THE LINK
VOLUME 2 · 2015/16

MAKING WAVES
TAKING ACTION IN THE REAL WORLD

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A one-girl mission against toxic toys
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Published bi-annually in spring and fall, The Link magazine features BSS thought-leaders and industry experts on current trends in education and spotlights the innovative teaching and learning that goes on in and outside the school, as well as the latest on alumnae news.

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• Letters: We’d love to hear what you think about any of the articles in The Link. Please send letters to Yael Jimenez at yjimenez@bss.on.ca. We will run as many as we can and letters will not be edited, though we ask that you keep them to approximately 50 words.

• Corrections: Every effort is made to ensure accuracy but from time to time, errors occur. Please make note of any errors you may notice to Yael Jimenez at yjimenez@bss.on.ca.

• Check us out online! Current and back issues of The Link are available online at www.bss.on.ca/thelink. See page 33 of this issue to learn more about our new online magazine!
Remainder when we used the causal distinctions of ‘book smart’ versus ‘street smart’? Each had its virtues and, of course, drawbacks and no one was thought to possess them simultaneously.

Today, success actually hinges on the ability to marshal many kinds of ‘smart’ to solve complex problems and invent new ideas. We have finally dispensed with outdated and inadequate notions of what it means to be ‘academic’ and have invited ‘street smart’ into the curriculum. In doing so, we are creating a Culture of Powerful Learning and a new definition of ‘academic’. There are many reasons why real-world experience is a crucial part of our academic program. The obvious, of course, is that it is character building for students to get out of the classroom and encounter the unpredictability of real-world problems, which tend not to follow textbook logic. Rather than critiquing the actions of others from the safe perch of a discussion group, let’s take those opinions and turn them into something useful, developing empathy and respect for the complexities involved in solving the problems of the world.

The process of turning learning into action is a cornerstone of the goals BSS has established in our Culture of Powerful Learning and it has a big impact on achieving the vision set out in our Signature of a BSS Girl. Learning activities such as our Grade 8 waterfront project, where students work closely with city architects, planners and councillors to determine how to maximize and future plan Toronto’s waterfront, help girls develop resilience and patience, hone the ability to work respectfully but assertively in teams, understand the constant need for reflection, analysis and correction, and the risks inherent in decision-making. Or take the example of a recent Duke of Edinburgh dog sledding trip where the girls’ learning took a real-world shift when the learning turned into an exercise in leadership and empathy (strong tenets of our Signature of a BSS Girl) on how to protect the dogs from freezing rain as opposed to learning the skill of sledding. These components are all exercised when we can incorporate experiential learning with classroom learning.

And while we’re on the subject of learning, these real-world encounters also serve to deepen students’ absorption and comprehension of the concepts they’re learning in the classroom. Testing one’s ideas by applying them and developing the problem-solving skills required to realize abstract concepts, is the basis for active learning. The result is not only the accumulation of knowledge, but also, the ability to use it.

This is an important distinction. Nearly a century ago Alfred North Whitehead, a mathematician and philosopher, identified the problem of “inert knowledge”, or the inability to apply learning to new situations. If students fail to see the relevance of what they’re learning, they won’t be able to harness what they know when confronted with an opportunity to transfer that knowledge to a real-life situation. This means that their learning cycle is incomplete.

For education to really do its job in today’s world, we must use every means to ensure that action, alongside reflection and discussion, is part of our culture. This issue of The Link showcases the variety of program innovations that BSS has developed to turn passive knowledge into active knowledge. I hope you enjoy and, as always, I welcome your feedback.
FROM LEARNING

Maria in Nizhny Novgorod’s local market in Russia.
TO LEGACY

Using science to change the world

BY AMY VERNER
I was blown away at the work they did, in addition to what they accomplished; I think the most powerful part for me was seeing that they believed that they could make a difference.”

Last spring, midway through May, stickers the size of salad plates began appearing on bathroom mirrors around BSS. Against solid coloured backdrops, the typewriter lettering offered various motivational messages, including “Change the way you see, not the way you look” and “Make health more important than weight.” An informational leaflet on the door of the bathrooms provided some context, namely, the harmful consequences of laxative abuse on bodily functions.

While the source of the awareness campaign wasn’t overtly indicated, this was hardly a guerilla-style operation. Rather, it was the culmination of Monika STEGER ’15’s Legacy Project. Like all other students taking Grade 12 chemistry, she was fulfilling the action plan based on research she had conducted over several months.

The Legacy Project, now in its second year, is the brainchild of Senior School biology and chemistry teacher Genny Lee. With the support, guidance and participation of department colleague Stephanie Beamish, she drew from the work she had produced as part of her recently completed Masters degree at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. At the core of Ms. Lee’s findings: students today field an overwhelming amount of information, often without sufficient skills to process truth from falsehood. Moreover, those emboldened to speak up or do something are often led to believe they are too young or unqualified to make a difference. Teachers, therefore, have an increasing responsibility to help students to better process and engage in the world around them. The central question is ‘why does science matter?’ Asking this encourages students to look at chemistry through a social justice lens.

The assignment she designed, which fits within the guidelines of the AP expectations, unfolds as a “unit” of classes that immerses students in various methods of research and investigation to develop their critical skills as independent thinkers.

“This is their training ground to become active members of society; research had shown that these students can actually make a difference now. And it’s important for them to consider these issues and start acting upon them, even in small ways,” explains Ms. Lee. “So we wanted to give them license and agency to go ahead and actually do something – but they had to make sure their research was sound.”

In November 2014, when the Legacy Project made its official debut (a trial run took place the previous spring), Ms. Lee presented a video on Chinese factory workers poisoned with benzene, a cancer-causing organic chemical compound. Students were then encouraged to question the validity of what they had seen and whether supplementary documents helped corroborate or contradict the information.

If this exercise strikes as relevant yet relatively standard, it was merely the tip of the iceberg. The students then learned they would be selecting an issue that had some connection to chemistry – whether environmental, social, health or economic concerns – from which they would propose a course of action as their legacy to the school.

Whereas some students focused on beauty products such as hair dye, others explored the ongoing impact of oil spills or revisited the widely contested link between cellphones and cancer (especially given that the girls often place their phones in the breast pocket of their uniform shirts). Monika, for instance, arrived at her topic after watching a documentary on laxative abuse, knowing how this can be fairly common among young women. In addition to
what she learned about the health implications, she says she felt buoyed by the way the BSS community responded to the stickers. One student even posted a selfie in front of the mirror to Instagram.

“I wanted to do something that people could relate to. I think that whether or not people in the community have experienced this first-hand, I think maybe they know someone who has and maybe it has crossed their minds once or twice,” says Monika, who was the Nation house head in Grade 11 and the head ambassador prefect in her final year. “I wanted to make people think about it realistically and in a negative light.”

For Maria Altshuller, who was in Ms. Lee’s Grade 11 class last year, the assignment seemed understandably daunting. But then, so was the topic that she ultimately elected to pursue: toxic toys in Russia, where she was born. After gathering supporting evidence, she used her March Break to discuss the problem with locals who were aware of the dangers, yet said these were the only toys they could afford to buy. To confirm her suspicions, she purchased toys from a market in Moscow and had them tested at a lab (her mother is a physicist and called in a favour). Indeed, two of the four toys exceeded acceptable lead levels as determined by the government. She wrote a letter to the local councilperson and, as she tells it, received a response one month later thanking her for bringing the issue to their attention.

Maria underscores how she came away from the assignment feeling entirely empowered – and how the project speaks to the “ambition” of the school’s curriculum.

Ms. Lee points out how any initial trepidation felt among students soon dissipated; as their research deepened, so too did their confidence. “I think because they had to do this on their own, there was a lot more ownership of their work. Throughout the process, I had interviews with them to challenge their thinking, playing devil’s advocate. By the end, they really knew where they stood on the issue – and why.”

And yet, she acknowledges that the undertaking was not a guaranteed success, which made last year’s outcome even more gratifying. “I was blown away at the work they did, in addition to what they accomplished; I think the most powerful part for me was seeing that they believed that they could make a difference.”

