

A WESTGATE PERSPECTIVE

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MENNONITE
WESTgate
COLLEGIATE

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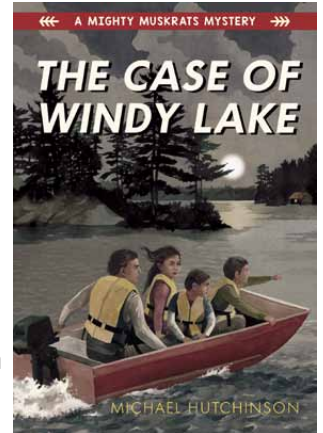
Responding to Calls

BY RAYA CORNELSEN AND HEIDI KOOP

This school is built on Treaty 1 Territory. These lands are the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Ininiwak, Dakota, and Nakota Nations and the homeland of the Metis Nation. We are grateful to the Indigenous Peoples for their stewardship of this land and the hospitality that enables our community to learn, worship, and serve God the Creator here. We acknowledge the harms that the settler community has brought upon the Indigenous Peoples of this land. As a school grounded in the peace tradition, we want to work for reconciliation.

For years, students, staff, and the broader community have called Westgate to take seriously the historic and present realities of Indigenous communities with whom we share this land, including lament for trauma, respect for worldview and celebration of varied and vibrant Indigenous cultures. These calls draw out our responsibility as an educational institution to teach truth, and as an Anabaptist-Mennonite institution to take action. Recently, we have begun to formalize the various strands of our response to create a more

consistent plan through the work of a Volunteer Staff Committee. Although we know we will make mistakes as we engage in this work, we are eager to begin our part in the journey towards respectful reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.



While education does not always happen formally, how teachers design courses frames conversations and attitudes. Many of our teachers have been looking at learning resources to integrate Indigenous perspectives into their curricula. This year in grade 7 ELA, students began their course with a focus on Indigenous literature. In his novel *The Case of Windy Lake*, author Michael Hutchinson, citizen of the Misipawistik Cree Nation in the Treaty 5 territory north of Winnipeg, writes about four cousins growing up on Windy Lake First Nation who are trying to solve the mystery of a missing archeologist. The hope is that through this novel study, Westgate students will build intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.

Currently, a student action group open to all grades meets at lunch hours to discuss and plan ways of acknowledging consequences of settler harm to Indigenous communities and ways of enacting truth and reconciliation in our community.

Westgate relies heavily on our community for all of our programs and initiatives. We encourage you to listen and respond to the calls around you, and to collaborate with us and your wider community in seeking truth and reconciliation.

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New Staff

BY NATALIE JOHNSON

Meet our newest staff members! It is no surprise that a big part of what makes Westgate such a wonderful place to be, are the smiling faces that greet you and support you while you are in this place.



EMILY REMPEL is a CMU music graduate who shares her skills in many ways at Westgate whether that be through worship leading at chapel or supporting students as an educational assistant. "I love that I never know what to expect day to day! We can be doing activities, assisting with learning new skills, and most of all just making education work for all kids."



EMILY ENNS brings experience and positivity in her new role as an educational assistant with Westgate. Emily is familiar with Westgate as she is well connected with one of our supporting churches, Sargent Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. "I have really appreciated coming here. I have loved seeing the care that is put in by teachers and all the staff into supporting students in an individualized way that is very unique to Westgate."



LYDIA EPP joined Westgate after graduating from the University of Winnipeg with a degree in anthropology and history. Lydia has experience working as a community connector with River East Transcona School Division. With her joy, expertise, and passion about making education accessible to all, Lydia is a great fit as an education assistant at Westgate. "I have really enjoyed watching students find their success and being able to work with them to get them to that place."



NATALIE JOHNSON is a CMU social sciences and communications graduate who loves storytelling, gathering with others, the outdoors, and photography. "I am incredibly thankful for the warm welcome I have gotten from both faculty and students. Some of my highlights so far have been capturing big school moments (Move-a-thon, chapels, sporting events, and Halloween events). I look forward to continuing to connect and make many more memories at Westgate!"

Gifted Student Services Staff

BY HELEN JANZEN

Westgate Student Services has been gifted with exceptional educational assistants. Sadly, two of them have left our midst for other ventures: Terina Henry for retirement and Lindsey Perera for Ontario.



