

# A WESTGATE Retrospective 2024



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# Westgate's Vision in Today's World

JAMES FRIESEN

This school year, I have been made keenly aware about the way our community speaks about the world and our place in it.

Westgate staff and students visit each of our supporting churches every other year. On these visits, our music program and students lead the congregation in worship. We call these visits our "Westgate Worships" events.

Our first "Westgate Worships" was shortly after the horrific Hamas attack in October, days into the relentless bombardment of Gaza. In my reflection that Sunday, I recalled my time in Gaza City in 2000 when my family lived there during our MCC term. Specifically, I recalled a

condolence visit we made to a local home.

Our neighbors' two year old daughter had died not from the violence in that part of the world, but because she had fallen into the fountain area of their courtyard and drowned. It was

finished it, both my wife and I said "daiyman" like we always did when we had coffee, an expression meaning that we hope to have coffee together many times in the future.

After an awkward silence, the whole family started laughing.

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*[We] speak differently as we try to understand real people, children of God, going through real lives, laughing, crying, trying to make sense of life*

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truly tragic. We had practiced our expressions of condolence and we said them correctly. Once the Arabic coffee came and we

One of them explained that we had basically told the family that they should "always" experience pain like this. We learned very quickly that one does not say "daiyman" on a condolence visit.

And in this singular story about one family in Gaza, I noted that as the world debates crimes of genocide, whether the use of force is balanced or justifiable or commensurate, whether rights of defence are legitimate, what we need to condemn, what we need to protest, our community speaks differently as we try to understand real people, children of God, going through real lives, laughing, crying, trying to make sense of life.

On subsequent "Westgate Worships" as the bombardment



Students at a Westgate Worships service at Douglas Mennonite Church. Photo credit: James Friesen





Westgate students try to decide how much they want to spend on scarves in the Old City of Jerusalem. Photo Credit: Kevin Friesen

of Gaza intensified, I kept seeing and recalling our different way of speaking. I was reminded again and again that we use the radical language of love and non-violence, the language that urges us to respond to evil by loving our enemies, a language that gives us the foundation to see all people as real people created in the image of God.

In June of 2023 on a Westgate Middle East Trip, I left the students for a bit and ambled into a small art shop in the midst of the Old City of Jerusalem. There, I fell in love with a print created by the Palestinian artist Sliman Mansour.

Now, I feel pretty good about my bargaining prowess but as I began the interaction with the shopkeeper, I was caught unawares by a master. He stopped me dead in my tracks as he said: “Listen. I don’t want to do you the

disservice of reducing the price. You wouldn’t appreciate it as much if you paid less.”

It is now hanging on our wall, a piece of art I paid far too much for. I love the artwork, the breaking of perspective rules, the impossible tree bearing both oranges and olives, the enlarged hands caring for the family, the warm red sand juxtaposed against the cool blue water.



Sliman Mansour’s “Family Tree”

Although the print is simply called “Family Tree” and its focus is on the ties Palestinians have to the land, I can’t help but see the holy family on their way to Egypt, mourning the massacre of the infants, resting beside the Mediterranean somewhere in the Gaza strip, the old story being made new over and over again.

As I look upon Mary and Joseph, in their hunched forms, I now see that they are doing something remarkable. Their eyes are closed while Jesus’ eyes are open. They are allowing Jesus to look upon the world for them, and that look is not a placid look saying that everything is okay, but an angry and forceful look imploring us to stop killing our infants, to stop destroying our world.

Whenever I look upon this print, I have to acknowledge that I have difficulty following the lead of Mary and Joseph. I find it difficult to close my eyes and allow Jesus to be my vision.

But Westgate and its church community pulls me in a different direction. It forces me to close my eyes and try to see the world as Jesus sees it, a good world created by a loving God, a world in which we need to respond to evil with the fervent non-violent love of Jesus, a world in which despite everything we do to destroy it, God is ultimately still in control.

This vision is at the foundation of our school and our mission. I have loved being reminded about that this year, and I thank you all for walking with us on this important journey together.

# Intercontinental Connections: Stories from Westgate Alumni's Time with MCC

BRYN FRIESEN EPP ('17)

After graduation, some Westgate alumni find opportunities within Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) programs to expand their perspectives. Sharing a strong affiliation with Anabaptist traditions, Westgate's curriculum and vision and MCC's world-wide programs resonate with the same theological history. This shared resonance both attracts Westgate alumni to MCC programs and provides a familiar framework for their perspectives, first fostered at Westgate, to branch out and become intercontinentally entangled with diverse stories.

Declan Moulden ('14) worked with MCC's year-long Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. From August 2022 until July 2023, Declan's role with MCC was to be a "Capacity Builder," someone who would travel to meet with MCC's partner organizations to find out what they were interested in and what they wanted to learn. Going into his time with SALT, Declan hoped that this position would give him "a bit more wisdom and a bit more experience" in whatever he

decided to do when he returned. However, in response to a military coup and continuing violence in Burkina, MCC canceled all travel outside of Ouagadougou for international staff a week before Declan arrived.