This notion of real science and its potential for a significant ripple effect contributed to Ms. Lee positioning the assignment as a legacy that the students leave to the school. Certainly Monika, who is now pursuing sciences at Queen’s University, notes how future students stand to benefit greatly from taking on the project, especially if they choose a subject that is of genuine interest. “It helped us have a broader perspective on what we’re learning – and how little things we do now may actually have greater impact in future than we think they might.”

As Maria puts it, “The goal of BSS, as I understand it, is to inspire girls who will be global citizens, who will take their education and actually make a difference in the world. And these types of projects really demonstrate how that mission statement is applied in practice; they allow us to take what we’ve learned and make a real difference.” When asked whether she considered her mission complete, the Grade 12 student replies. “I’m not sure; a couple years down the road, I may repeat the experiment in Russia. Maybe I’ll go to another market and see if anything has changed. But I know I’m really interested and invested in this.”

Amy Verner is a lifestyle journalist who divides her time between Paris and Toronto. She attended BSS between 1984–95.
Sustainable city planning meets limitless imagination

BY BEV CLINE
The late spring day was cold, windy and damp as the Grade 8 girls stood surveying Villiers Island’s bleak landscape of factories, barren land where trucks rumbled through, and the choppy water of Lake Ontario. Yet in discussing ideas amongst themselves and their teachers, the students excitedly began to envision this yet to be re-developed area in Toronto’s Port Lands as a vibrant, walkable, self-contained sustainable community.

Visiting the actual site was vital to the students’ participation in the No. 9 “Imagining My Sustainable City” urban planning and architectural design program. “If I hadn’t actually seen the site I wouldn’t have been able to think of it as a real place and that our ideas could contribute to what might happen there. It was really eye-opening to think about how you could re-develop this area in a sustainable way,” says Jacqueline Mimran, now in Grade 9.

The five-day intensive program kicked off with a workshop with the City of Toronto Planning Department during which students learned about the history and proposed re-development of the area. Thereafter, working with architects from No. 9 who accompanied them to the Port Lands, students undertook four days of learning, designing and building that led to the creation of a to-scale model that measured 6 metres by 3 metres (18 square metres).

The model featured pedestrian and bicycle paths; residential, public and commercial buildings with green roofs and solar panels; silos turned into artist studios, and a meandering boardwalk lined with blooming and colourful flower beds.

“In speaking to the city planners and architects we understood how they’re trying to reuse some areas after a city has been built up and people are trying to make it better. This gave us a taste of what it would be like to work in the field of sustainability and the ways the whole community can work together,” says Grade 9 student Clare Tremain.

The project was led by BSS Middle School teachers Tim Somerville and Vanessa Vanclief. One of his favourite parts of the project, says Mr. Somerville, was the culmination, where students presented and then defended their work to an assembled group consisting of the urban planners, architects, City of Toronto Councillors, teachers and...
other students. “The students didn’t build the model in a vacuum, they had to make it public and rationalize why their particular structures worked in the neighbourhood, like any planner or developer would have to do,” he says.

Ms. Vanclief says “This wasn’t a made up project; the girls can open up the newspaper and see the development of the Villiers Island project as a fairly near-term reality.” Consequently, it was important for them to creatively think, “How can I make this sustainable? How can I do this in an ethical way? Will any of the ideas we contribute actually have an impact on this project in the future?” Looking ahead, adds Ms. Vanclief, “It’s not inconceivable that, when the site is re-developed, some of the girls may even live there as young adults.”

No substitute for real-life experiences

In the BSS Junior School a reciprocal relationship with the Flemingdon Park community provides the girls with inspiring real life experiences, says Junior School teacher Jill Fisher. From community dinners, to food drives, toy drives, food bank visits and learning buddies with Gateway Public School, a larger picture of the world opens up for students.

Ms. Fisher, who helps to oversee Service Leadership in the Junior School, says, as an example, Grade 3 students earned money from chores to buy the toys, totalled up the amount raised, decided which toys to purchase by looking at an online catalogue (they remembered to put in the tax) and went to the store to purchase the items. “This experience was far more powerful than having parents buy the toys for the girls,” she says.

For the food drive, a group of Grade 6 students visited the Flemingdon Park Food Bank prior to the collection of the food. “We really wanted to know what the Food Bank needed’, so we talked with the person there who runs it and he told us which items run out really quickly. So instead of just saying to the Junior School ‘please bring food’, we asked each grade to bring in specific items like cereal, rice and diapers,” says Abbey Clutterbuck. After the drive, the same students delivered the food that was collected to the Food Bank. In January, every Grade 6 student visited the Food Bank to pack boxes for individual families. They will return to the Food Bank in the spring to distribute food boxes to families.

Create a meaningful voice

As to the legacy of the Flemingdon Park partnership, Ms. Fisher says “as a faculty, we are hoping these hands-on experiences with the Flemingdon Park partnership will instill a desire to help and that by providing this experience to 48 girls, some will continue helping on their own time.” Sasha Steiner, a Grade 6 student adds, “Often you donate things and you don’t know what happens next. But actually experiencing it makes you realize that your work actually does help.”

Similarly, after the No. 9 Imagining My Sustainable City program, says Mr. Somerville “We had the idea that we perhaps had a nucleus of young citizens who would hopefully make more informed decisions as they become voters and take a role in the community, and help us all to move ourselves towards a more sustainable set of living standards.”

Certainly, from a near-term perspective, the No. 9 project caused Grade 9 student Charlotte Keating to reflect on the role she and other students can have in creating positive change. “After we finished this project, I really started thinking about how much the world could change if younger people started getting a real voice and how cities could look and how politics could be run,” she says. “I think it could make a big difference if everyone started working together, not just from different countries and different cities, but also, if different ages could contribute ideas.”

Bev Cline is a Toronto writer, editor and author of non-fiction books for children and adults.
Never underestimate the power of youth to make lasting change,” asserts Leen Al Zaibak ’03, a board member of the refugee support group Lifeline Syria. A passionate advocate for Syrian refugee resettlement, she is also a founder of Jusoor, an NGO that has raised the equivalent of $20 million in support of international educational opportunities for Syrian youth. Ms. Al Zaibak is well versed in the impact that young people can have on world events.

“Almost five years ago, a handful of Syrian schoolboys spray-painted on a wall in their small town about overthrowing the Assad government,” explains Ms. Al Zaibak. “They were inspired by the Arab revolution elsewhere. The government responded by jailing and torturing the boys and then shooting protesters who tried to get them released. This group of children had said, ‘We’ve had enough, we deserve better.’ That was the beginning of the war.”

Ms. Al Zaibak, who manages her volunteer commitments on top of a full-time job as Senior Manager of Donor Engagement at Free The Children, sees the enormous potential for students to help those in need. “In some ways, students can blow adults out of the water. They believe they can make a difference and are not intimidated by the size of a crisis. Sometimes adults back away, questioning, ‘what difference can I make?’ whereas younger people think, ‘I know I can help.’”

As a BSS student, Ms. Al Zaibak appreciated learning opportunities outside school. “The classroom is an important place, but even with amazing curriculum, it’s still a box. BSS was always pushing us out of the box. Everyone at the school understands the value of authentic human interactions out in the world. That’s where we learn how similar we all are to each other. BSS always emphasized human need and connection.”

Allison Kavanagh ’09 echoes these sentiments. “I learned at BSS not to be afraid to take risks and do something different. We were encouraged to question the status quo, listen to our own voice, and believe in ourselves. We were told, ‘It’s good to be bold.’ And we were given opportunities to channel that energy to change something in the world.”

Today, Ms. Kavanagh works full time at the The Rumie Initiative, a non-profit organization that distributes electronic tablets loaded with educational content to areas in the world with limited access to education. Rumie tablets cost $50, contain open-source textbooks and educational videos, and work without the Internet. Each
BSS alumnae lean into critical world issues
BY KAREN SUMNER

device contains a library of materials for the cost of a book and can be recharged with solar power for $1 a year.