We were fortunate to have **LINDSEY** join our team in September 2019. She would always welcome students with a smile and showed genuine interest in what every student was excited about. Lindsey brought with her extensive knowledge of all

classroom subjects and the innate ability to connect and understand a student. As a result, she knew just how to motivate students to do their best, celebrating with any and all accomplishments they made along the way, big or small.



TERINA always had the students' best interests at heart. She came to Westgate in September of 2011 bringing with her immeasurable experience and extensive knowledge of students and their diverse needs.

Students who worked with Terina quickly recognized how fortunate they were to have an educator with wonderful listening skills, the ability to quickly discern the best approach to their problems, and someone who would advocate on their behalf. In addition, she valued her relationships with every student and staff she worked with. "While at Westgate I enjoyed the challenge and reward of working with and learning from students and staff dedicated to working towards and achieving personal goals."

We were all very fortunate to be able to work with such remarkable people. We miss them dearly and wish them well!

Move-a-thon

BY LYNDON BAERG

Moveathon is a Westgate event created to combine fun physical activity with one of our annual fundraising events. Students had the opportunity to take part in a number of events that ranged from a 25, 40 or 100 km bike ride, or walks that ranged from 12-17 km. All activities were centred around a school wide barbecue meal in Assiniboine Park.

The day was beautiful and students had a great time! We'd like to say thank you as well to the students and donors who helped the school raise \$66,374.00 dollars this year. These funds will help fund student events and keep reasonable tuition costs for students. Thank you to the parent volunteers for helping with this event.







Peer Support

BY CRYSTAL THIESSEN



The Peer Support Team is made up of students from Grades 9-12 who have been nominated by their peers. They meet regularly to learn and discuss ways they can best support their peers. The team brings school wide awareness to topics such as mental health, gender and sexuality, body image, racism, and healthy relationships. They work hard to make Westgate a

welcoming, caring, respectful and inclusive space for everyone. Each year they help run the new student orientation, host a chilli lunch for the grade 6/7 students which builds a bridge between the younger and older students at Westgate, and plan activities for Day of Pink (International Day Against Bullying).

“Being on Peer Support provides me with an opportunity to not only appreciate what makes Westgate such an inviting place, but also to come up with ways we can make Westgate even more inclusive and welcoming. It also allows me to make connections to students in other grades that otherwise wouldn’t be that strong.”

- Rebecca Loewen
(pictured in top photo: back row, far right)



Student Highlights

BY NATALIE JOHNSON



Mia Dasch, Emily Froese, Astrid Franz-Warkentin, and Luca Matyas were all recently awarded their Sprachdiplom B1 certificates. The B1 Sprachdiplom language certificate is an examination and assessment process for German as a foreign/second language. Students worked very hard to prepare and are thrilled with the results. The students were presented with a certificate from German language consultant, Mr. Andreas Meckes, along with a letter of congratulations from the German Consulate in Toronto.



Sarah Nason is a proud member of the Winnipeg Phoenix Premier 1 soccer team.

The Premier 1 program provides strong leadership and foundation for athletes that aspire to reach the highest level. What Sarah

loves most about playing in this division is the intensity of the

sport, the many people she has met along the way, and the friendships she has built on her team.

Erik was born in Saskatoon in 2007 and began skating when he was 3 years old. Erik got his first pair of speed skates (long blades) when he was 6 years old. He skated with the Saskatoon Lions Speed Skating Club for 9 years and competed across western Canada (while playing hockey as well). When he moved to Winnipeg



in 2018 with his family, he joined the Manitoba Provincial Development Speed Skating Team and skated 4 times a week. This fall he was invited to join the Manitoba Provincial Team and participated in his first International Skating Union (ISU) Can Am International Long Track Competition at the Calgary Olympic Oval. Erik spent the whole week in a training camp and then had a great meet, achieving personal bests in all of his races. Erik loves to skate long track (outside at Susan Auch Oval) and short track (Corydon Community Centre); he loves the camaraderie of the sport even though it is an individual sport as all the skaters cheer each other on. Erik is now a coach's assistant with the Winnipeg Central Speed Skating Club and is teaching new skaters the joy of the sport.



Westgate was well represented at the Volleyball Manitoba Awards on Saturday, December 11. Harry Ens, Rowan Krahn, Sammy Ludwig, and Nolan Gawne were named Graduating All Stars. Sammy and Rowan were named to the Volleyball Manitoba All Star Team. Sammy received the Dennis Nord Award Winner (MVP for this season). Westgate coach Maiya Westwood was named 4A coach of the year. Congratulations everyone!



Wings Athletics Take Off!

