

A WESTGATE
Retrospective



MENNONITE
WESTgate
COLLEGIATE

2019



PLACING STONES

Bob Hummelt

While I believe I could not be considered a conspicuous consumer, those who know me would not be able to label me a minimalist, either. I am prone to squeeze the last bit of wear out of bikes, socks and dress pants rather than buy new to replace them. But, I still like stuff. However, acquiring this “stuff” is relatively gentle on the environment because I like garage sale/flea market curio: unique Christmas mugs, old framed prints, fishing lures, lamps, carved or ceramic figurines, anything unusual that speaks to me or reminds me of a long ago experience. My school office and my home office are both far from austere spaces as they house these treasures, occasionally curated to give the impression that a fairly cluttered mind spends time there.

On the left side of my wide school office windowsill that offers me daily river views in all the seasons, rests a clear glass vase filled with stones and white sand. I claimed it after our community celebration October 29, 2017 when our newly redeveloped building was dedicated. A familiar demonstration used in sermons and public appeals, this vase and its contents indeed made a clear point amid the congregational songs and prayers of thanks that Sunday afternoon. Big stones were poured gently into the vase while key board and committee members were named and gathered up front to be introduced. Smaller stones followed to represent the architects, construction firms and trades that built what we needed. Finally,

white sand was poured in, slowly sifting into the gaps left by the varied river wash stones to honour the many hands of volunteers who had helped clear out the school and move us into our temporary school in Charleswood, and then return late the next summer to unload trailers to furnish the newly renovated campus mere hours before school was to resume in fall. On that celebratory afternoon in October we all were amused when the sand piled to form a conical mound beyond the lip of the vase as the grainy volume could not settle into the gaps quickly enough. Over the last several months the sand has indeed settled, and the intended point is now finally made.

The Bible offers a few passages using stones to make points as well. Daniel describes God’s Kingdom as stone cut without hands and Exodus describes an Israelite altar made of stones that have not been carved. Arctic indigenous peoples traditionally stacked stones, *Inukshuk*, often as human figures, that served as commemorative signs or as beacons on the stark barrens directing the right way for safe passage.

Our *Retrospective* journal is sent out to our school community stakeholders to highlight what is happening within and beyond the walls of our now redeveloped school campus. Previous issues have also raised awareness of the financial implications the building project has incurred and this issue will do the same. Perhaps the glass vase metaphor can also illustrate where financial support of Westgate stands.

Where some independent schools can count on some very big seven figure stones from more than a couple of donors, our school community with comparatively modest means has been blessed by a handful of very generous givers who had the capacity to drop six figure stones in our vase. There have been about two handfuls of givers adding five figure stones. While there may still be other larger gifts to come, it is now best to anticipate that the vase will be filled by the many hands that make up our school community who can commit perhaps a thousand or two, or a hundred or two, and in some cases, sums that are pledged over a few years. I invite current and past parents, and our now 2259 number strong alumni to gather up a bit of sand to pour towards Westgate’s debt free future. This would not only signal that the school would be free of annual payments and accruing interest, but that the school stands on a healthy solid base, where many contribute according to their ability so that children can learn to become people of God.



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BUILDING BRIDGES, CHANGING LIVES

Jamie Arpin-Ricci

A beautiful and unlikely friendship has emerged over the last decade between a community of the Pimicikamak Cree Nation in Cross Lake, Manitoba, and many urban Mennonites from Winnipeg, including several Westgate students. It started a decade ago when Sterling Mennonite Fellowship responded to a request from Mennonite Church Manitoba to connect with Living Word Mennonite Church.

“Since Sterling was already doing a Vacation Bible School (VBS) program in Winnipeg, we saw this as a good chance to start something in Cross Lake for which we already had the experience and materials,” recalls current Sterling pastor, Moses Falco. “As outsiders to their culture, it was difficult for us to realize that the way we did things in Winnipeg didn’t always work there. We needed to learn from them, and that became the story of our connection.”

Over time, Sterling realized that they had much to learn from the Cross Lake community, adapting their programs to meet the needs and match the strength they discovered locally. From VBS, they soon expanded to include things like youth mentoring programs and sports

camps, with a hope to offer opportunities for adults as well.

However, the most beautiful aspect of this unique connection has been the relationship built between the young people from both communities. “It is amazing to see all the friendships that continue from year to year and that now (thanks to social media) are continuing throughout the year as well,” says Falco.

Among those young people is Westgate student Logan Sawatzky (grade 11), who has been involved in the partnership since he was in grade one. “Every time I go I am always pleasantly surprised by the simple waves, hellos, or small conversations that I am able to have with just about everyone I see,” says Logan. “It’s something that you just don’t see in Winnipeg.” Learning about the unique culture over the years has stretched him in his own life and faith. “Personally, I have really found who I am and who I want to be as a leader in my community and at the same time how to listen to others.”

Westgater Julia Hutton (grade 11), who has been going to Cross Lake for two years now, comments on her expectations when she first visited the community. “The first time heading up there I was nervous and had an image in mind of what it would be and how it would run, but once we got there it was completely different.” Like most participants, she found people “super

friendly and welcoming”. Some of her favorite memories come from when things didn’t go as planned. “Half way through the week we lost power again during the day when all the kids were at camp with us. At first we had no idea what to do but Moses Falco got up on a chair and started singing a children’s song to calm everyone down.”

Beyond the fun memories, this unique relationship also impacts lives in powerful ways. Falco is reminded of a day when one of the youth came into the building they were using early one morning. It was clear that something wasn’t right. “She sat alone and people noticed that she wasn’t herself,” recalls Falco. “Everyone was brought together and we found out that her cousin committed suicide that morning. That shook us pretty hard.” And yet, because of the years of trust built, she had felt safe to reach out and get the support she needed. “What mattered was being present and showing love.”

It is those kinds of deep, genuine relationships that are most important, says Falco. “That is the main reason why we go. Everything we do is really an excuse to build those relationships because it is in the relationships that we can really learn from each other and transform the narratives we have been hearing over and over again about who each other is. When we build the relationships, we can see each other as beloved people of God, which goes a long way to changing our stereotypes.”

For Sterling Mennonite Fellowship and all the young people involved in the partnership with the Cross Lake community, these stories from the last decade give them a sense of hope and excitement for deeper (and new) relationships in the decades ahead.



HISTORY OF WESTGATE BOOK LAUNCH

Bob Hummelt

Janis Thiessen was a student at Westgate in the 1980's and taught at the school from 1995-2009, achieving her PhD during this time. An enthusiastic teacher, colleague, researcher and snacker, Janis has shared her love of Canadian, Mennonite, labour and food history with us in person and through her many books, including *Manufacturing Mennonites*, *Not Talking Union* and *Snacks: A Canadian Food History*.