Recently, Rumie launched #LearnSyria to fund 1,000 tablets for Syrian children. “The willingness of Canadians to support Syrian refugees indicates how connected we feel to people around the world,” says Ms. Kavanagh. “So we also need to help those Syrians who choose to stay behind to rebuild their country. One way is to ensure that the next generation is educated. Millions of children have been out of school for years. The Syrian crisis is, among many things, a crisis of education.”

Ms. Kavanagh sees the potential for young people to have an immediate impact. “The Rumie Initiative needs free, high-quality learning materials for its tablets. Students are a great resource for that. Any high school student can search for learning resources when they progress through their courses, enriching their own learning while assessing the quality of what they find. Then they build a connection to students in need around the world. The finder and the user are joined together through a Rumie tablet. It’s an amazing, life-affirming dynamic.”

In similar fashion, Ms. Al Zaibak has a message for current BSS students: “Consider what education means to you. For Syrian students, it’s a lifeline. It’s their future, their family’s future, and the future of their country. Any student could help Lifeline Syria settle young people here in Canada. Or she could raise funds for Jusoor to help Syrian youth prosper in their own country. These are real options. Don’t underestimate your clout.”

“My message to every BSS girl is the same one I heard when I was there,” summarizes Ms. Kavanagh. “Don’t feel you need to do what you’re supposed to do. Don’t worry about other people’s expectations. I graduated with a BA in history from Brown University because I love history. Now, my work helps students around the world. Part of the privilege of going to BSS is that it gives you so many options for your future, and we all have the chance to do something that is as valuable to others as it is to ourselves.”

Both BSS alumnae are implicitly asking the question, how do I want to be remembered? What is my legacy? And while these questions cannot yet be answered, one thing is for certain: it’s good to be bold.

Karen Sumner, Ph.D. is co-owner of the freelance writing company Sumner & Lang.
How does a school tell its story of community in a way that inspires and enlightens generations to come? Reverend Cathy Gibbs had an idea. To celebrate the school’s 150th anniversary in 2017, she decided to act on her longstanding vision for a wood carving on the front of the Chapel’s altar. And she had a very particular focus for how the process would unfold.

“I wanted the students to design it,” she says. “The altar will be a teaching tool for future generations, so it was really important that current students be involved.”

With this emphasis in mind, Rev. Cathy asked Dorothy BOYLEN Caldwell ’62 and her husband Tom Caldwell to sponsor the project. The Caldwells are passionate supporters of BSS with two granddaughters currently at the school – Faith, Class of 2021, Trinity, Class of 2018 – and a third, Riley, who graduated in 2014.

“We were thrilled to be asked,” says Mr. Caldwell. The altar will have a lasting impact on young people by jogging their minds to think about reaching beyond themselves. It’s a wonderful project.”

From there, Rev. Cathy contacted the Ontario Wood Carvers Association. BSS art teacher Ellen Wright joined the project and invited students to participate. A group of ten formed and began meeting on Tuesdays at lunch in the Middle School Art Room.

“Our plan was to have Rev. Cathy summarize some of the stories from the Bible while the girls sketched,” recalls Ms. Wright. “But they had trouble coming up with images.” Faced with a stalled process, Rev. Cathy changed directions and started reading stories to the girls directly from the text, such as the Parable of the Lost Sheep and the Easter story. The language in its original form had an electrifying effect.

“Images just starting popping up in my mind,” remembers Grade 10 student Kattly Li. “It was the same for everyone. We were drawing so much. There were big pieces of paper everywhere.”

Ms. Wright and Rev. Cathy were stunned when they reviewed the images the girls produced. “Our plan was to have Rev. Cathy summarize some of the stories from the Bible while the girls sketched,” recalls Ms. Wright. “But they had trouble coming up with images.” Faced with a stalled process, Rev. Cathy changed directions and started reading stories to the girls directly from the text, such as the Parable of the Lost Sheep and the Easter story. The language in its original form had an electrifying effect.

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Ms. Wright and Rev. Cathy were stunned when they reviewed the images the girls produced. “It was not what I expected at all,” recalls Rev. Cathy. “I had some themes in mind, but the girls keyed in on images of light like the Star of Bethlehem and the light of the resurrection. Light is such an important image in Christianity and in all faiths. It was a perfect theme.”
Soon after that, the professional carvers came to BSS and gave the girls a chance to try their hands at it. The experience was transformative. “It was so fun,” recalls Kattly. “And it totally changed the way we saw the images – like how do you represent flames or shadows in three dimensions?”

With their new understanding of carving in mind, the girls began creating a seven-foot mock-up of the three-panel altar by cutting out images and organizing them into a cohesive story. When they finally hung their draft in the Chapel, it was eye opening. “We saw that it didn’t quite work,” says Grade 11 student Katie Rockburn. “The images were too small and there were too many of them.”

That moment stands out for Ms. Wright as an example of the real-world learning the project captured. “It was amazing watching them work through problems. They were accountable for creating a design the carvers could work with, and they had to do it together. They learned so much.”

After persevering through several drafts, the girls arrived at a clear vision of the stories they wanted on the left and right panels, but their concept of illustrating BSS students in the centre panel stymied them – until the carvers made a few helpful suggestions. “They recommended an image of a BSS girl coming out of the light,” recalls Rev. Cathy. “So we took their idea and suggested 12 girls of different ages and cultures, just like the 12 disciples.”

Katie sees the image as a perfect reflection of the BSS community. “The altar shows what BSS stands for,” she says. “It’s our light shining into the future and a vision of the type of people we are and the ideas we have.”

With the final images clarified, the carvers are on track for the altar to be revealed in the fall of 2016, after the girls spend a day in the summer doing some of the actual carving. Looking back over the various steps involved, the enormous value of the learning stands out. “It’s amazing what happens when you let the kids take the lead,” says Ms. Wright. “When you honour their learning and believe they are competent and capable, the results are magic.”

The altar will be an important addition to the Chapel that tells the story of the entire BSS community as well as the journey of the young artists themselves.
IT’S UP TO YOUTH
A summit designed by and for girls seeks solutions to inequality

By Megan Easton

When BSS student Claire Vaughan heard about the chance to get involved in an event aimed at tackling the tough issues facing girls in Toronto, she knew she had to be part of it. When she learned that students would be planning and running the event, it was the icing on the cake.

“The best way to deal with problems related to girls is to have girls solving them,” says Vaughan, a Grade 11 student with a passion for gender equality.

The Influencers of Tomorrow (IOT) summit, a new initiative for BSS, will be held this April in partnership with Girls E-Mentorship Innovation (GEM), a local charitable organization that pairs successful professional women with high-achieving girls from the city’s at-risk neighbourhoods. Rochelle De Goias ’97, GEM’s founder and Executive Director, says collaborating with BSS was a natural choice. “Our idea for the summit was to give a platform to young women in Toronto to discuss issues that are important to them, and to help them find creative solutions to those issues. BSS was a perfect fit because it’s an institution that believes in girls and in giving women a voice.”

Five girls from BSS and five from GEM are working alongside the same number of mentors from BSS and GEM to make the inaugural summit happen. “The students are the decision-makers, with the mentors playing supporting roles” says Charlotte Fleming, Director of Service Learning and Canadian, Business and World Studies at BSS. She and BSS teacher Mary Ellen Moran sit on the summit’s executive committee. “The girls are driving the process, which reflects our revamped leadership model at the school,” reiterated Ms. Fleming.

The third partner for the event is the MaRS Discovery District in Toronto, which is providing space for meetings and the summit itself, as well as an instructional
designer to facilitate the summit team in a “design thinking” approach. A practical, creative method of problem-solving, design thinking starts with a goal and works backwards. Ryan Burwell, the facilitator and Instructor Designer at MaRS who is working with the girls is quite pleased with the process and the initiative itself, “Since October, I have had the pleasure of exploring and applying the design process with the group of 10 students who have taken on the challenge of organizing the IOT Summit. It has been incredibly rewarding to witness their ideas for the Summit grow in sophistication and creativity as a result of their willingness to continually prototype, test and iterate. The methodologies they have applied here will lead to a rich experience for Summit participants, and many more creative initiatives in the future.”

