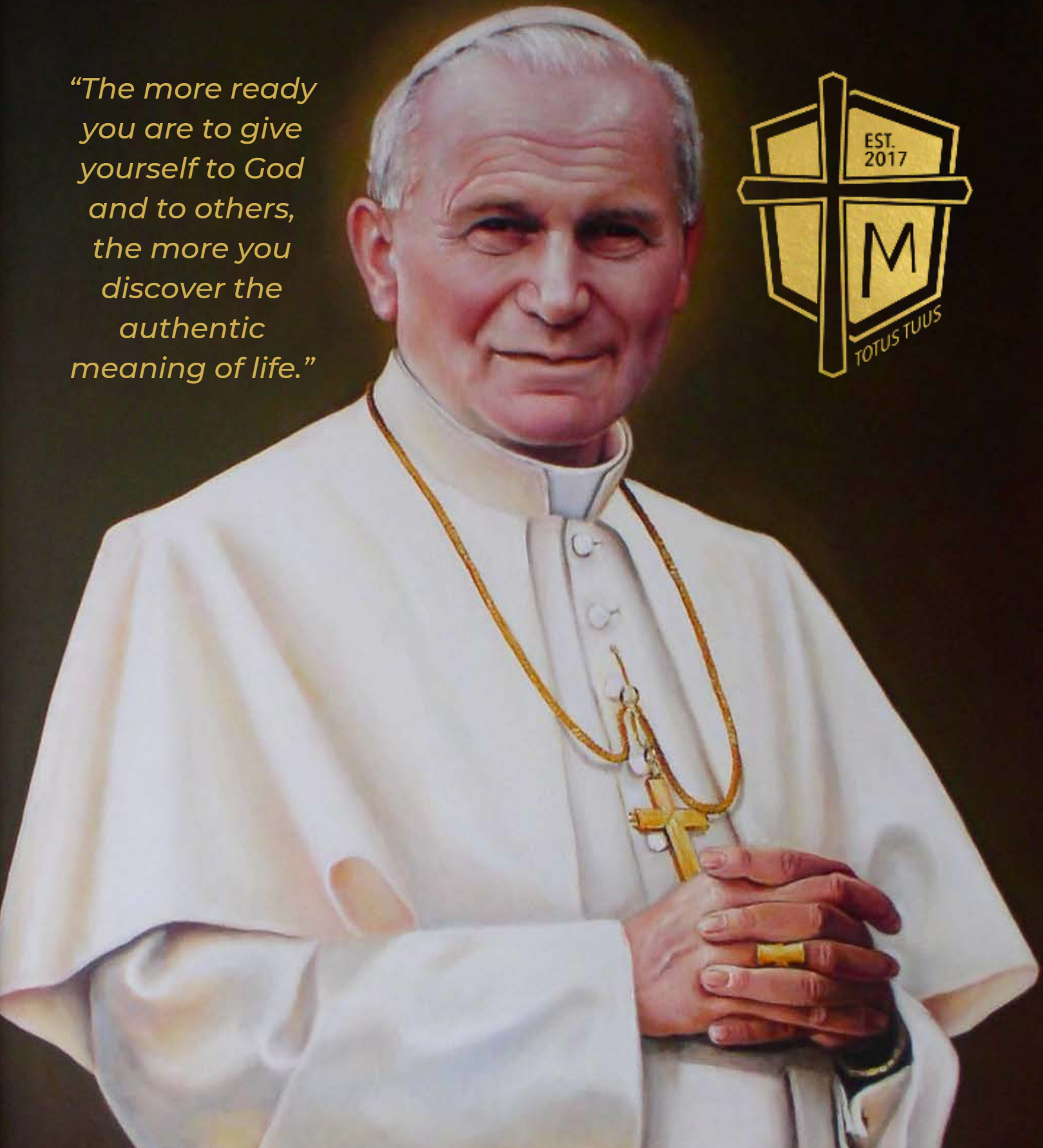


SAINT JOHN PAUL II FOUNDATION

SUMMER 2024 EDITION

*"The more ready
you are to give
yourself to God
and to others,
the more you
discover the
authentic
meaning of life."*