Declan's role had to change, dramatically limiting his interactions with MCC partner organizations. Amid the struggle of shifting expectations, Declan found community within a local group of students who invited him to join their weekly Saturday morning study group. Used to competitive and individualized

North American standards, Declan was struck by the respect, collaboration, and consideration within the friend group. "I was really touched," Declan reflects, "and it has changed a bit of my thoughts about relationships and friendships, the things that I value in friends." Although partially a result of an unexpected change of plans, Declan carries this wisdom forward as a welcome change in perspective.

In addition to the SALT program, MCC has recently started to offer another program for young adults called SEEK. Caleb Friesen



Declan Moulden ('14) spent a year in Burkina Faso between August 2022 and July 2023 with MCC's Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program.



Caleb Friesen Epp ('22) was one of thirteen young adults in MCC's five-month SEEK exploration and learning program in 2023, when it was located in Palestine.



Epp ('22) participated as one of thirteen young adults in this five-month exploration and learning program in 2023, when it was located in Palestine. For Caleb, it was Bethlehem Bible College, the place he spent the most time and became the most familiar, that grew into the site of deepest connection. There, Caleb had time to talk with both the Palestinian SEEK participants and students of the college, and was challenged by many conversations. "Our discussion about theology, the Bible, whatever else," Caleb reflects, "included their perspectives as well which challenged ours because we came from a privileged point of view."

Hearing Palestinians tell of their experiences of decades of violent oppression, Caleb's

understanding of Christian non-violence was nuanced within a new landscape. "We were talking about peacemaking and how to be nonviolent in situations, and the North American participants had a very privileged way of looking at it while the Palestinian participants had the experience of being nonviolent in very real violent events." The new perspectives and connections that he found within these conversations were a highlight of his time with MCC. "That was probably my favorite part," he said, "the relationships made between the cultures."

As Declan and Caleb continue to reflect and learn from their time with MCC, Garrett Walker ('20) and Lia Campbell-Enns ('22) are part of a seven-member SEEK

Lia is excited for these connections to deepen. "I am looking forward to hearing stories from Cambodians who have survived the Khmer Rouge," she says, referring to radicalized Cambodian politics and an intense American bombing campaign in the 1970s. As their new relationships grow, Lia and Garrett's new friends will not only continue to aid them in their navigation of a new culture, but will also challenge Lia and Garrett to consider and be changed by stories they share.

Whether it be new wisdom about friendship or new understandings about pacifism, Westgate alumni have found and continue to find new perspectives through participation in MCC's programs. Even Declan and Caleb, who have completed their time with MCC, continue to learn from their intercontinental connections. "I feel like it's still not quite written," Declan says, reflecting on how his time with SALT has changed him. "I'll admit I feel really terrified for all my friends and everybody in Burkina with the military situation as it is." Caleb also feels the devastation of violence in new ways. "The violence, what we hear over the news, is portrayed as numbers, but it's more than that, it's people's lives," he says. "It puts things into a new perspective, it makes things real."

These ongoing stories inform how Declan, Caleb, Garrett, and Lia will live their lives, a reminder that we can never unmake connection. Whether intercontinental or local, our relationships will always continue to form, change and challenge us.

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*Whether it be new wisdom about friendship or new understandings about pacifism, Westgate alumni have found and continue to find new perspectives through participation in MCC's programs.*

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Garrett Walker ('20) and Lia Campbell-Enns ('22) are part of a seven-member SEEK group that is currently in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

group that is currently in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Already, they are making new relationships among the Indigenous Khmer people. "Communication is definitely a challenge," Garrett says, having only had two short weeks of language classes. "Thank goodness for Google Translate and Khmer friends." Faced with the immediate challenges of communication, the experiences of the SEEK participants in Cambodia are already dependent on and shaped by their new relationships.

# Computer Science Courses Programming Grads for Success

JASON FRIESEN ('13)

Can you imagine our world without computers? Their influence is immense as they feed us information, navigate for us, entertain us, and more.

With the impact computers have on our day-to-day lives, the field of computer science is an important one in our society. Many Westgate alumni have gone on to pursue education, careers, and recreation in the computer science field. As shown by the paths of the three grads below, there are many ways to impact the world through computers - protecting others, building community, providing service, and more.



June's interest in video games has led her to pursue video game design at Red River.

## ■ June Pagé ('13)

June Pagé's passion for video games has led her to now finishing studies in 3D art at Red River College Polytechnic's Video Game Development program.

Though she tried out the Computer Science program at the U of M after honing her knowledge at Westgate, that program wasn't for her. Her computer science knowledge continued to prove valuable while working at GameKnight, a Winnipeg game store, as she optimized routine tasks for the retailer and developed their website.