The summit’s topic, for example, only emerged after three months of discussion among the girls and in consultation with their peer communities. “We wanted to make sure that the topic resonated with a wide group of girls,” says Claire. In the end, they chose the overarching theme of how to make Toronto a more inclusive and accepting community.

“Since the girls have such varying interests, keeping the theme quite open allows for more flexibility within the structure of the summit,” says Ms. Fleming. “Now they can enlist a diverse group of speakers that will appeal to girls from all over the city.” Though the issues up for discussion have yet to be confirmed, some of them may include female activism, the wage gap and inequalities for women in the workforce, and media stereotypes and pressures.

Every BSS girl on the summit team is partnered with a GEM girl and charged with a specific task, ranging from programming and recruitment to logistics and sponsorship. Claire is working with Aliza Fatima, a Grade 10 student at Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute, one of the most diverse high schools in the Toronto District School Board. Together they represent the summit’s communications committee and are responsible for the website, social media and marketing.

“Collaborating with the GEM girls has really added to my experience,” says Claire. “They have so many ideas that I never would have thought of. One big issue for many of them is discrimination against Muslim people in Toronto. I’ve been learning so much.”

And yet, Aliza says, there has also been a convergence of interests among the girls. “We’ve been talking a lot about gender inequality and those kinds of issues,” she says. “We all have so much to offer.”

This coming together of perspectives is the best part of the initiative, says Ms. de Goias, who envisions the event as a solutions lab led by girls. “The cultural differences, the socioeconomic differences, the opportunity differences – that’s what will make the summit so interesting. Exploring a problem from many vantage points, with unique cultural lenses, makes the solution rich and real.”

The Summit is hoping to attract approximately 150 girls from across Toronto to attend the event on April 16, 2016. “I want them to feel that they’re not alone, like they have a say in what’s going on in our city,” says Aliza.

As for Claire, her hope is that every girl who attends will use the summit as a springboard for activism. “My goal is to have them walk away feeling ignited by the discussions and motivated to take what we’ve talked about and turn it into real action.”

High school girls from across Toronto are encouraged to register online at influencersoftomorrow.com for an insightful and action packed day.

Megan Easton is a Toronto-based freelance writer and editor with a focus on education and health.
Imagine being able to work at an ad agency, hospital, veterinary clinic or Member of Parliament’s office even before finishing high school. That’s what students in the BSS Grade 11 Co-operative Education program experience – full-fledged exposure to a career at a time when they are actively working out their educational and professional aspirations.

After a six-week introductory period focused on learning workplace fundamentals, such as building a great résumé and health and safety rules, students spend the bulk of their course time on the job. They also attend classes every two weeks at BSS so teacher Jennifer Pietrangelo can support them in completing course assignments. This combination of real-life experience, analysis and reflection is ideal for learning, but it isn’t always easy.

“It takes courage to step into an adult work environment,” explains Ms. Pietrangelo, who visits students at their placements throughout the year. “The girls feel vulnerable at the beginning. But they grow from that risk and gain confidence and skills that bring out a whole new side in them.”

Cate Crossland’s placement at communications agency 88 Creative has been eye-opening. “Co-op has been an amazing experience so far. I have been able to go outside my comfort zone, learn new skills, gain valuable experience and follow my passions.”

Arly Abramson is equally enthusiastic. “I’m working at the Honourable Carolyn Bennett’s office. She’s the Liberal Member of Parliament for Toronto-St. Paul’s. It’s so rewarding to plan events for my riding and help constituents. The skills I am learning are ones that will be applicable for the rest of my life.”

When choosing their courses, some students shy away from co-op because it’s not a university prerequisite. How does Ms. Pietrangelo respond? “I always say, it’s a life prerequisite. It tells you so much about who you are. It informs your sense of purpose and your university choices. It’s relevant. It’s real. And you’ll make connections for life.”
Our Senior Leadership team identifies top three trends in education

FLIPPED CLASSROOMS

Harvard professor Eric Mazur experimented in the mid-1990s with moving his traditional lectures out of the classroom and reserving classroom time for questions, problem-solving and practice. “Flipping” is championed by many mathematics and science high school teachers who video themselves teaching short lessons and move homework to the classroom where they see students doing it themselves and observe their progression in grasping the steps first-hand. Flipping is at the heart of Salman Khan’s wildly successful “Khan Academy” where he recorded short videos of instruction in math and science, originally for a young cousin, and then he put them on the web for free.

Flipped classrooms aren’t a panacea for full student engagement, or an increased level of student outcomes. Critics argue that flipping does not create a student-centred pedagogy. They also argue that the conditions where students watch videos at home may not be ideal (while watching a baseball game), or that students may not comprehend the video and so will need additional work so that they can do the face-to-face activities.

Nevertheless, advocates believe that using flipped methodologies are very powerful in learning how to do something. A video teaching students how to solve a chemical equation is a powerful way of learning something, and they can watch it repeatedly for review later on. In addition, moving homework-like activities into the classroom allows teachers to monitor how students learn material and provide a much deeper perspective on how best to structure problems and activities for a variety of learners. Here at BSS we see promise and benefits in flipping specific classes such as math and physics so that students can be prepared for some version of this learning style in their post-secondary studies.

Angela Terpstra, Principal, Senior School

PYGMALION EFFECT

It is well documented that teacher expectations impact student achievement. At BSS, teachers have high expectations for student learning. In fact, excellence is one of the programmatic principles in our Culture of Powerful Learning.

There are a number of ways that teachers help students strive for excellence.

• For students to achieve high quality results, they need to understand the expectations. Students benefit when teachers are transparent about the learning goals associated with different units of study. It is also helpful when students co-create the criteria required to accomplish those goals.

• Another way that teachers help students understand what excellence looks like is through exemplars of outstanding work. For example, at BSS, Grade 6 girls who were selected to present at an external competition demonstrated their group presentations to the Grade 4 classes. The students in Grade 4 then deconstructed the presentations to determine what made them successful so they could emulate these strategies.

• In order to strive for excellence, students need to be able to accept constructive feedback and apply it. To create a culture of continual improvement, it is helpful when feedback comes from other sources in addition to the teacher. It is most effective when there is an authentic audience for student work.

It’s important for teachers and parents to consistently reinforce that excellent does not mean perfect. As Olympic athlete Jennifer Botterill reminded our Junior School students, the difference between excellence and perfection is that excellence is achievable…perfection is not.

Patti MacDonald, Principal, Junior School

DESIGN THINKING

Design Thinking is an approach to learning that uses a six phase design process to put the thinking into action:

1. Understand: immersion in specific learning
2. Observe: question and reflect on what is seen
3. Define: awareness of needs and developing insights
4. Ideate: brainstorming ideas and suspending judgment
5. Prototype: rough and rapid creations to portray ideas;
6. Test: learn what works, what doesn’t, and evolve.

As a tool for learning, Design Thinking supports the delivery of interdisciplinary academic content and activates students’ creativity. They see greater nuance in problems from their position within the core of an issue that engages critical thinking as a means to solving them. Neuroscience reveals that activities engaging creative thinking also appear to engage multiple regions of the brain to further encourage deeper divergent thinking. Learning through design thinking, therefore, becomes a human-centred approach whereby problem-solving, reasoning and purposeful interaction leads to producing outcomes that incorporate academic knowledge and skill sets in complex ways.

The delivery of interdisciplinary academics through Project Based Learning in our Middle School often utilizes the design thinking process. Students receive problems for which they seek solutions (“How do I build a thermos in such a way as to keep liquid hot for as long as possible?” “What is the most effective way to grow and manage a forest to maximize profit and ensure sustainability?”). Or, through more independent and open-ended wondering they identify social issues and use aspects of the design process to problem solve and identify solutions.

Ian Rutherford, Principal, Middle School

1 dschool.stanford.edu/groups/k12/wiki/17cff/Steps_in_a_Design_Thinking_Process.html
2 Barsghian, Tina, as cited in Innovation in the Classroom: Design Thinking for 21st Century Learning

To learn more about our three principals, visit The Link online at bss.on.ca/thelink
Several years ago, a new student approached Deb Piotrowski after music class. She explained that she had tremendous stage fright and she’d never be able to sing a solo. Over the year, Deb watched her slowly emerge until she was happily singing solos in Chapel regularly.