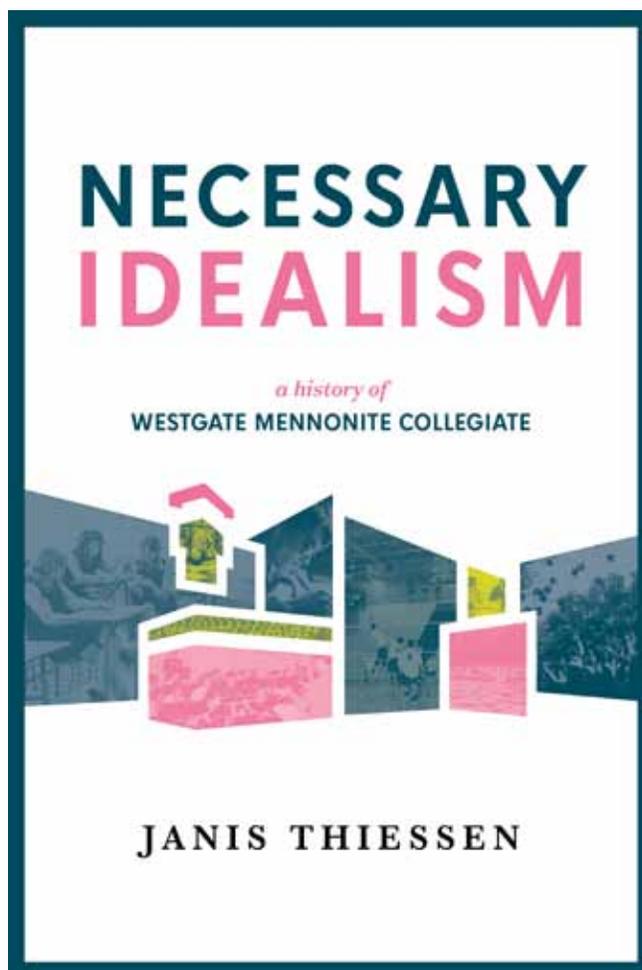


We were very excited to host the launch of *Necessary Idealism: a history of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate* in the Westgate atrium on April 7, 2019.

Using both documentary materials and oral history methodologies, Janis Thiessen has produced a splendid institutional history of a private Mennonite high school in Winnipeg, Manitoba - Westgate Mennonite Collegiate. This volume undertakes a careful, historical examination of the school's history, admittedly by a sympathetic insider (alumna and former teacher), and makes a significant contribution to the history of ethnic and religious private schools in Canada.

“[The Board of Directors] was interested in casting Westgate’s history before a critical eye, where it could be placed in a context that would inform not only the wider Westgate community but also scholars and readers of independent faith schools in Canada. Dr. Janis Thiessen offered that critical eye, belying the notion that a former student and staff member would not be able to fairly evaluate the historical record. Dr. Thiessen appreciates the nuances of the classroom, the staffroom, and the school boardroom that give meaning to the meeting minutes and the recorded personal interviews she has used in her research.”

– Bob Hummelt, Principal, Westgate Mennonite Collegiate



GIVING SO THAT OTHERS MAY RECEIVE

All members of Westgate's community are integral to paying off capital campaign

Jason Friesen

Westgate has been a gift to so many people throughout the years. With the recent building renovations, perhaps the school's capacity to continue with this has even increased. But in the wake of the project, and with \$2.4 million in debt remaining, Westgate is in need of some gifts as well.

Paying down the rest of the debt for the beautiful new space will no doubt continue to be a community effort; a community including current families and past families, those attending supporting churches and those coming from other faith backgrounds.

Neil and Kate Craton were heavily involved at Westgate from 2006 to 2014, with their children attending from Grade 7 to 12. Hilde Neustaedter has been involved with Westgate since the beginning, first as a student herself, then seeing her children and grandchildren attend more recently. The Cratons come from a church outside of Westgate's group of supporting churches, while Hilde attends one within that group. Though their experiences have been different, they each feel that it is essential to keep supporting Westgate through the Capital Campaign so that others can benefit in the ways their families have.

"We had such a positive experience and we wanted to ensure that other children would have that same opportunity going forward,"

"We had such a positive experience and we wanted to ensure that other children would have that same opportunity going forward," said Neil. "Going to a basketball game was like going to a big family reunion. Our son would go to school at seven in the morning and come home at ten at night almost every day. There were so many points of connection, whether music, drama, sports, or general community building exercises. It was wonderful."

Neustaedter agreed, noting a deep sense of appreciation for all that Westgate does. "We've been involved with Westgate for a very long time and we really appreciate what it has done for our whole family, and for other people as well." Faith, of course, was no small part in Neustaedter's decision to give either. "I've always felt that Westgate is such a complementary source to what you're trying to teach your kids at home," said Neustaedter. "So if you can get more support coming from the school, hopefully your kids will become well-rounded. I just thought it was an undergirding of what we and our church wanted to do."

The Cratons appreciate the Christian values taught by the school too, and believe in the importance of acting upon them. In the case of the Capital Campaign, it's generosity that needs to be lived out. "We grew up in the Christian tradition that teaches us the importance of tithing, and of sacrificial, regular giving," explained Kate. "I think that we need to be faithful to organizations, even if we're not getting a direct benefit from them at the time. Giving to the school when our kids were there was of direct benefit to us because we were taking back from the school at the time. Giving to the point that's comfortable is not hard,

but I think we need to remember that sacrificial giving requires you to give beyond your comfort zone. That's where the blessing comes; it is through giving in faith that our needs will be met." As an independent school, it is a part of Westgate's fabric to give to its community, trusting that its needs will be met.

"You need to hope and trust that the money will come," said Neustaedter. "If the school keeps doing what it's doing, then it will."

In the near future, we may we all see ourselves as integral parts of the Westgate community regardless of our day-to-day involvement, and, may we continue to give sacrificially in the faith that Westgate will continue to be a gift for generations to come.



Kate and Neil Craton



Hilde and Henry Neustaedter



WIDE PARTICIPATION: ULTIMATE AND CROSS COUNTRY

Bob Hummelt

When I was a high school student in Selkirk my goal was to make the volleyball team, signaling to all in the hallways that I had “arrived”, both athletically and socially. I did make the team, but my athletic gaps, relative to most of my teammates, became more evident and my social status had difficulty launching from my perch at the end of the bench. What I could do really quite well was run and it was clear after the Grade 10 phys ed. class fitness test that I would be funneled from the court to the fields of cross country and the oval tracks, as a middle distance runner. I initially groused at this as the profiles of those “minor” sports were very different compared to the “major” sports (as formally designated by the Manitoba High School Athletic Association). Yet these “minor” sports led me personally to wonderful opportunities down the road, a road I still travel as a coach and occasional runner, these days.