She also got involved with the Winnipeg Game Collective - a video game development meetup group for those pursuing it professionally or as a hobby. Pagé now helps run the group and their game jams - something that garnered a spot in Ace Burpee's

100 Most Fascinating Manitobans of 2023. Game jams are events that see participants develop video games over the course of 48 or 72 hours.

"Over the course of a game jam, people are making art, doing programming, doing game design," explained Pagé. "You go from having a one or two-word theme to having a little game. It might be only two minutes of gameplay, but it's really cool."

Though her focus is on 3D art now, having studied computer science at Westgate and U of M will continue to serve Pagé well in pursuing work in the video game industry.

"I'm working with programmers in my schooling right now, but I'm still able to talk on the same level with them and actually give useful suggestions about how to handle certain problems."



David's pursuits led to work on server infrastructure, cybersecurity, and linguistics.

### ■ David Dyck ('17)

David Dyck works at Security Resource Group - a company providing world-class cybersecurity services. Computer science has been an interest of his forever. By the time Dyck entered a computer science course at Westgate, he had developed a program to track cyber attacks and he knew most of the content in the high school curriculum. Regardless, teachers still found ways to challenge him. "I was able to take the knowledge I had and solidify it into actual foundations," said Dyck. "Teacher Neil Ens allowed us to go at our own pace, and noted I didn't need to listen during lectures and could just do the exercises. We

had a game to see how many I could complete every class and how quickly I could finish the curriculum." Dyck's knowledge led him to participating in a cyber defense challenge in Grade 12 with several friends - a competition they ended up winning. That impressed some industry business leaders serving as judges for the competition, one of whom offered Dyck a job at Bell subsidiary Epic Information Solutions. With Epic, he worked on a project team setting up infrastructure and servers. He also started in cybersecurity, as main area of interest, and graduated from the University of Manitoba with honours degrees in Computer Science and Linguistics while working there.



Upon graduation, Penner found his Westgate computer science classes gave him an edge in university.

### ■ David Penner ('16)

David Penner works at Calian Advanced Technologies - a global supplier providing infrastructure for satellite ground systems.

He found himself interested in computer science due to his love of video games. Prior to courses at Westgate though, he didn't have any experience in the field. That hasn't held him back from finding a career in the industry thanks to the foundation built at Westgate.

"The Westgate computer science classes made transitioning to university easier for me because university assumes you have no computer science experience," said Penner. "The high school courses cover the first semester of the

university courses, which is nice because the first semester of university can be an adjustment."

Penner gained further experience through the co-op program at U of M, where he had the chance to do three different four-month work placements throughout his schooling. His placements took him to Johnston Group, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and Upfeat Media, which presented opportunities to learn different applications for computer science.

Now at Calian Advanced Technologies, Penner's main focus is on a project to develop software to help clients manage their network and see the health of various entities and attributes.



# So... Why Westgate?

COMPILED BY NATALIE JOHNSON

We asked parents to reflect on their experience and their children's experience at Westgate, focusing on these three themes.

## 1. CHOOSING WESTGATE

**What motivated you to choose Westgate Mennonite Collegiate for your child, or why did you choose to attend as a student yourself?**

**Silantoi Kisoso:** WMC checked all the boxes for me - strong academic and art programs, extracurricular activities, community atmosphere and I like that children have an opportunity to also travel the world in their high school grade.

**Heba Gamal:** We chose Westgate for our two oldest daughters because we really value their academic excellence and strong German Program. The Management is very supporting and attentive to both children and parents.

**Lucy Payette:** Our son chose Westgate! His father had attended Westgate and had good memories and stories about the school and that must have made an impression on him. We had recently moved to

Winnipeg — in fact, it's one of the reasons we moved. He went through the interview process and being accepted into such a welcoming community meant a lot to him. Also, the school had just been beautifully renovated; it's a physically pleasant space to study on the river!

**Jennifer Kennedy:** We chose Westgate for our children because, as an alumni family, we know they will be supported to achieve their full potential, and graduate with the skills and courses required to pursue whichever career or post secondary education they choose. The teachers are kind, professional, and have appropriately high expectations for academics and behaviour at school. We like that staff will teach our children multiple classes over the years. We feel that a smaller school community has tremendous academic and social benefits for adolescents.

**Anonymous:** We chose Westgate as a BIPOC and 2SLGBTQ+ safe space for our child to educationally and spiritually learn and grow.



Silantoi Kisoso and her daughter.

## 2. FAITH AND/OR WORLDVIEW

**How has your experience at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate impacted your faith journey or worldview, if applicable?**

**Silantoi Kisoso:** I love that my child has an opportunity to study the Bible in a Christian school. We are practicing Lutherans and are active in our church but I can confidently say that beyond attending church, devotion at home or confirmation classes, there are few opportunities for Mariela to read the Bible regularly. Education offered with a Mennonite approach has directly impacted Mariela and our home.