“I love reaching those kids who may be a little different or awkward,” she says. “When I see something in there, I love drawing it out. I love finding it and nurturing it and seeing them gain self-confidence. Those are the joy moments.”

Deb arrived at BSS in 1977 when there wasn’t a formal primary music program. She began teaching piano lessons and accompanying the Junior School choir, later moving to the Senior School where she took over all vocal music as well as special events like the musicals and the Nativity. Over 40 years, the choirs have expanded considerably, and she’s worked with the girls on many fulfilling and creative projects, such as last year when her class wrote and recorded an anthem for the school’s upcoming 150th anniversary.

Jan Schreiber has a framed letter on the wall of her office. It came from a student who wanted to tell Jan that she had been more than just a French teacher – she brought humour and fun to the classroom every day, and her open, approachable demeanor made French easy to learn.

Jan treasures these personal connections with her students. She arrived at BSS in 1994, passionate and eager to teach French. She fell in love with languages as a university student, and honed her French skills at Neuchatel in Switzerland.

“I remember meeting Swiss youth my age and being terrified to speak French,” Jan recalls. “They would laugh at my pronunciation. I’ll never forget that. So I’ve always wanted my girls to feel safe and comfortable in class.”

Jan is known for her playful and creative approach to teaching. She loves using games and skits in her classroom, and she’s the first to get involved in Spirit Week and talent shows, especially in a crazy costume.

As someone who’s helped so many students through the fear of speaking a new language out loud, Jan will use her retirement to explore outside her comfort zone. She’d like to volunteer with kids, develop her jewellery business, and perhaps even become an Uber driver. Though she’s sad to leave the school, she’s intoxicated by the sense of possibility that comes with this new beginning.

During the 2008 financial meltdown, Wendy BECK ’80 was teaching an economics unit in her Grade 8 geography class. As a teacher of not only Geography but English, History, Writer’s Craft, Civics and Careers, Wendy drew on her ability to think creatively and across disciplines and wrote a play that her students acted out.

“On parents’ night, several parents told me they had a dinner party,” she recalls. “Their daughters not only stayed at the dinner party and followed the conversation on the financial crisis, but fully explained it to the table.”

Since 1986, Wendy has taught a wide spectrum of subjects and age groups ranging from Grades 7 to 13. She is passionate about creating engaged and thoughtful citizens who can make connections between our present and our past.

“I want the girls to understand today’s news as a product of historical patterns and human nature,” she explains.

As an Old Girl herself, and one whose mother and daughter also attended the school, Wendy’s connection to BSS is a deep one. She loves helping girls take risks and explore their true interests, and modeling this behaviour is part of her decision to leave the school. She hopes to spend her time working with newcomers to Toronto on language and other life skills.
When you’re a student, working hard and earning top marks is something to be proud of. But it isn’t everything, notes Douglas Watt, Director of Industry and Business Strategy Research at the Conference Board of Canada. Mr. Watt recalls what happened at Nortel Networks Corp. during the late 1990s. The company had recruited students with the best marks in math and science, IT and software engineering. Some worked out, as their technical skills were so high, but Mr. Watt notes that others lacked communication and teamwork skills, among other things, which caused challenges in the culture of the company – and ultimately led to some firings. “It’s more than what you know,” he says.

To build an employability skills profile for the 21st century, staff at the Conference Board spoke with hundreds of educators and employers in all sectors and all regions of the economy and the country. What they found was that while technical skills were important, other attributes – the ability to communicate, to manage information and problem solve, to be adaptable, responsible, to work well with others and be open to learning, among other things – were essential.

These skills are woven into the fabric of the teaching at BSS and fostered by inquiry-based learning. In fact, the *Signature of a BSS Girl* – one facet of the school’s *Culture of Powerful Learning* – establishes a similar set of skills that the school is committed to developing and encouraging in students. Starting in the Junior School, children learn how to ask questions, to use their voices and to work in groups that are truly collaborative. By the time they reach Senior School, says Barbara McLean, Assistant Head Human Resources and Professional Growth at BSS, girls are working on projects that are constructed in an emergent way but which still meet the demands of the curriculum, tackling real-world issues that are relevant to them but with a broader social purpose.

Ms. McLean says students also need to learn cultural competencies and proficiencies, which are worked into the classrooms and the community – but not simply to become attractive to prospective employers, though that is a definite bonus. “We gear it to what they become as global citizens and who they are as individuals – helping to build character that allows them to make the right choices,” she says. “Then the passions they develop will take them into the work world. We’re preparing them to be good citizens.”

Nora Underwood is a freelance writer, editor and a past BSS parent.
When I first found out that I was going to a boarding school in Canada, I remember asking Shirley, our school director in Nepal, many questions about what my new school would be like. She told me that it looked like Hogwarts. I had eagerly read all the Harry Potter series and was overjoyed at the thought of going to a school that looked like the magical school. My best friend (who was also offered a scholarship at another school near Toronto) and I, dreamed about what our schools would be like and what our lives might be after we joined these schools. Many people ask me now after having finished my four years at BSS, if it was what I imagined. It has been everything that I imagined it would be and more.

Just the other day, I had dinner with Wendy SUN ’10, one of my roommates from Boarding. We were reminiscing about BSS and what our life used to be like. I look at my BSS years as one of the fondest and most life-changing experiences.

BSS has opened many doors for me. Through support from BSS and BSS parents like the Kololians, I have been able to pursue my dreams. One of them was building a health clinic in my village, Nar. When I was at BSS, my friends and I fundraised by organizing a car wash. In the summers, in collaboration with local doctors in Nepal, I organized medical camps. In 2013, as students at St. Lawrence University, my friends and I applied for the Davis Peace Project grant to build the clinic. We won the grant and were able to see my dream realized. Currently, it serves around 500 people in Nar and surrounding villages. I was able to fulfill another dream in 2014 when I graduated from St. Lawrence University and became the first college graduate in my family. None of these achievements would have been possible without BSS supporters who believed in girls’ education.

My school in Nepal as well as BSS has instilled in me a sense of responsibility towards my community. In the last couple of years, there has been a lot of re-evaluating and adjusting my goals and dreams, but one thing has always remained constant – giving back to my country. I would like to be able to champion and create opportunities at home in the same way that so many people have done for me. I am currently working at a law firm in Virginia. I would like to go to law school in a couple of years. I am still figuring out the best way I can contribute at home. One thing I know for sure is that education can be a powerful agent to empower and bring opportunities to people in my communities that have been marginalized for many years. Himalayan communities in Nepal lack representation in all aspects of our society. We need entrepreneurs, politicians, artists and economists. We have intelligent, hardworking and resilient people but we lack opportunities. I consider myself one of the luckiest children to have grown up in Nepal because of the educational journey. I hope to do the same for children in Nepal.

When I reflect on my experiences, I think about so many amazing turns my life has taken. One missed turn and my life would have been no different from many girls in my village. Some of the girls that grew up in my neighbourhood are parents now. We were all curious, smart, but also mischievous children who ran around the village chasing the goats and sheep. Even so, the doors that are open for me are no longer an option for them. The only difference is opportunity. It only takes one person to believe in a child and give them the opportunity of a lifetime. In my case, I was extremely lucky to have my uncle, the Kololians (my host family while I was at BSS and one of the BSS parents who supported me), the BSS community, and people around the world who believed in education and supported my school in Nepal. As another year commences, I urge the BSS community to continue supporting and championing opportunities through financial assistance. It has opened a whole new world for me – literally and figuratively. We can change the world one scholarship at a time.