Westgate’s athletic profile was elevated with the Varsity Boys Provincial Volleyball Championship in 1978, and, indeed, the first time I heard about this school was news of the win on campus radio. Coincidentally, I was on a late night winter training run during my last season of university track when I ended up in Armstrong Point and came across the school. Volleyball and later basketball became Westgate staples, with good athletes in the school often playing both sports. However, the athletic landscape has changed at Westgate in the last fifteen years with successful seasons of two “minor” sports, cross country and ultimate.



I had coached cross country at Westgate since the early 80s where it was difficult to form a team of five needed to compete. Fortunes changed when I managed to get staff member Doug Durksen to make it past Balmoral Hall in our second after school jog one winter, unleashing the inner runner that resides in all of us. Doug helped coach senior squads the next fall and his connection with kids resulted in several more students than usual training with the teams. This created a “critical mass” where other kids chose to run with their friends. Staff member Jarrett Rempel joined the senior level coaching staff, leaving the juniors to train with me and Mrs. Terry Dirks.

We are very pleased with the results when our Juniors place strongly in invitational meets. These young runners often continue the sport at the Junior varsity and varsity levels, where 29 MHSAA AAA Provincial Championship medals have been earned since 2007. However, medal count does not fully measure the value of this program. Doug draws back on his initial running experiences noting that after two practices novice runners are hooked as they understand the fun in doing something difficult. All the junior and senior coaches are blessed with good health where coaches run with the kids. Doug offered, “One of the great things is that we are truly all in this together - we never ask the students to do something that the coaches don’t do as well - even if we’re the last ones to finish up - which offers a great sense of camaraderie. The first place gets to cheer on the last place (usually me).”

The early fall season offers a perfect opportunity for some of our German exchange students to join a school team and it is wonderful when they get to go home with a provincial medal. Other new students such as Rebecca Stoesz appreciated the chance to integrate into the student body. “It gave me the chance to get to know other students, and it was an amazing feeling to be cheered in to the finish line at provincials, where I then found some extra energy I didn’t know I had!” Team members are loath to let each other down, noted Carrie Schulz and Alex Grislis, where it was a “badge of honour to run every day, and it didn’t matter the conditions, snow, rain, ice... you just did it!” While several runners use this rigorous conditioning to train for other sports, for many this is their key Westgate intra-collegiate sport; this fall only one senior high girl and a third of the senior boy squads played volleyball as well. Along with inviting wider student body participation, the sport has also created a lifelong habit, and it is common to see cross country alumni out for runs on their own.

Successful programs often have a “driver”, that person whose passion and commitment draws kids in to try something new and develop a new passion too. For a relatively new sport, ultimate frisbee, Vaughn Rempel Snider ’84, is that person. Vaughn was an exceptional athlete in the court sports and also an exceptional runner, winning silver in the Provincial 400m race her varsity year. A decade after high school she was looking for a new athletic challenge and was keen to try

the new sport that had quickly grown in popularity in city parks. Vaughn was certain that ultimate would be a nice fit at Westgate, and recalled the “early years.”

“As is the evolution of most things new, it starts with a few “keener” kids (notably Vaughn’s kids, Caleb, Anya and Quinn), and these kids get their friends convinced to play. Then we tapped some shoulders in the halls to round out a roster and, voila, a “team.” What began as a motley crew of kids - half of whom had never played the sport or any sport at Westgate, has turned into a finely tuned machine with Westgate’s teams being among the most respected in the province and with our high school teams always finishing in the top five.” Despite not having a playing field of its own, over the last 10 years Westgate has expanded from having one middle school team to currently fielding three middle school teams and three high school teams. All teams are co-ed.



to have “spirit circle”, where all the players gather, arms around each other, to share what they enjoyed about the game, make note of an exceptional play, and acknowledge a female and male from each team who was “spirited”, and showed outstanding sportsmanship on the field and sidelines. It is a delight to see perhaps not the most skilled kids receiving this collective recognition, many of them athletes who had not found a place in the traditional court sports.

In many ways the sport embodies what Mennonite schools should foster. Vaughn notes, “Parents, administrators and teachers love it because it teaches core values of respect and sportsmanship and working out your own problems in a non-confrontational way. There are no officials to rely on; all you need is a pair of shoes and a field, a disc and knowledge of the rules and a game can be played.” Central to the sport is the “spirit of the game”, where

each player is accountable, not only to their own team, but the opposition as well. Players call infractions on themselves, and when a given play is seen differently by two players, a brief and calm discussion ensues, often changing a call after mutual resolution. Tournaments include a team spirit award that is chosen by all competitors based on knowledge of the rules, fair play and encouragement of others. It is common after a game

While the school ultimate program has spawned four members of Canadian teams that have played internationally at the World Championships, the sport, like the cross country program, has offered a welcome home for athletes of all abilities. In a faith school with a strong musical tradition, the widened palette of athletic choice offers Westgate students many opportunities to discover and develop gifts God has given them, gifts that offer joy for years to come.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

It's been an honor to serve as the co-chairs of the Capital Campaign for the past two years. We have appreciated getting to know the Westgate community better, and working with the wonderful members of the campaign committee. Together, we have achieved many goals, largely with two specific themes: the first, to get the message of the campaign out to our community in a variety of ways which included, video, social media, email, and events; the second, to simplify the message and keep it up to date as work progressed both during construction and after. We were so pleased to hear that Ozzie Rempel will be taking over as chair of this committee, and have great confidence in his abilities to carry this campaign through.

**Heidi & Randy Grieser,
Capital Campaign Co-Chairs**

I was honoured to be asked to be a part of the Westgate Capital Campaign Committee, particularly in light of the terrific work and success of former Committee chairs Lisa Thiessen, and Randy and Heidi Grieser and their committee members. Also, as many readers of this periodical will be able to attest, it's hard to say "no" to Bob.

The new school building is truly a beautiful facility, and in many respects is functioning even better than we had dared to dream. If you have not yet had the opportunity, I would strongly encourage you to drop by for a visit – you would be warmly welcomed and proudly taken on a tour.

We can best honour the efforts of all those who have contributed to this project by refusing to become complacent about the debt that

remains. With continued engagement and participation of our alumni and wider Westgate community, we are hoping to retire the remaining debt in a short time. We are, of course, always thrilled to accept larger donations in the five to fifty thousand dollar range. However, we also recognize the importance of every gift we receive. And to put matters into perspective, if 2000 of us commit to a \$1000 pledge over the next two years, we'll be done! One thousand dollars, while a significant contribution, translates into a little less than \$10 per week – a goal that the Westgate community has many times demonstrated to be achievable. We extend our sincere thanks to you all for your continued support, and I am already looking forward to retiring again soon.

Ozzie Rempel



Henry Dyck, Ozzie Rempel, Heidi and Randy Grieser

FALL SUPPER ON OCTOBER 11, 2018



This great community gathering was well received by the hundreds who attended and enjoyed a delicious perogy supper. All funds raised went toward the Capital Campaign.

