

# A WESTGATE PERSPECTIVE

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## Westgate Redevelopment News

**W**estgate Mennonite Collegiate has always been blessed by school community members who give their time and share their expertise serving on the school's Board of Directors and on various committees. We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge two individuals who have made immeasurable contributions to Westgate over the past several years, as well as to welcome two new volunteers to their respective positions.

As Redevelopment Committee Chair, Ralph Regehr ('80) and his committee secured vital civic and court approval for the campus renewal and renovation construction project. Ralph recognized that his former school campus would not be able to meet the needs of future students, and his committee responded with a design that is as functional and accessible as it is exciting. Tom Penner ('76) gave important leadership as Chair of the newly formed Capital Campaign Committee. As a former Board Chair whose children have since graduated from Westgate, Tom understood that the school needs support from all generations of school community, where today's investment in Mennonite Education will be paid forward in the city and the world for years to come. Over the summer, both Ralph and Tom passed their responsibilities to new Chairs.



**Glenn Penner** is the new Chair of the Redevelopment Committee. Glenn has worked for Manitoba Hydro for over 23 years in a variety of roles as a structural engineer. In his current role as the

Division Manager of Transmission Construction and Line Maintenance he is responsible for the design, construction, maintenance, and emergency restoration of Manitoba Hydro's transmission line network throughout the province. In the past several years Glenn has played a strategic role in Manitoba Hydro's efforts at relationship building with First Nation communities and other stakeholder groups. Outside of work he is involved in many volunteer roles; as a coach in a variety of sports and CAN TF4 – Urban Search and Rescue, as one of their collapsed building engineers. Glenn and his wife Alanda have four children, three of whom are currently at Westgate, and he has served on the Westgate board for a year as the representative for Bethel Mennonite Church.



**Lisa Thiessen** has assumed the Chair of the Capital Campaign Committee that will raise funds for the school's redevelopment project. Lisa, a Certified Professional Accountant, earned her Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) at the University of Manitoba. Lisa is Executive Director of ELCIC Group Services Inc. which administers pension and benefits plans. Her duties include cash management, investing, negotiations, plan design, communications and education. Lisa and her husband Ted have three children, all graduates of Westgate. As a member of Douglas Mennonite Church, Lisa had earlier served as Chair of Finance Committee for Westgate. A strong proponent of the school's focus on academics, music, athletics and nurturing of faith, Lisa has seen how the school has cultivated the gifts and abilities that our students take with them beyond our doors. Lisa is very optimistic that our extended school community can raise the funds needed to continue shaping young lives. ●



## GRADE SIX COMING TO WESTGATE!

We are very excited at the prospect of welcoming the first-ever class of Grade 6 students to Westgate Mennonite Collegiate in September of 2015. This is in response to learning of more public schools/school divisions transitioning to the middle school model, which will have a direct impact on many current—and prospective—Westgate parents. Primary schools that had historically offered classes from Kindergarten to Grade 6 will change to K-5. Former Junior High schools (Grades 7 – 9) are shifting to the middle school format (Grades 5 – 8), with their Grade 9s moving to large collegiate schools. Consequently, students in those elementary schools, and their families, would face making a transition twice in two years if they need to wait for Grade 7 to join us at Westgate.

Hence we are in the midst of planning for their inclusion in the Westgate family for Grade 6 starting with the next school year. We are inviting parents/guardians who would like more information to attend an

**Open House / Information evening  
in the Westgate cafeteria  
Tuesday, January 20  
7:00 to 8:30 p.m.**



Yasmin (left) and classmate Chloe Penner

**Take Your Kid to Work Day** was an amazing experience! I got to shadow my mom. It was pretty cool to learn about what she does on a daily basis. I got to observe a surgery, learn about the different parts of the hospital and got a tour of the pathology department. It was so fun to be there. I even got to put on scrubs, so I felt like I was a doctor. They also had great interactive booths that included topics like Pharmacy, Occupational Therapy, Surgery and even tours. Overall, I had a wonderful time and learned lots. I hope to become a worker in the medical field one day.

**Yasmin Banares**

I went to my dad's workplace for the day. I did a series of drills such as connecting a hose to a fire hydrant. I was also able to see how the firefighters have to do math in a hurry. I got to put on the full set of fire gear including the oxygen tank. I was able to experience all of the weight that every firefighter had to put on their back. It was very interesting to see what my dad has to go through every time he goes to a fire.