CENTENARY EVENT

Father Augustine & Archbishop Miller

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks once again to all those who helped put together the beautiful celebration we had on April, 28th, when Archbishop Michael was here in Good Shepherd Church to help us celebrate 100 years of Star of the Sea Parish. What a beautiful day it was! I especially mention members of the CWL, Knights, my office staff who organized the event, and all those who worked hard setting up and cleaning up. It was truly a great day for our parish.

To all those who attended, I hope you can all see how this parish has grown through the grace of God— how God has moved in this community in the last 100 years, God's merciful Love is greater than all of that! Remember last week's Gospel—Jesus says, "I am the vine, you are the branches.

He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." The good fruits that this parish community has borne over the last 100 years is God Himself working in us and through us—it is Him bearing fruit in us—for His own purposes. And HE HAS NO EQUAL!

Let us draw strength and confidence from this truth.

Archbishop Michael gave such a beautiful homily—and I want to share it here. Not only for those who missed it, but for everyone because his words warrant a deeper reflection.

As we commemorate the 100th anniversary when the first church erected to honor Mary, Star of the Sea, was dedicated by then Archbishop Timothy Casey on the 4th of May 1924, we rightly look to our past with enormous gratitude.



God is truly great and has done marvelous deeds over the long history in this parish for you and with you. For this we give him thanks and praise.

From its very humble beginnings of a few Catholic families who wanted, and indeed built, the first church in White Rock, and subsequently, over the years, other churches – this beautiful one – an extraordinary Catholic school, this parish has grown into a large and a vibrant community of faith. Indeed, what has taken place here in South Surrey recalls what happened in the Church after Pentecost.

An analogy can be applied from the Book of Acts, to the history of Star of the Sea Parish. Acts records the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria (and South Surrey) had peace and was built up. Living in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

Recalling your parish's history with thanksgiving is essential for preserving your strong identity as a place of Christ's presence, especially in the Eucharist, and for



strengthening your unity as a family united in worship, community, and outreach to others.

More than an exercise in nostalgia, although it is a bit of that, celebrating a centenary looks to following in the footsteps of past generations in order to continue to implement the mission, the vision and the values which inspired them, all of which, of course, were founded in the Gospel. Down through the years, you, this parish, have done this relentlessly despite not insignificant challenges that you have also had to confront as a parish, as every family does.

In particular, we give thanks to the good Lord for this precious inheritance of 100 years, when the life- giving power of the Holy Spirit has animated, over the years, the zealous pastors and priests. And certainly, here I recall especially most recent pastors, Father Jim Fagan, Father Stan Galvon, Father Glenn Dion, and Father Augustine Obiwumma.

We should also recall the earlier days the committed religious sisters.





DEAR SJP2 COMMUNITY AND SUPPORTERS

As we approach the end of the academic year, I am delighted to reflect on the exceptional accomplishments in academics, philanthropy, and athletics that have distinguished Saint John Paul II Academy. It is with immense pride that we announce the addition of 2 athletic banners to our collection at the local academy equating a total of 10; a remarkable achievement given our modest student body of fewer than 100 students.

This success is a testament to the exceptional leadership of Principal Ms. Lorraine Paruzzolo, whose vision, inspired by Mr. Michel Deslauriers, has propelled our academy to new heights. Our dedicated teachers have consistently gone above and beyond, not only within the classroom but also in their unwavering support for each student. Whether through the social justice program or organizing memorable events like the graduation party at the Pan Pacific, their commitment has been truly outstanding.