**Heba Gamal:** Our family practices Islam; and we always felt that Westgate fostered an inclusive and supportive environment in that regard. They emphasize values rather than anything doctrinal as there are many students who are non-Christian and from diverse



religious backgrounds that attend the school.

**Lucy Payette:** Our family comes from different faiths, but we have really appreciated the thoughtful discussions that have come up at the dinner table, learning about world religions and the spiritual celebrations like chapel or holiday concerts. The vibe at Westgate is sincere and heartwarming and the culture of inclusivity at Westgate has shaped our son's character in a positive way. There's a lot of spirit at this school!



Heba Gamal with her family.

### 3. SUPPORT + INCLUSION

## In what ways has Westgate Mennonite Collegiate fostered a supportive and inclusive environment for students and families?

**Silantoi Kisoso:**

If I am being honest, I thought WMC lacked diversity, initially, and I thought it might be a challenge for my daughter to “belong”. I made a point to mention this to the administration. However, in

the last few months, I have seen my daughter integrate very easily and thoroughly enjoy her learning experience at Westgate. Westgate is an inclusive school and has a very strong sense of community which is a rare quality to find in this day and age. Mariela is eager to go to school and she is motivated at the end of her day. She has told me many times how understanding and accommodating her teachers have been in her transition. This is a huge peace of mind for me as well.

**Heba Gamal:** The school facilities and teachers are great! One thing my girls love is Westgate's rich program for after-school activities and sports.

**Lucy Payette:** At previous schools our son attended, enrollments were so high and opportunities to engage in extra-curricular activities were limited, exclusive or competitive. At Westgate, our son always has opportunities to explore and he's been able to develop skills in sports or other pursuits and we're really grateful for that. Westgate teachers and coaches are committed to the students and as a result, our son has had a chance to develop, both in his



Jennifer Kennedy with her family on a 2023 trip to Maui, Hawaii

study habits and as an athlete. The teachers, coaches and administrative staff are really good about letting you know what's going on. They've been “lighthouses” in our son's life.

**Jennifer Kennedy:** We feel our kids are receiving an excellent education at Westgate and the school culture is positive, inclusive and supportive. As a parent, I appreciate the regular correspondence about everything that's going on at Westgate, and I feel a positive connection to my children's teachers and their education..

**Anonymous:** Westgate values peace and nonviolence, and the teachers and principal are very caring. For children with disabilities the student support services are exceptionally caring and skilled. We also feel heard and valued as parents.



Lucy Payette on a family trip back to Toronto, where her son was born and partly raised.

# Staff Retirement

AARON EPP ('02)

## ■ Charlotte Kroeker

Charlotte Kroeker has never forgotten the moment a student started to cry after she taught a class the meaning of the phrase, “Auf Wiedersehen.”

After explaining that the literal translation is “Until we meet again,” the student’s eyes filled with tears. The student explained that she now understood what her grandfather said to her just before he died.

That’s one of the many memories Charlotte will carry with her when she transitions into retirement in July.

“I will profoundly miss my interactions with students and those ‘a-ha’ moments that lucky teachers experience in real time,” she says. “Getting to know young people, and having the privilege of

watching them advance academically, socially and spiritually, is a gift that I will miss profoundly.”

Charlotte is proud to leave a school that has become part of PASCH, a global network of around 1,500 schools that place a high value on German language education.

Through cooperation with Manitobans for German Language Education Saturday School, Westgate offers the Sprachdiplom exams, which qualify successful students to enter a German university.

Under Charlotte’s leadership, Westgate moved its German program forward into Teaching Proficiency Through Reading and Storytelling, a second language acquisition method that can be compelling for beginners and advanced students. Classes are active with music, stories, cultural insights and fun.

“I believe that the German program at Westgate has (presented German) not just as a heritage language,” she says, “but as a living, contemporary language that can bring benefits to students regardless of background.”

Charlotte was already a seasoned teacher by the time she



Frau Kroeker leads a much-anticipated German Trip in 2022, taking a moment to pose as a group at Brandenburg Tor in Berlin.

arrived at Westgate in 2006.

Her career began in 1984 with pioneering the German bilingual program at Donwood Elementary School.

She has always considered German her mother tongue and is a fifth-generation German teacher on her father’s side of the family.

Her great-great-grandfather taught the language in Prussia, her great-grandfather and grandfather taught it in Ukraine, and her father taught it in Paraguay and Canada.

“I actually taught a student at Donwood whose father was taught by my father, and whose grandfather was taught by my grandfather,” she says. “All on different continents, too.”

Charlotte hopes that in the coming years, the German program at Westgate continues to be a vibrant initiative that students want to participate in.

Integral to the program is the Manitoba/Germany exchange experience for Grade 11 students, which has become an important part of the school.



Charlotte Kroeker poses with German Contest participants Gracie Dasch and Tavia Sissons.