**Hunter Quiring**



Hunter in full gear

## A German Exchange Program in its Second Generation

**A** 35-year-old German exchange program sees the second generation of exchange students. This year three students, whose parents participated in the German exchange in their Grade 11 year, will be travelling to Hamburg at the end of March to live with their German exchange partners.

Kaitlin Boyle and Monica Loewen (River East Collegiate students) and Natasha Neustaedter Barg (Westgate Mennonite Collegiate student) introduced their German exchange partners to camping, corn mazes, Canadian Thanksgiving, Hallowe'en and the Blue Bombers.

The three teens were inspired to participate in the exchange by their parents. Vicki Toews was a John Taylor Collegiate student and Gary Loewen ('84) and Krista Neustaedter Barg ('87) are both Westgate Mennonite Collegiate alumni who took part in the same Exchange program.

The majority of the Manitoba students currently come from River East Collegiate and Westgate Mennonite Collegiate with one or two from Niverville Collegiate and Manitobans for German Language Saturday School rounding out the numbers. Any Grade 10 student of German in Manitoba may apply and take part in their Grade 11 year.

The exchange was a brainchild of Karl Fast (Krista's grandfather and former Westgate teacher) and Claus Hartwig, German



German exchange students pose with their mural in the senior lounge.

consultants working for the Manitoba Department of Education in 1979.

In addition to learning to speak fluent German, students returning from Germany have shown an increased appreciation for their family, school and country, and a broader understanding of the world. They have had to learn to live in a new family and attend a new school in a new country. Most of all, they have shown growth in their independence and self-awareness. Perhaps it is this growth that encourages parents to send their children off across the ocean and allows an exchange program to thrive for 35 years! ●



Monica, Natasha and Kaitlyn with their parents and exchange partners.



**FIVE RUNNERS,  
FOUR YEARS OF MEDALS,  
THREE GIRLS,  
TWO BOYS,  
ONE SPECTACULAR  
ACHIEVEMENT**

**C**ongratulations to Nadya Langelotz, Annie Rose Daudet, Hillary Rempel, Will King and Liam Sawatzky, who have won provincial cross-country medals every year since Grade 9. It is true that they have been the anchors of cross-country teams the past four years, but anchors usually hold things back, so that doesn't sound quite right. They have been true leaders, helping their



Annie Rose, Hillary, Nadya, Will and Liam

teammates feel welcome, and making practices a fun place to be. As part of the girls' team, Nadya, Hilary and Annie Rose won silver with their Junior-Varsity teams in Grades 9 and 10, and led their Varsity

teams to gold in Grades 11 and 12. Liam and Will led their teams to JV silver in Grade 9, JV gold in Grade 10, Varsity silver in Grade 11, and Varsity gold in Grade 12. Well done! ●



Anya ('12) and Caleb ('13) Snider were both members of Canada's Junior National teams competing at the World Ultimate Championships this past July in Lecco, Italy. The men won gold while the women battled hard and earned silver. Way to go Westgate!

# Westgate-Mar Elias Student Exchange

## PALESTINIAN STUDENTS ILLUMINATE COMPLEX ISSUES: A REFLECTION BY NICHOLAS WARSA

**O**n October 1 at 12:34 in the morning, they arrived—a group of eight Palestinian students from Ibillin in northern Israel who came to Winnipeg as part of an 11-day exchange. Being someone who values new experiences, I quickly signed up to host two of the students in my home. During their time here, we took them to a cottage to experience our Canadian wilderness, went shopping, go-karting, exploring at the Forks, took a tour of the Manitoba Legislature, got lost in a corn maze, and many other activities. What I and the other hosts quickly found out was that the similarities between us were immense and the differences were almost inconsequential.

During our weekend at the cabin we watched a movie called *Omar* which

depicts the story of a Palestinian and the persecution he faces at the hands of Israeli authorities. The movie shows “Omar” being humiliated by Israeli “Security Officials,” made to stand on top of a small rock on one leg with his hands above his head and his eyes closed for hours. One of the Palestinians sitting next to me whispered, “This kind of stuff happens all the time.”

Back in Winnipeg, my parents hosted my entire extended family to meet our two guests. It was at dinner that I learned more about how difficult it was to be an Arab citizen of Israel. Basel explained that it was always his dream to become a pilot, but because he was Arab he simply wasn’t allowed. As a citizen of Canada it is still impossible for me to grasp this—that because my friends are defined as Arab they are blatantly discriminated against, and there is nothing they can do about it.