We are deeply grateful for the exemplary leadership of our school administrators, whose dedication and generosity of spirit have been instrumental in shaping the success of Saint John Paul II Academy. From social justice initiatives to musical performances, sports events, and mentoring students through pulpit talks, their contributions have been invaluable in fostering a culture of excellence and character, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Thank you for your dedication and service.

With a heavy heart, I must announce the leaving of our esteemed Principal, Lorraine Paruzzolo. Words cannot adequately express our gratitude for her tireless work, compassionate nature, and the transformative impact she has had on our Academy. Lorraine, you have instilled a culture of love and kindness within our school community, and your legacy will endure for years to come. Your embodiment of the spirit of Mary, Mother Teresa, and Saint John Paul II has made you a beacon of kindness, intelligence, and true servant leadership. Your presence will be deeply missed.

I would also like to extend our heartfelt thank you to Ms. Paruzzolo's husband, Mr. Renato Bordignon, for his unwavering support, service, and dedication to the Academy from its inception. Renato, you have been an inspiration to us all, and we are grateful for all your contributions.

As we bid farewell to Lorraine, we warmly welcome Ms. Andrea Burnett this fall. While she has big shoes to fill, we are confident that she will continue the legacy of servant leadership and inspire both the faculty and student body.

God bless,
Troy Van Vliet



GRATITUDE TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Dear Saint John Paul II Academy Supporters,

We are thrilled to announce that our inaugural Alumni Golf Tournament was a resounding success, raising an impressive \$150,000 for the Bursary Fund. Thanks to your unwavering support, no family will be denied a Catholic education due to financial constraints.

The event was a remarkable gathering that fostered camaraderie among players, brought our community together in celebration of our shared mission, and showcased to our students the power of unity for a noble cause. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our supporters and the dedicated Golf Committee.

A special acknowledgment goes to David Fanning for his leadership and invaluable experience in orchestrating a successful golf tournament. We also express our gratitude to Troy Van Vliet, Jose Vargas, Dr. Joseph King, Holly King, Bill Dibui, Ben Sears, John Milton Sanchez, Ximena Jimenez, and John Campaign for their exceptional contributions.

We extend our sincere appreciation to those who generously supported the event operations on the day, including Mr. Anthony Walters, Dr. Vincent Tighe, and Mrs. Linda Prout. Special thanks to Lorraine Paruzzolo for her invaluable assistance with volunteers and teachers.



Ms. Silveria Roselli

Our deepest gratitude goes out to all our sponsors and donors. Your generosity and support were instrumental in making this event a triumph. We are truly blessed to have such a remarkable community and dedicated supporters.

We invite you to continue supporting us at our upcoming Fall Royals Ball. All proceeds raised will directly benefit the Bursary Fund, providing assistance for tuition fees, uniforms, books, and educational field trips. Together, let us ensure that every family has the opportunity for a Catholic education.

With heartfelt appreciation and many blessings,

Silveria Roselli
Saint John Paul II Academy Foundation



THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS



SCAN IT
FOR MORE
INFORMATION!



Presenting Sponsor:
**FRIEND OF
ST JOHN PAUL ACADEMY FAMILY**



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE GOLF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE



Mr. David Fanning
Chair of the Golf Committee



Mr. Troy Van Vliet
Chair Foundation Board SJPII



Ms. Silveria Roselli
Director of Advancement SJPII



Dr. Joseph King
Golf Committee, Foundation Board
Director



Mr. Jose Vargas
Golf Committee Member



Mr. John Campaign
Golf Committee Member



Mrs. Holly King
Golf Committee Member



Mr. Bill Debiuk
Knights of Columbus



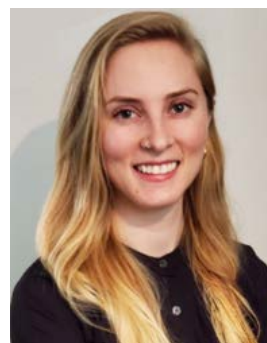
Mr. Ken Prout
Golf Committee Member



Mr. Ben Sears
Golf Committee Member



Mr. Milton Sanchez
Golf Committee Member



Ms. Ximena Jimenez
Golf Committee Member



Ms. Phung Pham
Golf Committee Member

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

With the academic school year coming to a close, and the excitement of many different Graduation celebrations approaching, it is a special time to reflect and give thanks to God for the many blessings He has bestowed upon us this year.