BY JEN HOW

After more than a year of sitting on the sidelines, Westgate athletics have returned! Our varsity boys (Rowan Krahn, Harry Ens, Carter Sagel, Cruz Correia) hit the links in the pouring rain in the SCAC **GOLF** Competition in September to kick off our return to interschool athletics, finishing in 7th place.



After missing two regular seasons, Westgates **ULTIMATE** teams were more than ready to be on the field. With heart and drive, both the middle and highschool teams competed at the *Hold Back the Snow* tournament hosted by SJR in Fall 2021. We anticipate an exciting return to the regular season in spring.



Meanwhile back in the gym, the **VOLLEYBALL** season was a smash! The varsity boys dominated the courts in an undefeated season winning the elusive 4A championship title.

► [Read article here](#)

The last time this title was won by a Westgate volleyball team was in 1978. The varsity girls continued to play with determination that took them to the provincial quarter finals. The junior varsity girls finished strong in the provincial finals. All teams represented Westgate well and should be extremely proud of themselves.



A small
school.
Doing **BIG**
things.





Our **CROSS COUNTRY** teams, led by coaches Jarrett Rempel and Doug Durksen, competed in two races and earned outstanding results. Luke Townsend came away with 1st and 2nd place finishes in varsity boys, and Lena Klassen with a 1st in both races in varsity girls. Lena's accomplishments on the trail also earned her an MHSAA Athlete of the Week award. While the zone championship was cancelled, they hope to resume the season in spring.

Thanks to all of our coaches for their hard work and dedication to our programs. We look forward to lots more action and excitement as we move through our sport seasons.

► [Read MHSAA article](#)



LENA KLASSEN

AWARD
DAIRY FARMERS OF MANITOBA ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

SPORT
BASKETBALL, CROSS COUNTRY

AWARD DATE
OCT 20, 2021

SCHOOL
WESTGATE MENNONITE COLLEGIATE

The Dairy Farmers of Manitoba Urban High School Athlete of the Week is Lena Klassen of the Westgate Wings Cross Country team. Lena recently lead the Wing's varsity girl's cross country team to two consecutive wins at SCAC meets. She finished first in both races, outpacing her nearest rival by more than a minute. Cross Country Coach Doug Durksen states, "Lena is a leader on the team, but not just in the standings. She supports and encourages teammates to do their best, and is a big part of making cross country at Westgate a good time." This grade 11 honour role student maintains a 98% academic average.

Westgate Athlete Represents on the National Stage



Sam Ludwig was a member of the U19 National Program. Sam spent his summer training in British Columbia. Sam is the starting setter of our #1 4A ranked varsity boys volleyball team. Sam and left side hitter Rowan Krahn will join Isaak Fast (class of 2019) as members of the Bisons next season.



A Broader Reading Experience

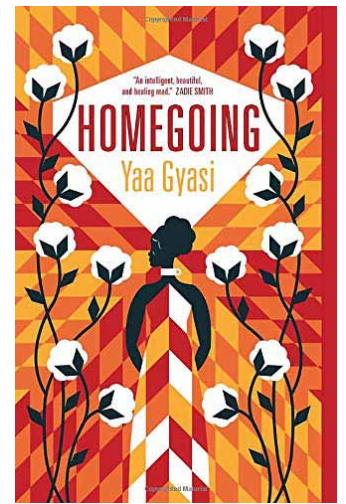
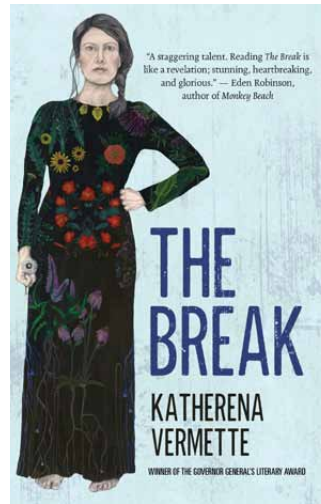
BY ADAM KLASSEN BARTEL

For many, it is through art that we find a window to lives different than our own.

Over the last few years ELA teachers at Westgate have put in effort to reflect a greater diversity in the authors of the books taught in class.

When Jeremy Siemens began teaching grade 10 ELA he noticed that texts were often from the same perspective, not to mention time periods far removed from students' current experiences. "I sought to bring in contemporary texts from authors who provide a range of experiences," including Katherena Vermette's *The Break* and Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*. With these additions to his program, Jeremy Siemens has found that, along with many other benefits, he spends less time providing era-specific context and more time discussing the themes and artistic styles of books.