I explained to them that if I was in their situation I would hate my oppressors; I would hate those who told me I can’t. What they said next astounded me. They said that while they do hate the fact that they are oppressed, they do not hate their oppressors. They hate the ideas their oppressors hold, not the person who holds them. I don’t remember exactly how the conversation went, but they explained to me that there’s no point in hating people. By hating, we only contribute to the endless spiral that has caused so much distrust and enmity in our world.

I’ve thought about this conversation that I had with my friends almost every day since they left. I’ve been trying hard to separate the individuals from the oppressive ideas that those individuals possess. I’ve been trying hard to hate ideas, not people. When we begin to separate the oppressive ideologies that some people believe from the individuals that believe in them, we will break the chains that have held our human race prisoner in a cycle of hate. My Palestinian friends taught me a new way of thinking, a new way of loving, and a new way of viewing others. It is these values they taught me that give me hope. ●

## SHARING THYME TOGETHER: THE SECOND WESTGATE-MAR ELIAS STUDENT EXCHANGE

**A**t the beginning of October, Westgate Mennonite Collegiate hosted eight students and one teacher from the Mar Elias School. This was our second encounter of this kind, the first one being in February of 2012. The Mar Elias School is a Christian school in northern Israel. It was founded by Elias Chacour as a place of learning that would transcend the divisions of the region. Students are taught not to buy into the narrative that would pit one religion against another, which would force people to take extreme positions on the future of Israel and the occupied territories. Rather, students are taught to look at connections and find ways to think of justice and peace. Even the structure of the school is one that promotes this attitude, as it is one of the only schools in Israel that has Muslim, Christian, and Jewish teachers working together.

We have felt God’s presence as we have worked on this project and we pray for God’s continued presence in the future. It was humbling how the students from Ibillin

Nicholas Warsza (centre) with his guests, Basel (left) and Razi (right).



Mayar (right) and Dyala (centre) set out on their bike ride to school with host Jasmin Epp (right).



Fun at the Loewen cottage.



Staying warm on Lake of the Woods.

immersed themselves into our school's community, and because of their courage, we were able to truly connect with these young men and women. Indeed, we made new friends. In that vein, Westgate halls are already filled with talk about reuniting with friends as we travel to Israel/Palestine in March. I trust that our students can represent our school as wonderfully as the Palestinian students represented theirs. ●

*James Friesen*

**W**e had a great experience as a host family to two of the Mar Elias students. The pace of not only scheduled events but spontaneous evening social activities filled most of the spare time for the rest of their stay. Fortunately we did have some chances to get to know our new "daughters" in more of a family setting. Going to church together the first Sunday was an interesting opportunity to dialogue about both faith

and cultural practices and that Sunday at Charleswood Mennonite Church we had communion as well as child dedication. These two events in particular, but also almost every aspect of the service from the singing to the children's story, seemed to be of interest to our guests, one of whom was from a Catholic background and the other a Muslim background. Of course both of them were entirely unfamiliar with our Canadian Mennonite approach to worship, and explaining to them what to expect before the service led into topics such as adult baptism, communion, and church authority and structure.

Another faith discussion happened at dinner one evening, after one of the girls was puzzled about the meaning of biblical references in an Israel travel guide book on our coffee table. Her line of questioning led to a discussion about the most basic concepts of Christianity relative to Islam and other faiths, such as: God, Allah (are they the same?), the Trinity, the meaning of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and prayer. She was interested in the idea of religion or a faith understanding as an individual's choice, and even something you could change your mind about, rather than a deterministic outcome of what village or family you are born into. This seemed to be a very foreign concept to both of them and I think this reflects one of the major overall differences in our situation compared to theirs—the option of choice in so many aspects of our lives, whereas theirs seemed to be governed by many more restrictions. I am very much looking forward to being a guest in one of their homes when Westgate visits this spring, when I can be the one asking the questions and feeling the wonder of their culture. ●

*David Epp*



Host mom Anita Epp (centre) with her new daughters.



Annie Rose (centre) with guests Fatima (left) and Doried (right).