The entire school community has truly strived to integrate this year's theme, "Living, Celebrating and Proclaiming Our Faith." We gave witness to living our faith by integrating our Catholic values and beliefs into all aspects of school life, including personal and spiritual growth, academic instruction, extra-curricular activities, and community service initiatives. It is a true testament to living our faith, as an integral part of our school's mission, to educate the whole person and help students develop spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, physically and socially.

I really believe "It takes a village to raise a child." This proverb helps us understand that it takes an entire community of people, collaborating positively together, to experience and grow in an enriching faith-filled environment. As I prepare to transition into another Educational position, I want to express my profound joy, prayers and gratitude, for the steadfast commitment, active participation, and ardent support from all of you. Your collective efforts have been instrumental in making Saint John Paul II Academy a special community.



"The future is in your hearts and in your hands. God is entrusting to you the task, at once difficult and uplifting, of working with Him in the building of the civilization of love. The most beautiful and stirring adventure that can happen to you is the personal meeting with Jesus, who is the only one who gives real meaning to our lives."
(Saint John Paul II, Oct.22, 2020)

I am grateful and blessed to have been a member of a school community which strives to live the words of our school's Patron Saint, "Living our faith leads us beyond ourselves; it leads us directly to God."
(Feast:October 22)

With Joy and Prayers,
Ms. Lorraine Paruzzolo
Principal



Congratulations Class of 2024

Saint John Paul II Academy celebrates its second graduating class



MS. L. PARUZZOLO
PRINCIPAL



MS. A. BOYLE
VICE-PRINCIPAL



MARCO CENIZA



VERONICA DEE



PARWAZ DHALIWAL



KELVIN DOKAJ



CHRISTOPHE FUNG



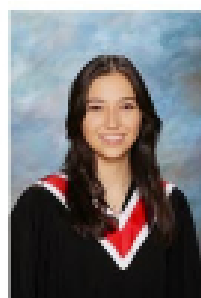
MATTEO HALLO



AIDEN HASS



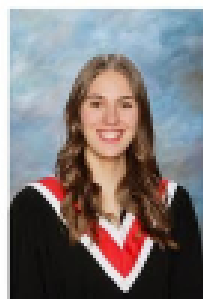
CAIHLEM HASS



MARIA HUERTA TALLARS



LOGAN JONES



ELYSE KARGL



BELLA KASSAM



SABASTIAN LAKOMY



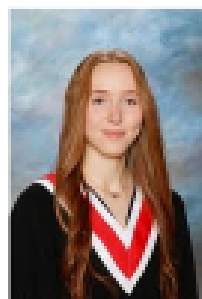
CHRISTOPHER LIFVENBORG



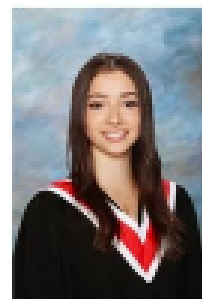
JAYDEN MCGOWAN



FAITHE PARSONS



TAYLA VAN VLIET



SOFIA VARGAS



FIRST GRADUATING CLASSES OF SAINT JOHN PAUL II ACADEMY



OUR FACULTY AND STAFF

COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE IN ALL AREAS



Lorraine Paruzzolo
Principal



Susan Kelly
Secretary



Anne Boyle
Modern Languages



Mark Wilkie
Science



Dr. Vincent Tighe
Science/Math



Patty Emry
Physical Education



Bernadette Yuson
Humanities



Colleen Girvin
Educational Assistant



Rita Hernandez
Educational Assistant



Morgan O'Flynn
Educational Assistant



Manuela Heleno
Educational Assistant



Jessica Kelly
Humanities/Fine & Performing Arts



Cindy Akyuz
*Science, Math
Athletic Director*



Aleli Perez
*Learning Support
Services Coordinator*



Anthony Walters
*Humanities/Career
Education*



A JOURNEY OF FAITH, LOVE, AND GENEROSITY:

The Inspirational Life of Willy Van Vliet

In a world where faith is tested and generosity is a rare commodity, there are individuals whose lives serve as beacons of hope and inspiration. Willy Van Vliet's journey is a testament to the power of prayer, the strength of family bonds, and the transformative impact of Catholic education.

Willy's story began in Holland, where she was born and raised. At the age of 10, she embarked on a life-changing journey to Canada with her family, a voyage that would shape her resilience and deepen her faith in God. Despite the challenges they faced, Willy always turned to prayer and the Holy Spirit for guidance and solace.

In 1960, Willy met the love of her life, Nick Van Vliet, a man who shared her Catholic faith. Their love story led to marriage in 1962, and together they built a life centered on their faith and family. Tragedy struck in 2006 with Nick's passing, leaving Willy to navigate the depths of grief and loss. Through her unwavering faith in God and the support of her loved ones, Willy found solace and strength to carry on.

Willy's dedication to supporting Saint John Paul II Academy is a reflection of her deep-rooted belief in the transformative power of Catholic education. Inspired by Nick's passion for education and faith, Willy sees the academy as a beacon of hope for future generations.



Her involvement in fundraising efforts, volunteer work, and advocacy for the academy's mission is a testament to her commitment to nurturing young minds and fostering a community grounded in faith and values.

Throughout her life, Willy has relied on the power of prayer to guide her through challenges and uncertainties. Her unwavering faith in God and the importance of living out her values have been the cornerstone of her journey. In times of joy and sorrow, Willy's generosity knows no bounds, as she gives back to her community and those in need with a spirit of compassion and kindness.

Willy's financial contributions to important causes reflect her belief in giving back to the community. She is dedicated to making a difference through her support. Additionally, she is incredibly proud of her children, Cheryl, Neil, and Troy, describing them as wonderful human beings and loving parents. Their accomplishments and values bring her immense joy and pride, serving as a testament to her dedication to family and faith.

Troy Van Vliet, the founder of Saint John Paul II Academy, created the school with a vision of providing a nurturing and faith-based education for his children and future generations. Inspired by his parents' commitment to Catholic education and their unwavering faith, Troy established the academy as a testament to their legacy and a beacon of hope for the community. May her story serve as a reminder of the importance of faith, love, and generosity in making a positive impact on the world around us.



HELLO SJP2 FAMILY AND DEAR SUPPORTERS

My name is Lisa Van Vliet and my husband, Troy, is the founder of our incredible High School, St John Paul II Academy, now in it's 6th year of operations in our temporary campus in White Rock.

I was asked to write our family's story for SJP2's year end correspondence likely due to that fact that recently, our daughter, Annika, and I were invited to speak at the CISVA Expo for life. There were select students in attendance from over 20 schools. The organizers of the event found Annika's story inspirational as she was featured in many publications (including the front page of the BC Catholic) on news stations, in advertisements and garnered much attention for her International achievements in the modelling world, walking many runways including Paris Fashion Week, and appearing on the Jumbotrons in Times Square, NY during NYFW. (New York Fashion Week)

The reason this was particularly newsworthy is because our daughter was born with an extra copy of her 21st chromosome. Annika has Down Syndrome.

Down Syndrome can cause social, academic and physical challenges throughout life.

It causes hypotonia, an extra flexibility that displays itself due to low muscle tone. This affects fine motor, speech clarity and balance.

Let me back up about 16.5 years, though.