In her grade 7 ELA class Heidi Koop's students get to choose from a list of novels for a guided book club. "I



am always looking for a way to make my classroom a safe learning environment for all students, but I am also encouraging students to develop empathy, respect, and understanding beyond their own experience. Books can play a vital role in this. Recently, I've been adding books that help students to develop anti-racist perspectives, appreciation for Indigenous experiences, and an understanding for different gender identities."



As Westgate ELA teachers continue to work at broadening their curricula with the new texts and new genres, Westgate students will be given the opportunity to read classics of the Western canon, graphic novels, short stories, fantasies, dystopian fiction and many other diverse genres. Through reading such a wide range of material, by such a wide range of authors, they will hopefully get to see themselves reflected, see the complexities of the world, and have a window into the experiences of people completely different than they are.

Westgate is Alive With the Sound of Music!

BY ROSS BROWNLEE



Voices, strings, wind and brass instruments are once again alive and well at Westgate! There is collective joy and even a little giddiness at returning to music-making after a long and challenging shutdown!

I believe I can speak for Mr. Pankratz, Ms. Bell, Ms. BW, and all music teachers, when saying we felt a collective swell of excitement and relief when we learned the restrictions put in place from the pandemic were to be lifted. Yet nobody wanted to get too excited for fear they might return! But (knock on wood!) they haven't, and currently we are singing and playing with careful protections to mitigate the chances of any virus spreading.

Our students are amazing - they are picking up from wherever we left off nearly two years ago, and have gleaming smiles on their faces (behind their masks, of course) while singing and playing. We teachers have had

to redesign courses to accommodate for the missed practice time, but compared to designing music courses without making music, this is a piece of cake! Collectively, there is a sense of appreciation and relief at returning to the pleasures of collegial music-making. I'm happy to share that we are working towards a Christmas concert, in which all our music students



There is collective joy and even a little giddiness at returning to music-making after a long and challenging shutdown!

from the choirs, strings and bands will have the opportunity to rehearse in Westminster United Church, and then perform for each other. Although not quite the same as our traditional Christmas concert, having the chance to share music in such a fine venue is a massive step towards reintegrating our full music program. We are thrilled for this exciting opportunity!

▶ [We invite you to listen to it here](#)

We look forward to making music for you in person, but until then, please look for our students in video performances and live-streamed events. Meanwhile we are joyfully singing and playing, enjoying our music fellowship together, and rebuilding the music team!

▶ [Watch 2020 Christmas Concert](#)





BY JAMES FRIESEN

It all started rather innocently. After explaining the way graduation was going to unfold, with groups of students at different times, entering the school and exiting carefully, one student quietly said, “But we want to graduate together.”

And so, without any assurance, we decided to move the graduation ceremony date into August, hoping that restrictions would lessen and we could be together to celebrate. It turned out to be a fortuitous decision as we were able to gather together at Bethel Mennonite Church, masked but smiling, with every graduate and all their parents attending.



It was a beautiful service. Students and parents were spread throughout the sanctuary and although we didn't have a rehearsal before the event, we somehow managed to move through the event with grace and elegance. After the ceremony, it was a delight to dine together, inviting each graduating student to stand as we read their tributes written by Westgate staff.



Truth be told, Westgate teachers at the event were walking rather gingerly, recovering from the event the day before: The first annual Westgate Grads vs Teachers soccer game. Yes, it was a battle between the wizened and grizzled battle hardened teachers and the fleet of foot grads. Although the teachers went into the last third of the match holding a 2-1 lead, youthful energy won out in the end with the grads winning 3 - 2. By next summer, the teachers should have recovered enough to give the 2022 grads a run for their money.

Looking back over the last few years, we are so grateful for Westgate staff, parents, and students who made it possible to have a full and meaningful graduation for our class of '20 and class of '21. Every single Westgate grad was able to be a part of these celebrations, something that has meant so much in a time when we have felt so isolated and separated.



Hello Alumni!

You're important to us!

We want to know the good things that are happening in your life. Please let us know if you have exciting announcements:

- births
- marriages
- big life events

If you have new contact information, please let us know so we can keep you informed on the latest news and events happening at Westgate!