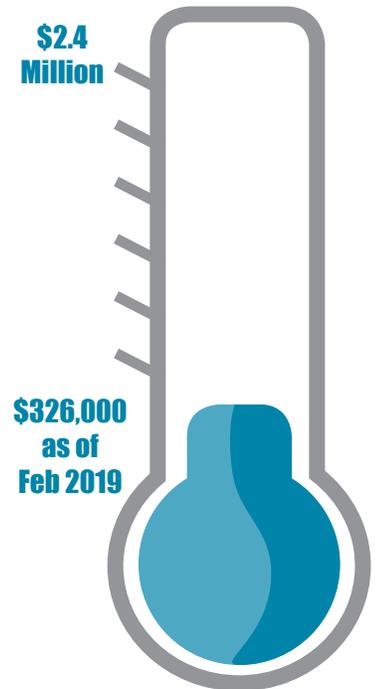
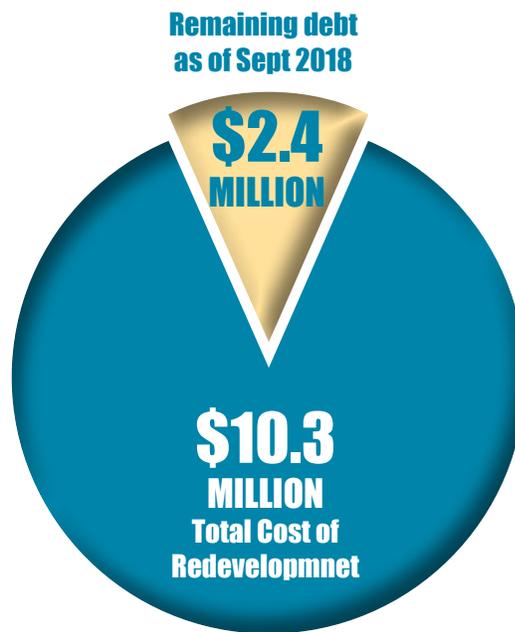
As Westgate stakeholders, it is important for you to know the status of the Campital Campaign funds.

In addition to regular donations that we receive throughout the year, many of our events help raise a significant amount of money as well. Our last event was a delicious Fall Supper in October that brought out hundreds of people and was a wonderful community-building event.

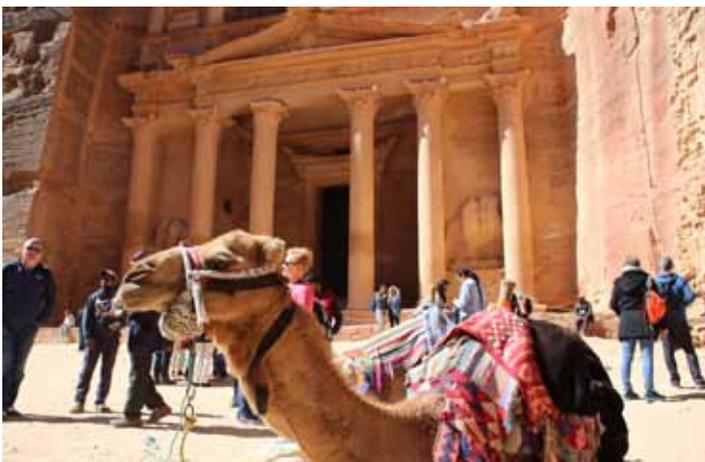
Since August 2018, our Golf Tournament, Fall Suppoer, and Adult Middle East Trip have raised nearly \$100,000. This brings our total funds up to \$326,000 as of February 2019.

Currently, we have just over \$2 million left to raise. We are so grateful to our donors who have helped us get this far and we couldn't do it without you!

Heidi & Randy Grieser,
Capital Campaign Co-Chairs



MIDDLE EAST TOUR FOR ADULT MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY, MARCH 4-19, 2019



Westgate has a long tradition of Middle East study tours. The first one was in 1995, when Bob Hummelt and James Friesen led nine students on an excursion through Israel/Palestine and Egypt. Since then, the trips have grown and changed, adding destinations such as Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. This spring Westgate is celebrating this tradition by taking forty adults on a trip to Israel/Palestine and Jordan. These adults will retrace the steps that students have walked, experiencing what their children, grandchildren, nephews, and nieces told them about on past trips. This tour will also connect with the school back home as all participants have made a contribution to the capital campaign as part of the cost of the trip.

MIDDLE EAST TOUR

for adult members of our
community, March 4-19, 2019





THE REV. HENRY AND HELEN BECKER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Westgate family's legacy supports students in the sciences

Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe

When Ruth Dyck walks into her bedroom at home, she's walking on the floorboards of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's first building at 86 West Gate. She had them put in when the building was torn down as a reminder of the place that has played such an important part in her life. "I live and breathe Westgate," she jokes. But indeed, her family always has.

Ruth has taught mathematics and computer science at Westgate since 1987. She is the daughter of Henry

and Helen Becker, after whom *The Rev. Henry and Helen Becker Memorial Scholarship* is named. The scholarship is awarded every year to a grade 11 student who has attended the school for at least two years and demonstrates academic ability in the fields of mathematics, science, and computer science.

Ruth established the fund on behalf of her and her siblings Ernie and Werner Becker when their father died in 1993. They extended the fund to include their mother when she passed away in 2001. "When my father passed away, all of a sudden all these flowers started arriving and I thought, let's get a scholarship going ... I think I was doing it because I couldn't take all the flowers!" she laughs.

In truth, Ruth set up the scholarship because her parents were faithful Mennonites with a passion for education that were dedicated Westgate supporters from its beginning. "It's who they were; they were just such Westgate people," says Ruth. She and her siblings all pursued careers in the sciences, becoming a nuclear physicist, a neurologist, and a teacher. They wanted to honour the sacrifices their parents made to give them those futures. Now Henry and Helen's legacy continues to give opportunities to students today.

"Receiving the ... scholarship in my grade 11 year at Westgate gave me confidence that I was on the right track and encouraged me to continue to take computer science for my grade 12 year," says Daly Penner, recipient of the scholarship in 2014. "I am going into my final year of studies in Civil Engineering at the University of

Manitoba and I am always thankful at how I was encouraged to pursue sciences and maths at Westgate, especially computer science as it has become increasingly important to know in all streams of engineering."

Henry and Helen Becker both fled from Ukraine to Canada in the mid-1920s. Henry became a lay minister at Pigeon Lake Mennonite Church for the next 50 years. Helen was head cook at Misercordia Hospital before marrying Henry and having children. "They were very hardworking, very focussed, very committed to their faith," says Ruth. They were also social people who always made time for their community.

Although they farmed to support themselves and send their children to school, Henry didn't want his children to be farmers; he wanted them to continue with higher-level academic studies that he never had the chance to pursue. "We had a one way trip off the farm," says Ruth. "My parents had a plan ... it was always Westgate."