Dolma Lama attended BSS from 2006 to 2010 on a scholarship supported by ten BSS parents. After BSS, she won a full scholarship to attend St. Lawrence University and graduated with a Global Studies and Government major in 2014. She currently lives in Washington, DC.
A look back

Look to the next three editions of The Link to find a special section dedicated to celebrating our 150th anniversary. In each issue – September 2016, March 2017, September 2017 – we’ll take a look at highlights of our rich history, artifacts we’ve treasured over the years and people who’ve played meaningful roles in helping BSS become what we are today.
COMMUNITY EVENTS

UNIVERSITY VISITS

During the month of October BSS went on the road and made stops to visit Old Girls in Guelph, Kitchener and Waterloo, Halifax, Kingston and Montreal. We love seeing you in your new stomping grounds!

Old Girls catching up in Kingston

DEL RAY BEACH (ATLANTIC COAST)
January 21

BSS Grandparents Pat JONES Dalton ’51 and Peter Dalton were very kind to host a group of Old Girls at the St. Andrews Club in Delray, Florida. Old Girls spanning decades shared many laughs, reminiscing about their days as students and catching up on life since then. Peter kindly treated the husbands in attendance to a more casual “boys” lunch by the pool so their wives could catch up with the girls! A great time was had by all.

Good times, great company in Montreal

HOLA DECEMBER

Young Alumni Social

On December 3, 2015, BSS joined forces with UCC, Branksome, St. Clement’s, and Royal St. George’s and threw a fun and rousing young alumni social at El Caballito. A good time was had by all.

Young Alumni Social in Toronto

BONITA SPRINGS (GULF COAST)
January 22

Mary PATHY ’55 greeted alumnae and friends at her home in Bonita Springs, Florida, looking fabulous in her BSS midi. Mary was very good to accommodate guests indoors for a beautiful buffet lunch when the rain kept everyone from sitting outside under her lanai. Ron Bezoff, spouse of Merle OVERHOLT Bezoff ’55, was kind to offer his bartending services!

Bonita Springs (Gulf Coast) January 22

CALLING ALL FLORIDA SNOWBIRDS! If you or someone you know winters in Florida and would be interested in attending a BSS event, please let us know so we can invite them to our next Florida gathering. Contact oldgirls@bss.on.ca
BSS IN VICTORIA

Deryn Lavell and Jill BLAKEY ’02 caught up with Old Girls over lunch in Vancouver. The two also enjoyed tea with Anne BREUKELMAN Baird ’55 and Joe Baird, as well as dinner with Laura CORNISH ’03.

NYC YOUNG ALUMNAE BREAKFAST

On October 23, 2015, Deryn Lavell hosted young alumnae at Hundred Acres Restaurant in NYC for breakfast. The group shared lots of coffee, a hot breakfast and many laughs.

CIRCLE BACK TO BSS

For close to 150 years, we’ve been breaking down walls for girls and women. Now, it’s time to build some – right here on campus.

As we celebrate our sesquicentennial in 2017, we invite every BSS Old Girl to circle back to her roots and make her mark on our new building. Donate a minimum of $150 and have your name and graduating year inscribed on our Full Circle glass wall overlooking our beautiful new atrium.

Anne ODETTE Kaye ’76 and Andrea ODETTE Federer ’79 on behalf of the E. & G. Odette Foundation have generously offered $150,000 to match gifts of $150 or more made by Old Girls. So, there is even greater incentive to make your contribution today!

THE FULL CIRCLE PROJECT BSS.ON.CA/FULLCIRCLE
We want to hear from you. Please email us at oldgirls@bss.on.ca or write to us with an update.

1929
Mary Elizabeth JARVIS Musgrave 1929 is pictured here with her great granddaughters who now attend BSS, Keira (Grade 7) and Sara (Grade 4). Mary attended the girls’ holiday concert in the Chapel last December – at the age of 104 – and shared her memories of the laying of the cornerstone for our Chapel in the 1920s, when she was a student!

1942
Four generations: Suzanne HAAS Stohn ’42, Jaryn DESMASDON Sorg ’95, Jaryn’s daughter, Blanca, and Dale STOHN ’68

1951
We need all of you to attend our Reunion this spring! Please make a special effort to join us, because this is our 65th Reunion, and we are fortunate to be here together! Your faithful Reunion Committee of Pat JONES Dalton, Janet WRIGHT Ainslie, Lee ROWLAND Booth, Mary GILL Byers, Joan JENNISON Wright, Susan TURNER Walker, and Mary WILLIAMSON, is organizing a class luncheon on April 29 and we hope to see you all there. For more information, contact Pat at p.dalton@sympatico.ca or 416-483-6772.

1954
Alison SANDERS ’54 published a book, Bonita and Estelle: Girl Greatness Started Here. Both Alison and her mother attended BSS. The book is the previously untold story of Alison’s mother, Estelle HODGINS Wishart 1916, and grandmother, Bonita Hodgins. The two were dynamic and engaging and were the leaders of the early Girl Guide movement in Canada, spanning 1920–1954.

1955
In October, Deryn Lavell and Jillian BLAKEY ’02 had tea with Anne BREUKELMAN Baird ’55 and her husband, Joe, at their home in Vancouver. Anne is pictured here, proudly wearing her BSS paraphernalia.

1964
University of Toronto Press recently published Masterminding Nature: The Breeding of Animals 1750–2010, the fourth book in Margaret DE ROCHE Derry’s ’64 series on Animals and Culture. Margaret is internationally recognized for her work as a historian of genetics and its relationship to culture. The book’s cover illustration, Portrait of Debutante, is also by Margaret and features a purebred Shorthorn bred and raised on her farm.

1965
Robin “Betsy” RIGGS Sagurna ’65 resides in Taufkirchen, a small town outside Munich, Germany, where she has joined a local refugee support organization, which organizes German courses for grown-ups and tutoring for children. Taufkirchen has about 300 refugees from different countries. Many are living in air-inflated tents but Taufkirchen is building some wooden “container” houses, which will offer more privacy and quiet, especially for families.
“I have been helping out in a course for women from Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia and Eritrea. Their differing backgrounds and education makes it difficult and they will soon go to more specialized and more intensive classes. I have also been tutoring Musa, a ten year old boy from Afghanistan, who has never been to school.”

1968

CBC’s *Metro Morning* featured a story about New Circles, a not-for-profit organization founded and directed by BSS Old Girl and 2016 recipient of the Distinguished Old Girl Award, Cindy GARDINER Blakely ’68. The organization is busy providing clothing to Syrian refugees in Toronto, and is also responsible for the holiday love program and prom drive that BSS takes part in each year.

1974

Pam REDFERN Brands ’74 hosted classmates for nibbles, cake and bubbly at her home on October 24. It was a joyous occasion, and a wonderful opportunity to share laughs with ‘old’ friends, many of whom will celebrate a 60th birthday milestone this year.

1985

Jill LEWIS ’85 is expanding our kids’ world through food, culture and caring. Co-Founders, JILL LEWIS ’85 and Julie Levin conceived the idea while on an apple picking field trip in Ontario, with their two youngest children. Kids Cook to Care was born and since then the pair have ignited a movement where children learn about new cultures, basic cooking skills and the power of empathy while feeding those in need. Kids Cook to Care is committed to inspiring families to support their communities to better our world one bite at a time.

1988

Rebecca LI Liu ’88 met with Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne on Monday, November 2 in San Mateo, California. Rebecca was delighted to learn that Premier Wynne’s mother is BSS Old Girl Patsy O’DAY Wynne ’48. Rebecca works in Communications for Ant Financial US, which owns Alipay, China’s leading digital payment platform.

1991

Tara Uzra DAWOOD ’91, President of Dawood Global Foundation & LADIESFUND®, dropped into BSS for a visit with Deryn Lavell last November.

BSS Reunion

April 28–30, 2016

Please join us! We have lots in store to help celebrate milestone years ending in 1s and 6s – and create even more memories of your time at BSS.

Register for events at bss.on.ca/reunion
1992

Janet BROWN ’92, Founder and CEO of FilmBuff, a New York-based film distribution company, arranged a screening of CodeGirl for our Grade 8 students last fall, followed by a Q&A session. CodeGirl is a documentary film that follows high school-aged girls from around the world as they try to better their community through technology and collaboration. BSS students are introduced to coding, starting in the Junior School. Janet has also been kind to share her time and professional guidance as a mentor through our BSS Connect! mentorship and networking program (bss.on.ca/mentorship).