► [Update info here](#)

SAVE
THE
DATE

Musical
Variety
Show

Saturday
March 12, 2022

West End
Cultural Centre

MENNONITE
WESTgate
COLLEGIATE



New **FREE** Westgate Wear



Available for the
Children of Alumni



NEW! - Onesies, T2 & T4
Plus a new design for older
kids (sizes: Youth, S, M, L)

► [Order Here](#)

Weddings



Erin Blaine ('11) married Derek Purvis Summer 2021. Erin is still enjoying playing rec volleyball. She graduated from U of M with a masters in physiotherapy in 2018 and is working as a physiotherapist in Winnipeg.



Rachel Hildebrand ('08) married Brandon Arbour August 2021. After seven years in Vancouver working with WestJet for a big portion of that time, Rachel is settling into life in Barrie, Ontario. She is enjoying new work as the business operations coordinator with a startup company called Simcoe Harvest.



Alex Friesen ('14) married Naomi Klassen on July 23rd 2021. Alex recently graduated as a paramedic and is now enjoying his first position as a paramedic in Western Manitoba.

Births



Gavin Ewert ('10) and Anica Martin are pleased to announce the safe arrival of Sage Walden (with Anica) and Leif Aurelius (with Gavin) August, 2021. Everyone is doing well. They live just north of Gimli and are enjoying the delights of parenting and market gardening.



Ziggy Jane Boyd born in August, 2021 to parents Jami (Krahn '08) and Shawn Boyd. Pictured here with Odin – the big GREY dog.



Rey Victoria Stephenson born in September, 2021 to parents Alexis Dirks ('00) and Jared Stephenson.

Deaths



Henry Dyck ('58) died on September 18, 2021. Pictured here with his wife Elsie and six Westgate grandsons (Jake, Josh and Adam Fast – Micah, Seth and Matthaeus Dyck). Look for a longer article in the next Westgate Retrospective which will celebrate the many contributions of Henry's work with Westgate as fundraiser, building project committee member and board member. Condolences to all classmates, friends, and family.

Catching Up with Alumni



Amy Groening ('07) has had a busy year in front of the camera. In 2021, Amy has been cast in many films including: *Bone*

Cage, *Snowkissed*, *A House On Fire*, *Wouldn't It Be Nice*, and is currently filming *Tis the Season to be Merry*. Amy has been nominated for Best Actress in a Supporting Role at the Canadian Screen Awards. Tune into her interview with CBC's Faith Fundal to hear more.



Watch CBC Interview



Watch out for **Carson Kroeker** ('20) coming to a big screen near you! Carson plays son Colin in Hallmark's new Christmas film *A Kiss Before Christmas*. Filmed in Downtown Winnipeg with actors James Denton and Teri Hatcher, this is a sure to watch holiday film. (Photo: Copyright 2021 Crown Media United States LLC/ Photographer: Ian McCausland)



Please share with perspective families!

You are invited to attend the following events to learn more about Westgate:



- **Discover Westgate Open House**
Sunday, January 30th
1:30 Doors open, 2:00 Student led tours begin Parents and children of all ages are welcome.
All guests 12 and up must show proof of vaccination at the door.



- **Grade 8 Day**
Friday, February 11th
9:00am-12:15pm A Discover Westgate Event for Current Grade Eight Students. *Your child is welcome to bring a friend to join in this adventure. All guests 12 and up must show proof of vaccination at the door.*
And "Yes", they need to miss their own regular school to attend this.



- **Grade 6 Day**
Friday, February 4th
9:00am-12:15pm A Discover Westgate Event for Current Grade Six Students. *Your child is welcome to bring a friend to join in this adventure.*
And "Yes", they need to miss their own regular school to attend this.



- **One-on-One Tours**
available most days.
Register on our website or call the school office to arrange a tour. Parents and children of all ages are welcome.
All guests 12 and up must show proof of vaccination at the door.



- **Grade 5 Day**
Friday, February 4th
9:00am-12:15pm A Discover Westgate Event for Current Grade Five Students. *Your child is welcome to bring a friend to join in this adventure.*
And "Yes", they need to miss their own regular school to attend this.



- **Shadow Days**
available most days.
Enjoy a time at the school in regular classes being buddied up with a current Westgate student host. Half or full days possible. Register on our website or call the school office to arrange a tour.
All guests 12 and up must show proof of vaccination at the door.

Register online or give us a call!

Westgate Mennonite Collegiate is a Christian school grounded in the Anabaptist tradition. It is the mission of the school to provide a well-rounded education, which will inspire and empower students to live as people of God.

westgatemennonite.ca ☎ 204-775-7111