It provides an opportunity for students to make friends on a different continent and inevitably leads to growth in understanding and independence.

Charlotte's time at Westgate has also been enriched by an exchange program for student teachers from Germany.

The program sees the teachers travel to Winnipeg, where they work as language assistants in German classes. Twenty student teachers from Germany have visited Westgate over the years.

Charlotte is looking forward to retirement because it will allow her to spend more time with her grandson before he's in school full-time.

Retirement will also allow Charlotte to tackle a project she's been postponing for decades: writing a book of her mother's stories.

As she prepares to leave the school in a few months, Charlotte says she will miss being part of Westgate's staff.

"We get to know each other well," she says. "I feel safe enough to be open and vulnerable with my colleagues and be supported. I do not take that for granted."

Thank you for your many contributions to Westgate, Charlotte. Auf Wiedersehen.



Vic Pankratz conducts choir in the Choral Space.

## ■ Vic Pankratz ('77)

Westgate is where Vic Pankratz spent his time as a music teacher, and it's where he was encouraged to pursue a career in music in the first place.

As a high school student at Westgate in the late 1970s, Vic sang in choir and played the scarecrow in the school's production of *The Wizard of Oz* during his Grade 12 year.

His music teacher, John Harder, encouraged him.

"He pulled me aside and said, 'Vic, you can do this if you want — you can do music,'" Vic recalls. "Even the way he talked about music-making and what was out there was inspiring."

A few years later, Vic was back at Westgate as a teacher. Now, four decades later, he will retire at the end of June.

He is one of the longest-serving teachers in Westgate's 65-year

history and the only teacher who has taught their grandchild.

Throughout his tenure at the school, Vic has created an exceptional choral program.

He connected with his students by leading worship in supporting congregations, leading music tours and creating musical productions like *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, which won Rainbow Stage's School Award in 2019.

Throughout the school's performances at ChoralFest, Westgate choirs have consistently been recommended to perform at the National Music Festival.

"It's such a rewarding career because you create beauty with the students that affects everyone," he says.

Vic and his students were able to share that beauty beyond Manitoba through music tours, which have led to many holy moments.

He recalls the time he arrived at Nutana Mennonite Church in Saskatoon with 70 students only to find that there was a family gathering happening.

The family invited the group to join their meal.

"I think of the story of the loaves and fishes," Vic says. "(The family) had enough to feed all of us, including pie for everyone."

Outside of school hours, Vic has sung professionally as a tenor soloist and conducted numerous youth choirs.

He was the artistic co-director of the Winnipeg Singers for four seasons and the artistic director of Prairie Voices for five seasons.

Currently, he is part of the artistic team

Vic Pankratz leads the Grade 8 choir in a Christmas Concert.



behind Dead of Winter (formerly Camerata Nova).

“I’m always on the go, but that’s what musicians do,” he says. “You just fit these things in. It does make for a busy life, but a very rewarding life.”

Vic hopes that after he leaves, students will continue to be challenged to make music at a high level. He has done his best to instil in students a love of singing and tried to show them that making music can be a lifelong endeavour.

He hopes students will become involved in making music in their churches, and trusts that Westgate will remain a vibrant, caring school that helps students grow in their character and faith so that they can serve God and others.

Vic feels blessed to have worked for so long at a school that values music-making, and he is thankful for the many colleagues and students he’s worked with over the years.

While he will still make music in his retirement, he is ready to leave his daily teaching responsibilities behind.

He didn’t want to stay at Westgate much later than the age of 65, a milestone birthday he will celebrate in June on the last day of school.

Incidentally, his fifth grandchild is due around that same time.

“It just sort of feels like it’s the right time (to retire),” he says. “But I know for sure I’m going to miss it a lot. Westgate is a special place.”

## Len Wiebe

BOB HUMMELT

It is my personal belief that if you work at Westgate, whether it was only for a short while or whether you have yet to leave, it is not by accident. Since it is Westgate’s mission to inspire kids to become people of God, then who is on its staff and for how long becomes part of this spiritual providence.

Consider Len Wiebe, who accepted the challenge to be Principal after John Enns sought to return to his beloved classroom teaching position. The campus had just recently built its well-designed gym and educational spaces amid crushing interest rates, and to be the educational leader at this time was not for the faint of heart. Len, who taught physics and math for several decades, served as an important administrative bridge during the 1979-1981 academic years before



Erwin Strempler’s tenure began.

I was not on staff with Len those years, although I had volunteered as track coach while teaching elsewhere. Back then, school administrators wore either shirts and ties or leisure suits, and I commonly saw Len in the building

sporting the latter. His chosen *accoutrement*, aviator glasses, was a bold choice for the times. However, I came to know Len less superficially during my own years as Principal. Our shared roles at this good school, albeit decades apart, prompted good conversations when we met at Westgate events that he and his wife Phyllis commonly attended. It was my annual pleasure to place a call to their home to thank them once again for another deep contribution to the Capital Campaign to help pay the debt on the most recent redevelopment, a project he fully felt was needed to move the school forward. After each of those calls, I felt graced by the kind words and support this long-ago servant of Westgate warmly shared with me, yet another sustaining gift that was no accident in my work that day.