Henry and Helen were not just passionate Westgate supporters from afar. They dove in headfirst, being house parents for the girls residence from 1967-1970, when the building was still a stately mansion. All three Becker children attended Westgate and both of Ruth's children also graduated from the school.

"I love how these scholarships connect our graduates with the history of the school, setting them off in a positive way as they further their education," says James Friesen, Vice Principal at Westgate.

To learn more about how to contribute to the Rev. Henry and Helen Becker Memorial Scholarship or any of Westgate's other scholarships, contact the Westgate office at 204-775-7111.



Rev. Henry and Helen Becker



WESTGATE ALUMNI PROFILE: GREGORY DAHL, BARITONE

Sarah Jo Kirsch

“I play the bad guys. Scarpia. Iago. Boys with big pants and big problems.”

Baritone Gregory Dahl ranks among Canada’s finest singing actors. With a voice and stature perfectly suited to Verdi’s most villainous, Dahl’s first steps onto the stage were made at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate.

Graduating with Westgate’s class of 1985, Dahl says he was still a long way from finding his voice while at the school. As much as he enjoyed collaborative music, it took some time to get his instrument under control. “I was never the leader star in all that stuff in high school. We did *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* and I was probably brother number five.”

Starting in Westgate’s choirs as a soprano in grade seven, it wasn’t until grade 11 that his instrument settled into the bass section. Dahl reveals his favourite credit hours to earn during the six years he spent at the school were in vocal ensembles. “For an hour, I didn’t have to ‘study’. That was a very positive experience for me. I wasn’t the most scholastic – I mean, school was all right. I did okay, but I wasn’t like ‘Oh! Ya! Let’s go study!’ Whereas, in choir it



was like, ‘Wow! You can actually get a credit for this?! This is fantastic!’”

Now based in Toronto, Dahl’s career constantly demands the analysis, practice, memorization, and performance of some of the densest dramatic music and most psychologically complex roles in the Western canon. “Let me tell you, I’m studying all the time. That’s the big joke.”

The 2018-19 season began with the Canadian Opera Company singing in the premiere of Rufus Wainwright’s *Hadrian* at the Four Seasons Centre in Toronto. In November, Dahl made his Wagnerian debut with l’Opéra de Montréal as Donner in *Das Rheingold* before coming home for Handel’s *Messiah* with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra in December.

The new year took Dahl to Oregon for a brilliantly unique realization of Humperdinck’s *Hansel und Gretel* in collaboration with Chicago’s shadow puppetry innovators, Manual Cinema. Calgary Opera has claimed him this spring to reprise Verdi’s *Rigoletto* – a role deep in Dahl’s wheelhouse – before diving into his first Dutchman in Wagner’s *Der fliegende Holländer* with Festival Opéra de Québec in the summer – a role he’s been longing to perform. “I mean, this guy is seven years at the bottom of the sea and every seven years he gets shot out by the ocean and he’s gotta look for a faithful woman. It’s the common quest.”



The Baritone Dahl regularly performs works in English, French, German, Italian, Latin and has dabbled in a Russian work or two. It was at Westgate that he began studying German, “which is what I need – I’m still back in German class translating,” he adds. Though he usually kept himself out of trouble, he thinks back with a chortle about “doing crazy things with (fellow Westgate alumnus, now chemist and painter) Garth Giesbrecht and stealing (former Westgate science teacher) Al Klassen’s mug.” He also admits to once filling an entire Westgate locker with empty Coke cans. “Could you imagine? I was hyper enough. Claim to fame. Took some commitment.” In a moment of nostalgia, he recalls the horror of his grade 10 yell-singing in a school production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. “It’s awful. My dad has a recording of it. But I always loved that we put on a show.”

Juvenile antics aside, Dahl feels he was part of a deeply supportive and close-knit community at Westgate. That community continues to invest in its music and theatre programs, fostering a brand new generation of stellar young classical singers including tenor Adam Sperry (‘11), soprano Christina Thanisch-Smith (‘15), and baritone Nick Niebuhr (‘15).

At Westgate, regardless of one’s strengths or weaknesses, Dahl says “you could always find your way.”



WESTGATE ALUMNI ARE OUTSTANDING IN THEIR FIELDS

Jamie Arpin-Ricci

Jonah Langelotz ('10) was drawn to farming when he was faced with one simple question: *Where does my food come from?*

As a student at Canadian Mennonite University at the time, the answer led Langelotz to a practicum on a small organic farm in rural Manitoba where he had the chance to dig his hands into the soil, putting into practice the ideas he'd been studying about. "I value my education at Westgate and at CMU immensely, but I learnt as much with my hands in the soil as I did with my nose in a book, or up against a computer screen," says Langelotz.

From there, Langelotz had the unique opportunity to participate in the Metanoia Farmers program at CMU, learning to farm in the context of community, while also exploring other important aspects of the field, including how to run a business and working co-operatively. His experience left him with an affection for the work and lifestyle of a farmer.

Today, Langelotz farms with both his father and father-in-law near the village of Rosenfeld, where they grow wheat, canola, and soybeans on their 2000 acre plot of land. While largely using conventional farming, he is passionate about learning new ways to be better stewards of the land.

"One thing that I remember a fellow farmer, and one of my most influential mentors, saying a few years back was something along the lines of: 'Over time we become a reflection of the people who we spend time with. So if



you want to do something, surround yourself with people who are doing things you'd like to do."

Langelotz's commitment to sustainable and healthy farming certainly reflect the best of what Westgate alumni represent.

Perhaps it was gardening with his mother in their backyard that set **Marcus Rempel** ('91) on the path that led to his unique life on the land.

From the MCC Native Gardening program to the Wiens Shared Farm CSA, Rempel began to discover where his gifts (and limitations) were to be found. In 2006, Rempel, along with his own family and another family, founded Ploughshares Community Farm, a community where members have each learned to serve their respective "domains," and each member takes some leadership of one area or another.

"Mine have been in the market garden, the woodlot, and the butchering and keeping of hogs, rabbits and a few cattle," explains Rempel. "I experimented with animal traction for a few years, training up a team of oxen that I managed to get to pull some stuff, but never to pull anything in a straight line. In the end, it all turned out to be a learning experience and some high-maintenance hamburger."

Describing their community, Rempel calls their home, "a lifeboat for a storm that is coming sooner or later." Drawn to the more sustainable (if unconventional) way of farming, he believes the unique skills his community members have developed will be invaluable in an uncertain future. Far from idealistic, Rempel knows that such a life comes at a price. "Students interested in agriculture face some big questions. 'Is this going to be a livelihood or a way of life for you?' 'How cash-poor are you willing to become for a life rich in meaning and healthy, outdoor work?' 'It can be a beautiful life, but there are few customers willing to pay you middle class wages for "small is beautiful" farm products when they cannot help but compare prices with foods produced in economies of scale, often with low-wage immigrant labour.'"