#### **An email from Fatima:**

*"Thank you for hosting us, and loving us, and giving us the best u can, thank you for being our family in the last two weeks. Thank you for giving us that hope that we did search for, that there are wonderful and great people in this world, love you all more than can you even imagine!! Peace is the keyword in the whole world, and i really miss the Canadian sweets, your tasty meals! You were good at everything Say hello to everyone and can't wait to see u all again. love u so much ♥♥♥♥"*



# Student News

In addition to playing with the Winnipeg South Chiefs, **CHRISTIAN PETERS ('15)** has been training/playing with the U17 provincial baseball team, with double-headers every week against Junior teams, tournaments in Fargo, Minneapolis, and culminating with the Canada Cup—a national championship in Saskatoon. It was at this championship that he hit two home runs, the second of which caught the attention of former Blue Jay and Hall of Famer Roberto Alomar, who was scouting the tournament. This resulted in his selection to Team Prairies (SK/MB) for "T-12"—the Blue Jays' premier baseball academy and tournament. T-12 is an all-expenses paid event for exposure to professional and college scouts from all over North America. Being selected is considered a great honour and achievement; the players are considered to represent the best 160 Canadian amateur players with college eligibility.



Christian fared well. Highlights included a stand-up double and two circus catches which generated applause. It was also fun for him to meet some major leaguers, including Lloyd Moseby, Jesse Barfield, George Bell, Devon White, and others. For a week he was living the dream.

**JORDAN YOUNG ('15)** had the opportunity to attend the 90+ Ministries, a soccer academy in England, from June 1 - July 28, 2014. This academy was comprised of players from around the world who had the potential to play at a university or professional level. Jordan was accepted into this academy in January and spent four months preparing for the challenge. He was the youngest of the group at the age of 17,

the next closest age being 20. The daily schedule consisted of soccer training, crossfit training and community service in the core of Liverpool, where kids were taught to play soccer instead of getting into trouble. On the weekends there were games against University, Semi Pro and Pro players in front of coaches and scouts. It



was strenuous work for eight weeks but the benefits will last a lifetime. During the trip Jordan was contacted by a scout/agent who will work

with him over the next two years on a development plan with the intention of bringing him to Europe for tryouts for a number of professional teams in 2016. He has also been invited back to the 90+ Academy next year.

**LUKAS ('17)** and **CHRISTIAN ('20) NEUSTAEDTER** competed at the National Waterski Championships this past summer. Both are members of the Manitoba Provincial team. Lukas has been waterskiing since he was two years old. He competes in three categories: slalom, trick and jump. He placed in the top 10 at both National Championships (Toronto) and the Western Canadian Championships (Edmonton) this year. Christian has been skiing since three years of age. He placed second overall, second in trick and jump and third in slalom at Nationals in Toronto this summer.



*The Cycle of Hope is a fundraising event, sponsored by Habitat for Humanity, that raises money for the construction of a home. Habitat partner families make a down payment on the house through 500 hours of work and make monthly mortgage payments on a no-interest loan. This year's partner family is Mohamed and Eiman Asker and their four children (shown in photo). The cyclists pay all their own expenses and this year raised over \$180,000, which all went to the construction of the house.*

*The 2014 Cycle of Hope Bike Ride started in Omaha Nebraska, ending up in the Black Hills of South Dakota. The ride back to Winnipeg was through the Badlands and plains of South and North Dakota. The original plan was for a ride of over 1,700 km, but this was cut back to about 1,500 km, due to tornado warnings and several severe lightning storms. The final day was an exhilarating ride through Winnipeg, from Westwood to Nairn Ave., complete with a police escort of about a dozen cars and several motorcycles! Among the more than 30 riders were two septuagenarians with strong ties to Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, **HENRY THIESSEN** (at left in photo) and **HENRY FAST** (right). Henry Fast is also a part time staff member of Westgate.*



Thomas Dickson, Noah Kelly and Xander Guzzi get into the Hallowe'en spirit!

# Alumni News



**ADRIAN WERNER ('07)** won the gold medal for four-year BSc honours in Geography at University of Winnipeg, June 10th, 2014.



**JACKIE NEUFELD ('86)** earned a Masters of Education in the field of Curriculum and Development, from the University of Manitoba this past year. Her daughter Rebecca will be graduating from Westgate in June of 2015.

On Wednesday, November 5th, **CHARLENE KASDORF ('96)** brought a group of Westgate students to Doha, Qatar, and they never even left The Gates. From the comfort of her air-conditioned studio, Charlene shared her passion for art and taught the Grade 8 ELA students how to make images come to life. She encouraged them to think like five-year-olds, leave their



inhibitions in the dark and bring their creativity into full colour.

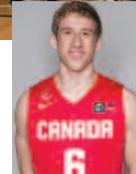
Charlene is not only a Westgate graduate, but a published illustrator. Charlene studied graphic design at Red River Community College in Winnipeg and, together with her husband Keith Reimer, decided on a leap of faith to attend an international job fair. After several interviews they were offered a position in Bangkok. They looked at each other and said, "Why not?"