Len Wiebe passed away November 22, 2022.



# Empowering Futures: A Decade of Impact Through Marlies Klassen and Colin Edmond Scholarships

NATALIE JOHNSON

In the decade since the inception of the Marlies Klassen and Colin Edmond Scholarships, these two have made a lasting impact on the lives of countless students. The scholarships, named in their honour, stand as a testament to the importance of recognizing and nurturing young talents in our school.

The Marlies Klassen Scholarship has become a beacon for those who exemplify dedication to community service. Marlies Klassen's legacy, rooted in service to Camps with Meaning and active involvement in the Westgate choral program, continues to inspire students.

These scholarships not only recognize academic achievements but also celebrate a commitment to giving back to the community. Over the past decade, the Marlies Klassen Scholarship has fostered a spirit of generosity among students, encouraging them to contribute positively to our school and the wider church community.

Similarly, the Colin Edmond Memorial Scholarship, designed for students engaged in the Visual Arts program at Westgate, has played a pivotal role in shaping the artistic aspirations of

many students. By highlighting the value of supporting friends, spreading positive energy, and setting an example, the scholarship promotes a well-rounded approach to education. Those who receive the Colin Edmond Scholarship not only shine in their artistic pursuits but also exemplify kindness and support to their peers.

Beyond the financial aid, these scholarships instill values of community engagement, artistic expression, and leadership. As we continue to pay tribute to the legacies of Marlies Klassen and Colin Edmond, we not only celebrate the recipients of the past decade but also the enduring spirit of giving back and artistic pursuit within our school.

By contributing to these scholarship funds, individuals play a crucial role in ensuring that future students continue to reap the benefits of these opportunities. Supporting these scholarships is an investment in the education and development of young talents, fostering a legacy of generosity, creativity, and community service for years to come.



Marlies Klassen on a sleigh ride with a group of children at Camp Assiniboia.



Colin Edmond engages in a snowball fight during the Cycling Trip in June 2012.

## ■ Past Winners

### Marlies Klassen Scholarship has been awarded to:

- Jonathan Froese ('15)
- Jordan Peters ('16)
- Bryn Friesen Epp ('17)
- Naomi Balsillie ('18)
- Nicholas Harder ('19)
- Grace Siemens ('20)
- Will Harder ('21)
- Lia Campbell-Enns ('22)
- Isaiah Koslowsky Wiebe ('23)

### Colin Edmond Scholarship has been awarded to:

- Aliyah Baerg ('16)
- Signe Zywina ('17)
- Sophia Assuras ('18)
- Anya Repko ('19)
- Kate Zywina ('20)
- Payton Gowdar ('21)
- Nyamal Jack Kuan ('22)
- Robyn Bock ('23)

# Alumni & Community News

## Share your news with us!

If you'd like to share your news with us, please get in touch with **Krista Neustaedter Barg**, Alumni Relations Coordinator.

 [alumni@westgatemennonite.org](mailto:alumni@westgatemennonite.org)



### ■ **Lexi Janovcik ('14)**

After obtaining her Undergraduate Degree while playing with the Bison Women's Volleyball Team in the 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 Seasons, Lexi went on to attend Thompson Rivers University Law School in Kamloops B.C., where she completed her Juris Doctor Degree in 2022. Returning to her home in Winnipeg, Lexi successfully completed her Articles with the Firm of Taylor McCaffrey LLP. After successfully completing her licensing requirements, Lexi was called to the Manitoba Bar as a practicing Lawyer on June 15th, 2023. Lexi accepted an offer as an Associate at Taylor McCaffrey LLP where she practices in the areas of Corporate/Commercial Law. Lexi looks forward to reconnecting with her Westgate Community to whom she owes a large debt of gratitude.



### ■ **David Pankratz ('00)**

Congratulations to David Pankratz ('00) who is the NDP MLA for Waverley.

Pictured here with other alumni who serve in the Manitoba legislature: Nathan Dueck ('17) –Issues Manager (Premier's Office), Nicholas Pauls Harder ('19) –Legislative Intern



### ■ **Tonya (Wagner) and Jared Enns (both '09)**

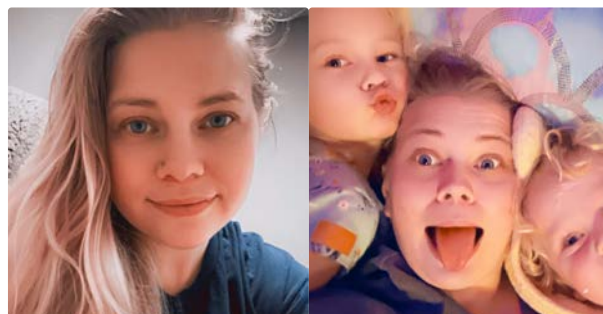
Tonya and Jared both graduated in 2009. Having spent some time living and working in Edmonton, they are happy to be back in Winnipeg as they raise their growing family closer to grandparents and aunts and uncles. They welcomed Cora Charlotte Enns on November 15, 2022. She is the younger sister to Caleb.