Regardless of what the future holds, Marcus Rempel is grateful for the land and community he is a part of, a gratitude that has motivated him to invite others into just such a life.

Despite working on the family farm as a young adult, **William Janzen** ('04) didn't comprehend how integrated and important agriculture is to so many aspects of life and society. Over a decade later, Janzen now partners

with his parents, Jim and Ronalee, in farming their 6000-acre farm.

“After high school, I worked on the farm but didn’t see myself choosing farming as a career,” says Janzen. “I tried university without any direction and struggled through it.” Even when he returned to the farm a couple of years later, he still dabbled in other areas of study, such as broadcasting, welding, and small engine mechanics.



William Janzen

“When I realized those pursuits were not for me, I began to look at farming differently. I decided to take it more seriously and become more involved.”

Today Janzen devotes his energy to growing grains and oilseeds, specifically wheat, canola and soybeans, keeping him on his toes as he continues to discover how complex and valuable agriculture is.

“It is important to many parts of life - not just the food side of things,” says Janzen to anyone considering a future in agriculture. “It is economical, political, environmental, technological.”



Marcus Rempel



Jonah Langelotz



Hello Alumni!

You’re important to us!

And we want to keep in touch to know the good things that are happening in your life and to share what’s happening at Westgate.

If you have stories, births, engagements or other announcements to share, please let us know. If you want to participate or volunteer in any of our events throughout the year, please let us know. If you have an updated address, email, phone or other contact information, please let us know.

Please email me to help us stay “in touch.”

klangelotz@westgatemennonite.org



Karl Langelotz

Westgate
Mennonite
Collegiate
Alumni
Coordinator

WANTED! Class Reunion Volunteers

Let us help you plan your Alumni Reunion. If you need assistance in contacting your fellow grads for your Alumni Reunion, please contact Karl Langelotz:

klangelotz@westgatemennonite.org



LIFE AT WESTGATE AN INTRODUCTION TO CANADA

Alexis Dirks

Few of us can imagine what it would be like to move away from our parents at age 14, to go to school in another country, to live with a host family, and to make new friends, all in a language which was not our native tongue. Ji-Hae Kim and her older brother Hyun Woo, came to Westgate in 1996 as International students from South Korea, leaving the city of Boon Dang to board with Winnipeg families. Ji-Hae lived with Bob and Cathy Hummelt and their children for three years.

Ji-Hae and I were classmates at Westgate in the late nineties, and I had the opportunity to reconnect with her in Toronto this winter. I asked her about this big move to Canada at such a young age, and if she found it intimidating. She explains that “It wasn’t necessarily difficult, or easy. It just was. I didn’t know what to expect; it’s just the way it was. When you’re young you don’t know as much. You’re more fearless, so you take bigger risks.”

Being fearless and taking a few risks seemed to come naturally to Kim, as did her motivation to work hard and reach her goals. Bob Hummelt remembers Kim’s 5am study sessions before school, when she squeezed in a few hours before a regular day of classes at Westgate, and occasionally he would even find her lying asleep across her books. Kim admits that in Korea

the academic system is geared towards careers which offer a stable future. “You don’t really question it. If you’re a student, you’re supposed to work hard.”

Immersed in a Canadian home and family, Kim’s English communication went from “lots of big hand gestures” to complete fluency. “I remember Cathy would spend 30 minutes with me in the evenings correcting my homework. That’s something that just brings tears to my eyes to think about now. Knowing how busy she was with her children and she made that extra time for me every day. Now that I’m a mother, I don’t know how easily I could find that time.” Cathy warmly recalls that it was a pleasure to welcome Kim into their home. “She had a very positive outlook. She was very driven and she wanted to learn and make her parents proud. We just loved hosting her.”

Those three years in Winnipeg might have been challenging in terms of learning English, but Kim flourished at Westgate. Students and staff alike remember Ji-Hae Kim fondly for her easy laughter, her eagerness to help her peers, and her commitment to achieving her goals. “Westgate was a perfect setting for me, as a newcomer, to feel safe and welcome to learn all my baby steps again. There was always plenty of help when needed, both academically and emotionally, which I am ever grateful for,” says Kim.

Kim excelled academically at Westgate, giving her the opportunity to choose from a number of post-secondary institutions. After graduating in 2000, she went to McGill University and studied anatomy and cell biology, earning both a Bachelor and Master of Science degrees. During the second year of school, she met her future husband, Daniel Suss, who was studying law. Kim found herself uprooted again after finishing her studies in Montreal, this time moving to Australia where she completed a Bachelor of Dentistry degree at the prestigious University of Sydney. A career in this field seemed





like a natural fit for her. She explains, “Dentistry combines creativity with medical knowledge. I thought about studying medicine, but I like to be crafty with my hands, and in dentistry you need to have that dexterity.”

Kim has been practicing for 10 years now, and says she’s right in the sweet spot of her career. “I feel confident in what I do. I’ve already encountered most of the problems that people will have, and I also know my limits.”

She has been at Toronto Beach Dental for over seven years, making the move back to Canada after five years in Australia. Now married to husband Daniel and mother to Harvey 5, Lily 3, and Marcus 1, Kim reflects on parenthood’s influence on her career. “Since I’ve had kids, it’s definitely made me a better dentist. I can relate to my younger patients more, and also to their parents. I can understand what they want and see it from my own perspective. Being a mom, it’s like the ultimate empathy for another human.”

Even while establishing a rewarding career and creating a family, Kim has had yet other ambitious endeavors on her plate. Soon after moving back to Canada, she helped develop a number of successful restaurants with her husband Daniel and his university friend and business partner, Mark Kupfert.

The couple said they’ve always enjoyed making food, and they experimented with recipes from their family homes; Korean flavors, combined with Middle Eastern vegetarian recipes are the inspiration behind the success of



Kupfert & Kim. The first location opened in 2013 in Toronto’s financial district, and has since grown to five other locations in the city, and one in Montreal. The restaurants are based on a model of minimally processed, plant-based food which is affordable and has few negative impacts on the environment.

Kim remembers how they would sell 600 boxes of food during lunch rushes, which was very encouraging and this gave them the confidence to open more locations. The day to day operations are now managed by Daniel and partner Mark, but Kim describes how busy the first few years were getting off the ground. “I would come in the morning and chop vegetables in the kitchen, and then go to work and see a full day of patients, and then return to clean and help close up the restaurant.”

Learning independence at a young age has inspired Kim to keep challenging

herself to take risks in order to reach her goals. She has experienced life in different countries, but intends to keep Canada as her home. “I love Toronto,” she says. “In my neighborhood, there are so many families like mine, and we just understand each other.” Looking back, she reflects on how her parents made such a bold decision for her and her brother, but is grateful that they did. Now her parents visit her regularly, always staying in their home, and often for months at a time. Kim says, “After they leave, Daniel always asks, ‘When are they coming back?’”