1995

On October 21, Shandley McMURRAY ’95, Judith McMurray and Loretta Rogers dropped into BSS to read from their new book, Under Your Nose: A Book About Nature’s Gifts, with Grade 1 and 4 students in the BSS Learning Commons. Shandley and her mother, Judith, co-authored the book, and Loretta is among its illustrators. The book was very well received by students, who had plenty of questions about the book-writing process, and comments about their own experiences in nature. The group is pictured here with Carmen, daughter of Christine FEJER ’95.

Joanne FELLOWS Baxter ’95 and her husband, Phil Baxter, welcomed a son, Owen, on December 11, 2014. Twins Sarah and Liam are proud older siblings!

1996

Kate NELIGAN Murray ’96 owns two Mathnasium franchises in Toronto, and was featured in a story last fall on the cover of The Toronto Star.

Catherine FARQUHARSON ’96, daughter of Amelia SMITH Farquharson ’58, was married in Toronto on August 15, 2015 to Sean Evans.

2002

Dia MAKRIMICHALOS Thomson ’02 married Michael Thomson at the Design Exchange in downtown Toronto on September 26, 2015. In attendance from BSS were co-maids of honour Ashley AUDET ’02 and Amy DOUGLAS ’02, as well as Carling HAY ’02, Lisa GILBERT ’02, Zoe BECKERMAN ’12 and Naida COLE ’91. Another fellow Old Girl, Catherine FARQUHARSON ’96, was the couple’s photographer. Dia is the daughter of longtime staff member, Deb Piotrowski.

Jess MOSS ’02 is currently enrolled in the prestigious Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program at Juilliard in New York. Jess is the only Canadian student in Juilliard’s Playwrights Program, which is purposely small, and allows the artists to focus on the practical aspects of dramatic writing while taking advantage of the wealth of resources within Juilliard’s walls, and those afforded via the school’s prime location on Broadway.

Jill BLAKEY ’02 married Tom Lowden on August 29, 2015 at the Rosedale Golf Club in Toronto. Jill and Tom met during their final year of high school at Neuchâtel Junior College in Switzerland. Rebecca McALLISTER Smith ’03 – daughter of former faculty member Pinky McAllister – was a bridesmaid, and Lara TREIBER ’02 was also there to celebrate on their happy day.
2003
Courtney Lawrence ‘03 is a Senior Resident Anthropologist at Idea Couture, a global strategic innovation firm. Her expertise lies in gathering strategic insights that ultimately drive business value and growth. Increasingly her focus is in organizational culture transformation and consulting with leadership teams to enhance their workplace environments for greater engagement. She has also recently been engaged in writing for the Dalai Lama Centre for Peace and Education. Courtney graduated with a Masters in visual anthropology from the University of Oxford in 2008.

2005
Jennifer KAISER ‘05 was spotted on CTV’s Canada AM on December 9, announcing YouTube’s top trending videos of 2015, on behalf of Google Canada. Jenn works in Communications & PR at Google, Canada.

Alison SHORT Martins ‘05 married Christopher Martins of Caledon, Ontario on July 11, 2015 at the Villa Caledon Inn in Caledon East. Both Alison and Christopher are teachers and met while teaching at Emily Carr Secondary School in Woodbridge. The bridal party was made entirely of BSS Old Girls: maid of honour (Alison’s sister) Robyn SHORT ‘08, and bridesmaids, Danae ENGLE ‘05 and Sara MEHLENBACHER-MOFFAT ‘05.

2007
Sabrina SIMMONS ‘07 and Priyanka KRISHEN ‘07 dropped into BSS for a visit in December 2015. Sabrina is currently pursuing a Masters in Clinical and Counseling Psychology at the University of Toronto (OISE), and also manages an after school program in Toronto. Priyanka earned an undergraduate degree from the Richard Ivey School of Business and now works for Linc, a Smart Metering tech start-up company. Linc enables real-time monitoring and control of all energy systems in any building, providing actionable insights to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions by up to 30%. Priyanka’s business continues to take her across the globe – she recently returned from Denmark, and will next be working from Spain.

2008
Photographer Madelaine EDMONDS ‘08 is also an accomplished singer-songwriter, and recently released an original song, “Dreamcatcher”, on SoundCloud. Madelaine was the recipient of the Don Quixote Award for the Pursuit of a Dream in 2008. The Don Quixote Award is presented each year in the spirit of the leaving class of 1975. Girls from the leaving class submit applications and the girls’ ambitions cover a range of subjects from the environment to fashion to photography to healthcare. Madelaine submitted the winning proposal and used the Award funds to study photography, watercolour painting, figure drawing, landscape sketching, and the Italian language in Florence during the summer after her first year of university at Bournemouth. Madelaine later completed a Master’s in Fine Art Photography at Parsons.

Chloé HUNG ‘08 presented her play, All Our Yesterdays, to a packed house of Grade 11 and 12 students in the BSS theatre, followed by a powerful Q&A session. Chloé’s play tells the story of two sisters kidnapped by Boko Haram, the Islamic extremist group operating in north-eastern Nigeria. Upon thanking Chloé and her team for their time, Grade 11 student Carlyn Bujouves reflected, “We’re so fortunate to be at BSS where our opinions are valued. We come to this school so we can help to fix these problems – we’ve been given the reins.” It was extraordinary to see how this experience inspired BSS students to reflect on their own circumstances and their responsibility to be ethical citizens.

Rebecca KIRBY ‘08 has just landed a job working for Disney in Orlando, Florida doing Revenue Management. Every year, Disney holds a major conference for revenue management within all of its major subsidiaries and companies and Becky is going to help run the conference. Becky has a varied and interesting educational background. With an undergrad in Theatre and Music, a Masters of International Business and her most recent accomplishment, an MBA! Becky was the first drama student ever to be admitted to the MBA program at Queen’s University.

2009
Molly BROWN ‘09 is making her mark in the music industry and has released an EP, The High Road. It includes six songs and can be purchased on iTunes by searching “Molly Brown”... or you can listen to the songs on her website, www.mollybrownmusic.bandcamp.com. After BSS, Molly graduated from Berklee College of Music in Boston and then moved to Nashville, TN to pursue her love for writing and performing. Her original music is inspired by artists such as Carole King, James Taylor, Jackson Browne, Kathleen Edwards and Carrie Underwood. Congratulations, Molly!
2009
Lauren HASEGAWA ‘09 co-founded an app called Bridgit, which won the first ever women’s edition of Google’s Demo Day for entrepreneurs. Out of more than 450 applications from 40 countries, Bridgit was selected as one of just 11 startup teams to pitch at the event held at Google’s headquarters in California.

2010
Emily KASSIE ‘10 won the Student Academy Award for Best Documentary for her film, I Married My Family’s Killer – a portrait of Rwandan genocide victims who chose Rwandan genocide perpetrators as their life partners. Emily is an award winning documentary filmmaker, journalist, photographer and artistic director. She is also a writer, reporter, and photo and video journalist for The Huffington Post, covering social justice and human rights issues. After BSS, she graduated from Brown University with a B.A. Hons in Politics, Film and Journalism, with a regional focus on East Africa and a thematic focus on human rights and genocide. Emily took her first film class and made her first documentary at BSS. Read more about Emily’s journey and how BSS inspired her documentary on The Link online: www.bss.on.ca/thelink/bss

Commemorating an Old Girl’s sacrifice
There’s a new memorial plaque on the south wall of the BSS Chapel. It commemorates Anislie St Clair DAGG, a student at BSS from 1910-11 who served as a nurse in World War I, and complements the existing one to Frances MUNRO 1886 across the aisle, erected many years ago. Relatively few nurses lost their lives in World War I and BSS is remarkable in having two graduates who died in connection with their war service. Ms. Munro died early in the war in September 1915 on the island of Lemnos in the Mediterranean Campaign, and Ms. Dagg succumbed to Spanish Influenza contracted while nursing in an English hospital on November 29, 1918, just a few weeks after the Armistice was signed. Both women are buried overseas.
Vicky CHEN ’15 and Kourtney JACKSON ’15 designed the plaque together with Paul Toth, Head of our BSS Visual Arts Department. The finished plaque was a gift to the school by BSS faculty/staff members, Cathie Pfaff, Susan ALLEN Dutton ’79 and Rita Gravina. The Senior School was introduced to Ms. Dagg’s story and the plaque on November 19, 2015 through a student video prepared by Christabel CHAN ’15 as part of her history project.