■ **Alexis Dirks '00**

June Stephenson born on August 22, 2023 to parents Alexis Dirks ('00) and Jared Stephenson, and older sister Rey. Congratulations!



■ **Devyn Neufeld ('13)**

We rejoice with Devyn Neufeld ('13) who has come through some medical challenges with spring in her step and joy in her heart. "I started a new job this month and I'm working as an executive assistant in an imported car dealership. I love it!" Devyn's children have both started school this year and claim to want to come to Westgate when they're old enough. Life is going well - especially when you throw in a new Christmas puppy: Blue the Samoyed.



■ **Susie Fisher ('02)**

Susie Fisher ('02) and Shaun Dyck welcomed their daughter Margot Bernadette Fisher on January 18th! They are slowly adjusting to this new season of life!



■ **Tatiana Janovcik ('10)**

After graduating from the University of Winnipeg with her Education Degree in 2019, Tatiana was chosen to complete her Teaching Practicum in Lima, Peru, where she had travelled extensively after graduating from Westgate. Tatiana has settled in Winnipeg where she has been teaching at Montrose School since obtaining her Education Degree. Tatiana obtained her permanent teaching status in 2023 and continues to teach a grade 5/6 split class at Montrose School. Tatiana remains firmly connected to the Westgate Community through her many close friendships made as a student.



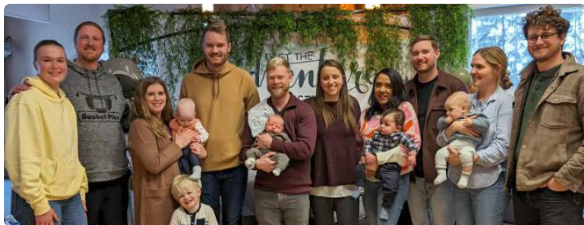
■ **Lauren Donnelly ('04)**

Lauren Donnelly ('04) and Alex Maher welcomed Ronan Harrison Donnelly Maher on December 20, 2023 at Women's Centre in Winnipeg, 9 lbs 8 oz.



■ **Evan Kroeker ('09)**

Congratulations to Evan ('09) and Kacey Kroeker at the birth of Owen this past December. Gathered to celebrate at a baby shower were fellow classmates and their growing families.



From left to right, Caileigh and Connor Entz ('09) (Congrats on the Summer 2023 wedding!) Amanda and Michael Pankratz ('09) with their kids Hudson and Hadley, Derek Pankratz ('10) and Melissa and their son Amari, and Blake Penner ('09) with his wife Kayla and son Egan.



■ **David Penner ('16)**

David Penner ('16) and Emily Elash were married August 5, 2023 at The Millenium Centre.



Janzen, Evan Stock Front Row: Spencer Kristjanson, Jared Schulz, Anika Nelson

Classmates of 2016 gather to celebrate at the wedding. Back Row: David Penner, Kieran Penner, Ryan



■ **Joceyln Hummelt ('11)**

Jocelyn Hummelt ('11) and Cale Mogg tied the knot on June 17th 2023 in LaSalle, MB. Pictured here with parents Bob and Cathy Hummelt.



■ **Sarah Enns ('18)**

Congratulations to Sarah Enns ('18) on her marriage to Will Koop (son of Krista (Friesen) ('87)).



■ **Savanannah (Baird) Gauthier Wiebe ('14)**

On September 16th, 2023 Savannah Baird ('14) married Gavin Gauthier Wiebe (her brother Lucas ('06) introduced them). She currently works in social services and has coached girls volleyball at Westgate for the past 3 years.



## Alumni Reunion in Bangkok, Thailand



SUBMITTED BY JOHN PETERS

In January of this year a reunion of senior alumni members of Westgate took place in Bangkok, Thailand. The photo shows the former students, which are from left to right Randy Friesen ('72), a medical doctor from Melbourne, Australia, myself, John Peters ('70), a lawyer from Calgary, my cousin Karl Peters ('71), a retired teacher and university lecturer from Udon Thani, Thailand, Robert Friesen ('71), a lawyer from Winnipeg and Randy's older brother, and Barry Riediger ('72), a retired teacher and university administrator from Bangkok. I graduated in 1970, Karl and Rob in 1971, Randy one year later and Barry in the same year I believe. Barry is part of the Riediger clan which owned and operated Riediger's supermarket in the West End of Winnipeg for decades. The photo was taken in the famous "Cabbages and Condoms" restaurant, which is a not for profit restaurant with all profits dedicated to primary health, education, the fight against HIV/AIDS in Thailand.