Even though I had not seen Ji-Hae in nearly twenty years, she had the same warmth and friendliness that I remember as a teenager. I was touched by her generosity to offer so much of her time, her willingness to invite me into her home and businesses, meet her family, and even cook me dinner! While we hadn’t kept in touch over the years, I was not surprised to learn all about Ji-Hae’s many accomplishments, nor that she still has the same ambition and determination she had as a young Westgater, many years ago.

WESTGATE
2019 SPRING
BURSARY BANQUET
MONDAY
MAY 13
5:30PM REFRESHMENTS
6:30PM DINNER
CANAD INNS POLO PARK
1405 ST. MATTHEWS AVENUE

Admission to this event is complimentary and tickets will not be printed. Please reserve your individual seat, or book a table by contacting Alexa Dirks at 204-775-7111-248 or emailing adk@westgateontario.org. Visit the event page at bit.ly/2yGBdoX.

All donations support the Westgate Bursary Fund.

WESTGATE
ONTC
Inspiring and Empowering students to live as people of faith

HOW CAN I HELP SUPPORT WESTGATE?

As Ozzie says, if 2000 people donated \$1000, our \$2 million building debt would be gone!

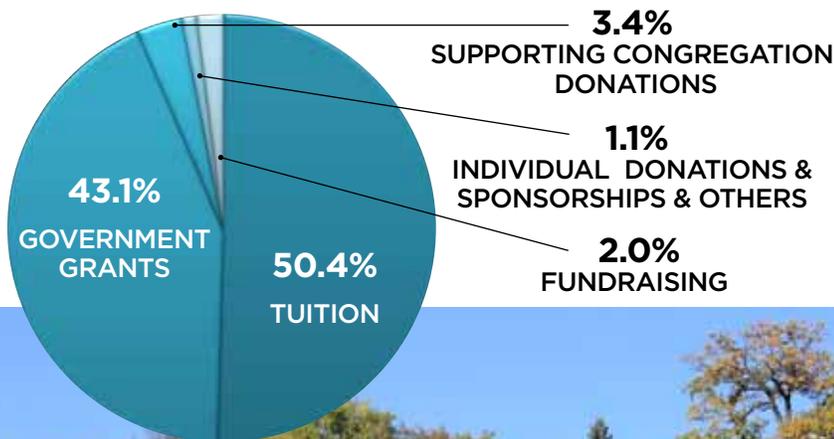
There are many ways to give:

- Credit card (through Canadahelps.org)
- Monthly Pre-authorized giving forms - available at westgatemennonite.ca
- Gifts of stock or securities - facilitated through the Abundance Canada

And It's easy. Giving opportunities include:

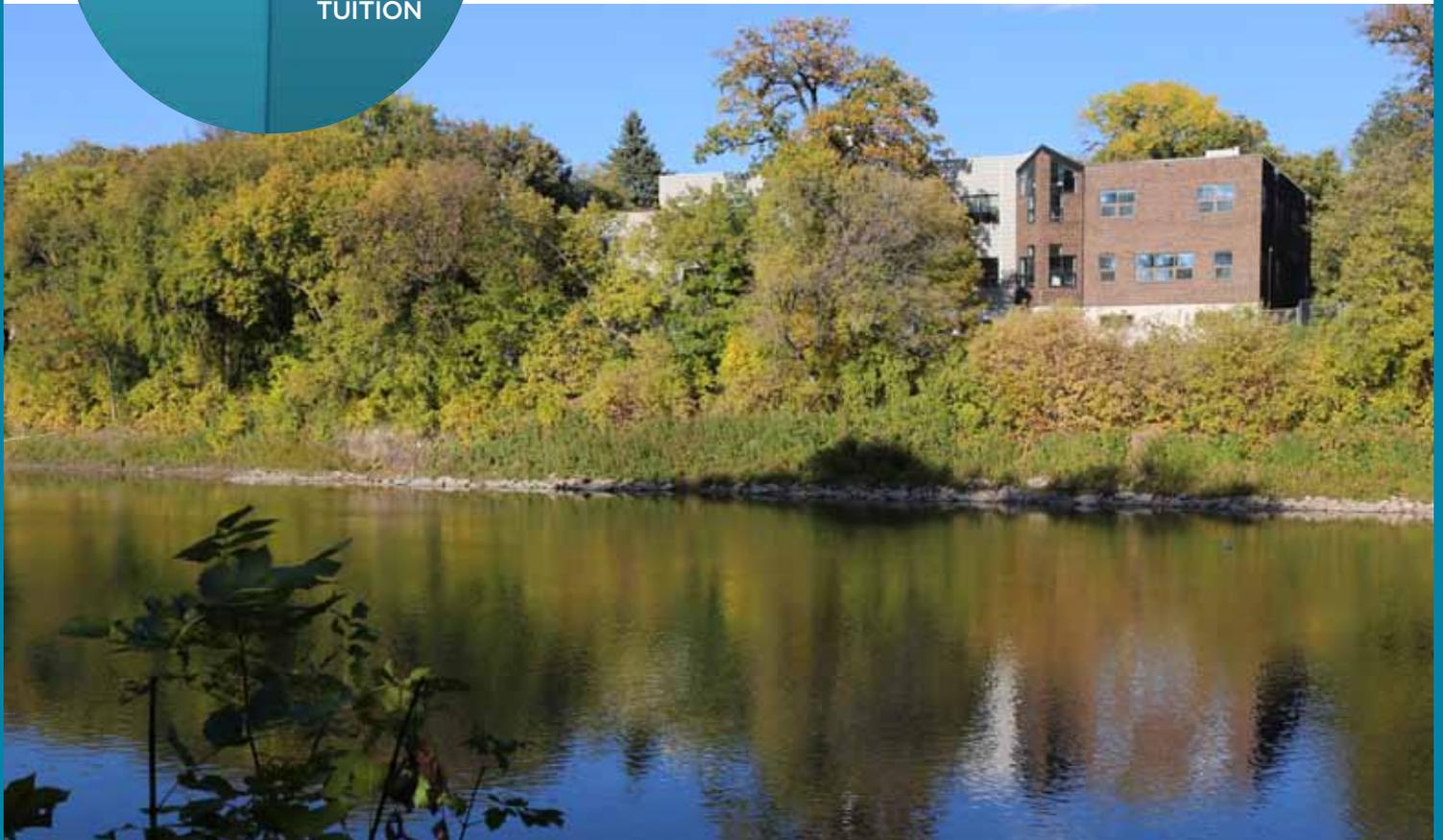
- Capital Campaign (our highest priority)
- Area of greatest need (non-designated gifts)
- Scholarships
- Bursaries
- Designated gifts

A glimpse at Westgate's Operating Revenue Streams 2018



Westgate 2018 Net Fundraising Snapshot

CYCLATHON	\$47,293
WORKDAY	\$32,403
BURSARY BANQUET	\$30,291
GOLF TOURNAMENT	\$23,707
FALL SUPPER	\$35,477



Abundance
CANADA

Donate
NOW
The Westgate Inspiring
Spaces Campaign

 CanadaHelps.org



BENEATH THE SURFACE

Wilma Johnson

We are now well settled into our much improved school building. We have (mostly) found a place for everything and count on Greg Taylor or Ryan Bemister to find a spot for the leftovers. The walls are straighter, the floors are more level and the windows keep the cold out and flood our spaces with glorious light.