2011
At 22, Hillary CHAN ’11 is the youngest student pursuing a professional Master’s degree through the University of Toronto’s Translational Research Program. It’s an emerging, meaningful field that allows her journey forward to be truly her own. “The valley of death” is the chasm between medical discoveries in a lab and the living, breathing patients dependent on those epiphanies to improve their day-to-day realities. There are numerous steps from medical research to practical application: acquiring funding, replicating studies, obtaining patents, marketing ideas effectively – and this time-consuming process can result in prolonged patient suffering. Read more about the impressive work Hillary is doing on The Link online: www.bss.on.ca/thelink

Second Annual BSS Apres Ski
January 2016
Hosted at the chalet of BSS Past Parents, Tony Gaffney and Dee Patterson (Ciara GAFFNEY ’15). Tony and Dee welcomed a group of more than 50 BSS parents, past parents and alumnae into their beautiful chalet for a lovely apres ski. Also in attendance were Deryn Lavell, Head of School and Cindy TRIPP ’82, Chair of the BSS Board of Governors.
OBITUARIES

Robin HORWOOD Godfrey ’50 passed away peacefully in her sleep on April 9, 2015. Robin was adored by her husband John. She was a wonderful mother to her sons, Ian and Stuart, youthful, loving and adventurous grandmother to her grandchildren, Aaron, Ross, Misu, Christopher and Katie and a big sister to her daughters-in-law Barbara and Sandi. Although a native of the Rock, Robin was (mostly) polished smooth by The Bishop Strachan School. She loved Scrabble, bridge and chocolate (especially chocolate) and she will be missed greatly.

Nancy PARK Ivory ’52 died peacefully at home in Wiltsire, England on July 25, 2015. Cherished wife of Angus for 59 years, and beloved mother of Gavin (Betty) of Toronto; Colin of Bath, UK; and Gillian of Milford, CT. Loving and supportive Nana of Julia (Harvey), James, Robin, Dana, Grace, Brian and Maxwell Dearest sister of Denny Starritt, Murray Park and Bruce Park (deceased). Nancy will be greatly missed.

Mary Jane MERWIN Christakos ’51 passed away on Friday, August 21, 2015, age 83, in Sudbury, Ontario, attended by family. Born in Sudbury in 1931, Mary Jane was a noted Sudbury artist and arts educator, dynamic contributor to the regional arts community, supporter of the Laurentian University Museum and Art Centre (Art Gallery of Sudbury), long-serving community arts volunteer, dedicated two-term Ontario Arts Council Board member and recipient of an Award of Distinction for contributions to the Greater Sudbury Civic Arts and Cultural Advisory Panel. Mary Jane embodied the creed ‘Do Thine Own Thing’ and inspired many. She will be remembered by many Sudburians and her appreciative children as a uniquely generous, tenacious, loving and wonderful woman.

Joan WINDELER ’47 passed away peacefully on Monday, October 12, 2015. Beloved daughter of Dr. and Mrs. E. C. H. Windeler late of Windsor. Joan was a graduate of The Bishop Strachan School and Toronto General Hospital. She was a private duty nurse who later retired to look after her father. Joan enjoyed cottage life, travel, theatre, tennis and was a strong supporter of her nursing association. Joan is survived by her sister, Ruth WINDELER Milks ’42, nephew, William Milks (spouse Sara) and was adored by her grand-niece, Gillian and grand-nephew, Jonathon, all of Waterloo.

Jill MERRY Plaxton ’60 passed away peacefully, privately, and with dignity at her home on October 21, 2015. Jill began in Kindergarten at BSS and went all the way through. She was a great friend to every classmate and hosted many of our Reunion lunches. She was a devoted wife, incredible mother, proud grandmother, and trusted friend. She will be missed.

Denise “Gubby” ARNOLDI Armour ’39 passed away peacefully at Kensington Gardens in Toronto on October 21. Gubby was born in England on January 8, 1921, and raised in Toronto. Gubby, an accomplished horsewoman, was a well-known fixture in the world of show-jumping, fox hunting, endurance riding and thoroughbred racing. Gubby was one of the very few people who could claim that she had stood in the stall with Man O’War, Northern Dancer and Secretariat. Gubby led a long, colourful life. She loved wine, dancing and music. She didn’t know the meaning of the word quit and she will be sadly missed by her family. Gubby’s daughter, Celia CHASSELS ’69 and Aunt, Phyllis WILLIAMS Arnoldi 1900 also attended BSS.

Christie RUSSELL Bentham ’48 died on December 28, 2015. Christie is predeceased by her much-loved husband, Will, and leaves her children, Margaret (Michel), John (Dianne), David, Harry (Andrea), Ken (Ann) and Claire (Bob), who died in 2013. She also leaves 14 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren and her brother-in-law, Jim Bentham (Barb). Christie was educated at The Bishop Strachan School and then graduated from Trinity College, University of Toronto. She followed her undergraduate studies with a Masters degree in Speech Pathology. Christie was a proud and devoted mother to six children who loved her dearly and are so fortunate to have had her as their role model. She demonstrated to her grandchildren that by being interested, one becomes interesting. Christie’s favourite place was Spree Island, Stony Lake with her beloved sailboat, Spree. She was in her element when at the Lake, enjoying time with her grandchildren, teaching them how to canoe, sail, swim and sharing with them an appreciation of the nature that surrounds them. She will always be remembered sailing down the lake in her Spree, with the love of her life, Will, by her side. Christie’s mother, Helen FORTIER Russell 1915; aunt, Mildred FORTIER Fraser 1914; cousins, Barbara RUSSELL Washburn ’50 and Sue ALLEN Dutton 79 all attended BSS.

Laurel SANDERSON Ness ’41, Montclair resident for more than 62 years, died on Saturday, January 2, 2016, at the Summit home of her youngest daughter, Lorna Ness. Born in Toronto, Canada, to Allan Ussil Sanderson and Constance Howard Sanderson, Mrs. Ness attended The Bishop Strachan School and graduated from the University of Toronto. During World War II, she served in the Royal Canadian Air Force, scanning the skies over the Pacific for enemy planes. After the war, she moved to New York City where she attended Parsons School of Design and worked briefly as an interior designer. It was there that she met her future husband, Arthur Graham Ness. The couple married in The Bishop Strachan School’s Chapel in 1947 and moved to Chile, where her husband worked for the British exporting firm Duncan Fox. In 1952, they moved back to Montclair. After raising three daughters, Mrs. Ness became active in volunteer activities as a longtime member of the Garden Club of Montclair, the Women’s Committee of the Montclair Art Museum and the Montclair Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, as well as a docent of the Montclair Historical Society. She was predeceased by her parents, Allan Ussil Sanderson and Constance Howard Sanderson, and her husband of 53 years, Arthur Graham Ness, who died in 2001.

Mrs. Ness is survived by her daughters, Lorna Ness, Frannie Ness and Carol Ness; two grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; two nieces; two nephews, and their families.
Over the years, our magazine covers have been inspired by the Powerful Learning that goes on at BSS and beyond. But don’t judge us entirely by our cover. It’s what’s inside that really counts.

We’ve launched The Link magazine online and we think you’re going to love it! It’s now easier to stay on top of the latest in education, learn about trending topics, stay connected and interact with BSS by posting comments on our various articles. We hope you’ll enjoy the new online features which allow you full page access to articles and photo galleries making it easier to stay in the know from your laptop, mobile device or iPad! Check us out online and let us know if you’d like to receive The Link digitally or in print. Visit bss.on.ca/thelink

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