## Class of 2003 Reunion



In June 2023, the Class of 2003 had a small gathering with fun and food. Good conversations and opportunities to catch up were had.

**Back row:** Mark Dyck, Curtis Klassen, Tony Kasdorf, Josh Kathler

**Front row:** Jason Neufeld, Elise Tissandier, Krista (McPherson) Klassen, Kira Friesen, Jennifer (Egan) Karpenko, Rachel (Bock) Perez, Amy (Kasdorf) Reimer, Kristi Carrick

## Class of 2013 Reunion



In June 2023 the Class of 2013 hosted a reunion at 86 West Gate. The event included time to remember classmate Evan Neufeld with the planting of a tree in the school's memorial courtyard. Thanks to Joshua Neustaedter Barg and Baden Gaeke Franz for coordinating the gathering, school tours and fun BBQ to help folks reconnect.

**Back row:** Baden Gaeke Franz, Joshua Neustaedter Barg, Katie Enns, Jason Friesen, Nick Epp, Dylan Pate, Owen Baerg  
**Front row:** Kristen Kennedy, Kirstyn Eckhardt, Abbie Nykvist, Rachel Blaine, Olivia Ulrich, Anya Snider, Aggie Funk-Unrau, Devyn Neufeld, Alex Wilson, Rae Toews, June Pagé, Paige Madden, Olivia Wiebe



Planting a tree in memory of classmate Evan Neufeld (1995-2019).

## IN MEMORY

As a school community we express our condolences to the friends & family of those grieving in the wider Westgate family. We remember with gratitude the lives of those who have gone before us, who have been supportive and active members of our school community – making it what it is today.

**Kim Hoban ('84)**

**Rick Braun Janzen**

**John Lohrenz**

(Board Member)

**Dolores Lohrenz**

**Val Pankratz**

(Board Member)

**Helen (Hildebrand) Bergen**

**Marge Bock**

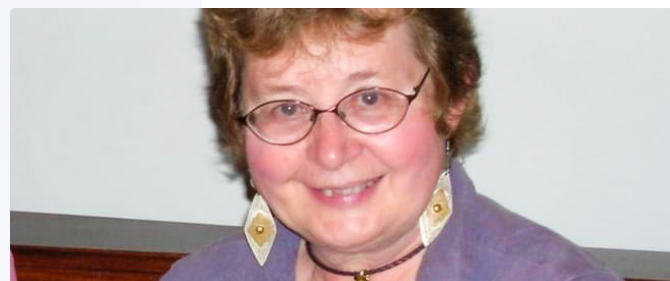
**Irene Dyck**

**Carl Epp**

**Madeleine Enns**

**David Campbell**

**Frieda Peters**



## Evelyn Koch Peterson (1946-2023)

We remember Evelyn as a fun loving, enthusiastic, and caring teacher at Westgate. For 15 years she shared her passion for English Literature and her expertise in French Language with many students. We also remember her for the exuberant way she led her students through France on European Study Tours. Her presence at Westgate touched many lives and we will miss her.





# Supporting Westgate

Your gifts allow us to meet the needs of our students.

## Giving Opportunities

REBUILDING SHAPED BY STORY AND SONG MUSIC APPEAL

WESTGATE'S CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

AREA OF GREATEST NEEDED Non-designated gifts

BURSARIES

SCHOLARSHIPS

DESIGNATED GIFTS

## How to Give

### ► CREDIT CARD

Find Westgate at [www.canadahelps.org](http://www.canadahelps.org)

### ► MONTHLY GIVING (PRE-AUTHORIZED)

Learn more at [www.westgatemennonite.ca](http://www.westgatemennonite.ca)

### ► STOCKS OR SECURITIES

Facilitated through Abundance Canada

### ► E-TRANSFER DONATIONS

Sent to [accounting@westgatemennonite.ca](mailto:accounting@westgatemennonite.ca)

## Westgate 2023 Net Fundraising Snapshot



GOLF TOURNAMENT  
\$39,560



CYCLATHON  
\$39,560



COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY  
\$21,919



BURSARY BANQUET  
\$54,941



DINE AND DONATE  
\$19,450

**AMOUNT LEFT FROM THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN \$457,869**

## Questions?

We'd be happy to discuss any questions you may have about supporting Westgate!

✉ [accounting@westgatemennonite.org](mailto:accounting@westgatemennonite.org)

☎ 204-775-7111



# 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 reach out to **Krista Neustaedter Barg**, Alumni Relations Coordinator, to stay in touch.

✉ [alumni@westgatemennonite.org](mailto:alumni@westgatemennonite.org)

[westgatemennonite.ca](http://westgatemennonite.ca)

*Inspiring and Empowering students to live as people of God*