One way many of us take advantage of the sunlight streaming in is to place plants in our spaces. Not only lovely to look at, they clean the air and add colour to our currently defoliated winter views. I always take some of the plants from the library home for the summer: sometimes to re-pot them, sometimes just to give them some fresh air. I have two planters with succulents, planted in a growing medium of peat, compost and vermiculite, that spent last summer basking in my gazebo in the backyard and are currently enjoying the afternoon sun on the library windowsills.

Surprisingly, on returning after Christmas break this year I discovered a new plant growing in one of these pots. Definitely a deciduous plant of some sort with a long stem and 4 well-formed, distinct leaves. Puzzling! After a few days I decided to pull it out; it obviously didn't belong with the succulents in these planters. It was harder to pull than I expected. The stem was quite sturdy and an inch or so below the surface there was a lump

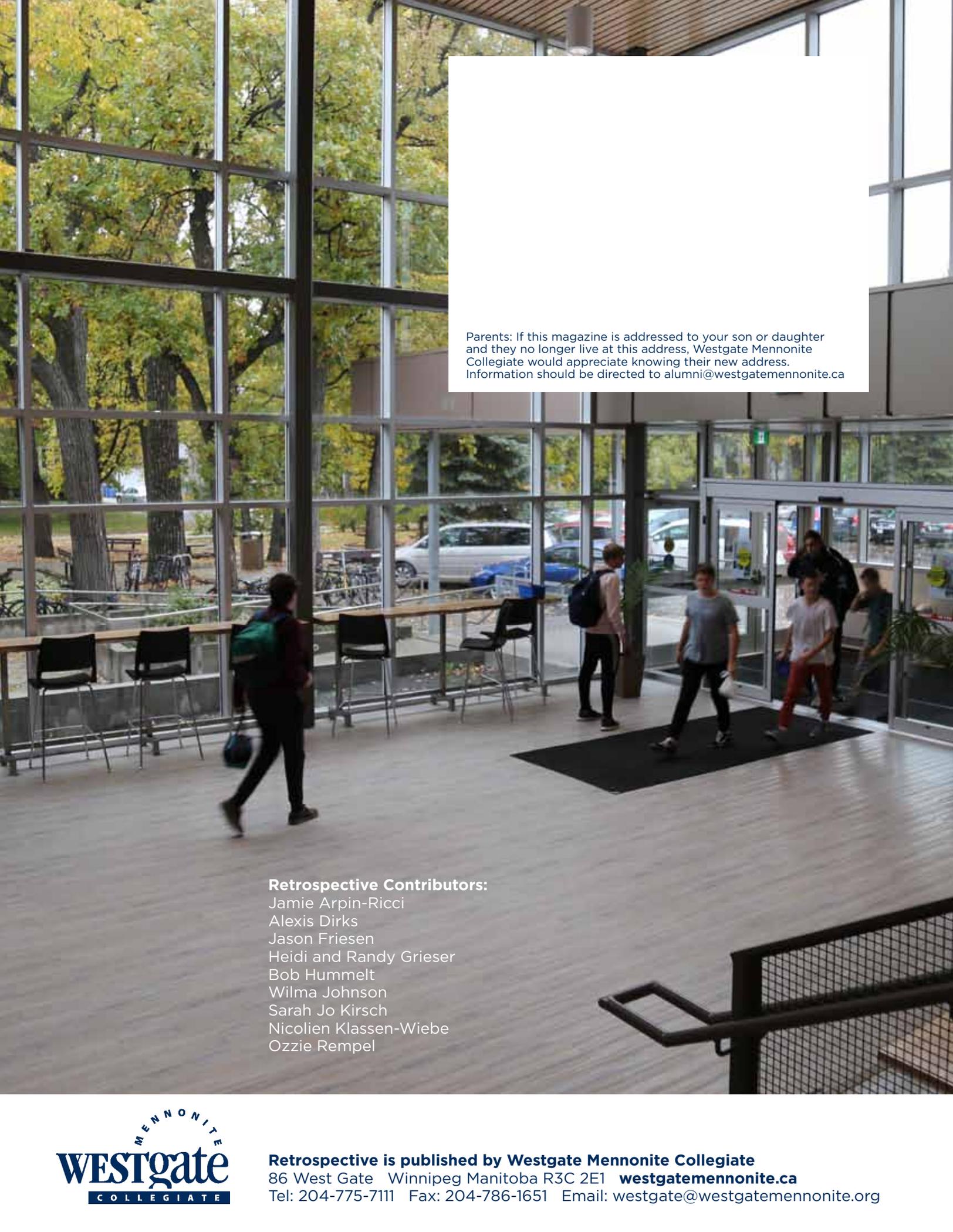
growing on it. I thought, potato? But it seemed unlikely and the leaves didn't match. Cleaning the soil off this protuberance I recognized it as an acorn. An oak tree was growing in the library! I've planted it in a more suitable pot and hope to see it taller and sturdier before my days at Westgate are done, although I believe oak trees are notoriously slow growing.

Walking through the hallways at Westgate I sometimes wonder, "What's beneath the surface - of the students I encounter?" What do we know and what would we be surprised to discover lying in wait. In the library I get to know students in a certain light. I don't always realize who the talented athletes are, who has musical gifts and what roles our students play outside the school setting. When encountering students years after graduation, I find it fascinating to see the "kids" as extraordinarily accomplished adults. It was there, just below or peeking above the surface, and we at Westgate get to nurture and "water" and get the occasional glimpse of what's germinating. Transplanting these capable young people out into the world where their parents, friends, instructors and employers continue to nurture and

encourage them, their branches of skill, knowledge, faith and compassion have a chance to bloom to their full potential. I envision a forest of those who have benefited from Westgate's unique growing medium. Granted, some of us are pretty gnarly specimens by now, but the continued population of saplings surrounding us keep us strong and allow our "ecosystem" to flourish.

I do feel a little sorry, though, for the poor squirrel who's been looking for the winter snack he stashed away last summer.





Parents: If this magazine is addressed to your son or daughter and they no longer live at this address, Westgate Mennonite Collegiate would appreciate knowing their new address. Information should be directed to alumni@westgatemennonite.ca

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