The couple arrived in Thailand on January 1, 2003. That six-month position extended to 12 years and many more job fairs. This carefree yet adventurous outlook has steered them to teach in Switzerland and London. Their last "Why not?" sent them to colourful Qatar. Together with their two boys, Otto (5) and Jonas (3), they are living and playing in the world's "big tree" city on the coast of the Persian Gulf. Keith teaches physics and mathematics at the international school while Charlene spends her time creating illustrations, artwork and teaching art education at the Virginia Commonwealth University.

The latest project that "found" her was a book she illustrated with author Frances Gillespie. *The Blue Jackal: And Other Tales from Islamic Lands* is a compilation of tales for young readers. She is currently creating illustrations for the Museum of Islamic Art for an upcoming exhibition.

The heat of Qatar hasn't wilted her Mennonite roots. As Charlene's weekend approached, she was looking forward to "good Mennonite zwieback and cinnamon buns in the morning."

For details about her book, follow the link: <http://www.amazon.com/The-Blue-Jackal-Other-Islamic/dp/1909339229>



**BEN MILLER ('13)** was a member of Canada's U18 National Basketball team this

summer. They competed in the 2014 FIBA Americas U18 Championship which took place from June 20-24 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The team had the best finish ever by a Canadian team, losing to the USA in the finals. Ben is currently at Acadia University in Nova Scotia.



**LEXI JANOVCIK ('13)** began her university volleyball career this September as a member of the 2013 National champions, University of

Manitoba Bisons. We wish Lexi all the best in her studies and training.

Every year, our most recent graduates are invited back in November to receive their last yearbooks, enjoy some Gondola pizza and reconnect with classmates. The attendance at this event grows each year as students look forward to this evening. Neil Ens, Westgate's yearbook staff editor, extends the invitation to our most recent alumni and enjoys watching the students' reactions as they open their yearbooks.



# More Alumni News



**THOMAS DOUGLAS ('08)** married Adrienne Rempel on Oct. 24/14 at North Kildonan MB Church.



**NICHOLAS WOELCKE ('05)** is a first-year associate at the law firm Thompson Dorfman Sweatman LLP. He's developing a practice in business law, with a slight focus in the area of property and development. He is engaged to classmate **KELSEY CRAM ('05)** and they are planning a December 31, 2015 wedding.



Sister **NATASHA WOELCKE ('07)** completed her bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering at the U of M in May 2014 and in July started a two-year term working with MCC in Mozambique as a water engineer.

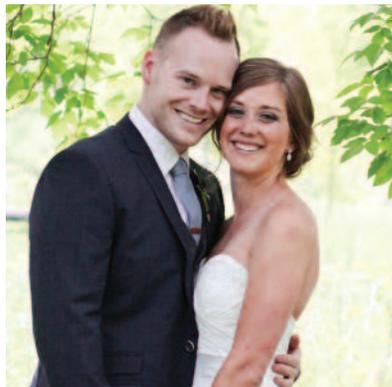


**OLIVIA ULRICH ('13)** was one of a group of performers from Winnipeg who went to New York for five days. They saw four musicals and took part in two workshops. Olivia got to work with some of the cast members from the musical *Pippin*. She also met celebrities like Neil Patrick Harris and James Franco. Olivia is currently in her second year at the U of Winnipeg majoring in theatre performance.



**CURTIS ('03)** and **KRISTA (MCPHERSON) KLASSEN ('03)**

recently welcomed their first child, Parker George Klassen, into the world on October 1st, 2014. Krista is currently an associate lawyer with D'Arcy and Deacon LLP. Curtis is a financial Advisor with Trilogity Wealth Management.



**REBECCA VANDERHOOF ('05)** and Colin Barber were married on June 13, 2014, officiated by her aunt (Marla Langelotz '83) at Assiniboine Park. Both Colin and Rebecca are finishing their medical training this year. Rebecca hopes to work in Family Medicine.



**CORY FUNK ('08)** and **ANNEKE HILDEBRAND ('08)** were married on July 26, 2014. Having just graduated from the University of Winnipeg with a BA in History and Religion, Cory has been accepted for a four-month position in Ottawa as an Advocacy Research Intern for MCC Canada. Anneke will be graduating this spring from the University of Winnipeg with a degree in Kinesiology and Applied Health. Both plan to pursue graduate studies in their respective fields.



**CAROLINE FISHER ('05)** and Josh Markham are pleased to share the news of the safe arrival of their son. Simon Fisher Markham was born on June 20, 2014. All are doing well.



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