My husband Troy, and I already had been blessed with a young baby girl, Tayla (our eldest daughter) and we were thrilled to be welcoming another baby into our lives.

After confirming my pregnancy, I attended a standard 12 week Ultrasound and was puzzled by the Ultrasound technician's curt behavior.

I chalked it up to questionable bedside manner and left the office being instructed to wait for results.

The results came by phone and were quite concerning, so I requested a formal report to be sure I had the correct information and what I read in it was completely unexpected.

There were markers that showed our baby had a high probability of holoprosencephaly.

This condition occurs when the frontal lobe of the brain fails to divide into 2 hemispheres, causing a single enlarged eye in the Center of the face, no nose, no mouth and the baby asphyxiates at birth, being unable to get oxygen. This is where the term, cyclopia comes from, as in "Cyclops."

I was provided no information at the time that this condition can present itself to varying degrees and it can, in rare & mild cases, be a survivable diagnosis, all I was told was the worst case scenario prognosis of time-of-birth imminent passing of our child and that the diagnosis was "Not compatible with life."

Due to our faith as Catholics and the fact that I was adopted as a baby in the late 60's (at a time when young Mothers were not socially accepted) this has remained a sacred fact of my existence. I am here solely because my biological mother decided to give me life and

relinquish me for adoption and a chance at a happy, stable and loving life. (Which I've had .

When I contacted the Doctor for clarification, I was berated and told "just to take care of it as soon as possible" as the diagnosis was "not compatible with life."

Subsequent visits with my OB/Gyn were quiet and guarded, as we navigated the inevitable road ahead.

It was scary, but I never wavered from the knowing that this was God's will. I am meant to gain and lose and learn the blessings from whatever is going to happen!

We carried on loving, nurturing and growing our precious baby inside my womb. She didn't "feel" different than Tayla did. How could this be? Perhaps denial, perhaps a divine KNOWING that all would play out in God's timing and on HIS terms. As his servant, I am here solely to see his plans to fruition.

When I visited the medical genetics department, my world shattered. Not due to the fact of our current diagnosis, but because they "reassured" me that I could still "take care of it" (Abort our child!!) until 25 weeks gestation!

I gave it to God, offering thanks for an experience that was sure to strengthen me and our family as a unit- regardless of the outcome.

Many weeks and thousands of prayers later, we had a more definitive test that showed us our Dear Annika had an extra copy of her 21st chromosome!

Praise God! Our beloved baby will survive her birth process!!

No holoprosencephaly!!

Then my husbands cousin lost her sweet baby girl in utero at 6 months pregnant.

We were also 6 months pregnant with Annika!

We attended the funeral and prayed over her tiny white casket... surrounded by family.

The moment came back to me. I tried to push it away, but it was whispering to me, urging me to address it.

It was the Doctor's voice urging "because this pregnancy resulted in a genetic defect, we have 2 more weeks to terminate for you.



She will never have a quality life. She will be a burden. It's okay, just give us a call"

Finally it hit me. AT the funeral. I froze.
My heart dropped into my stomach.
What a vast difference of value for life. 2 babies, same gestational age of 6 months. One grieved by a packed church filled with love, another considered "easily disposed of and defective."

The baby girl who went home to be with our Lord was named Jillian.

And so it became our Annika's middle name in her honour.

I'd like to think that Jillian is pleased by this tribute to her ❤️

We definitely feel like Annika has a guardian angel.

We are committed to providing Annika with every opportunity she wishes to pursue. We still navigate a cruel world where, if Annika needed an organ transplant, she would be flatly DENIED. Due to being a "genetically defective" subject.

An acquaintance of ours was just denied a heart for their baby with heart issues requiring a transplant. Just a "NO."

Your beloved child does NOT QUALIFY for life saving measures!!

And then there is the whole social aspect to having a child with a disability or who is neurodivergent. The elementary years are far more forgiving, as differences can be washed away by the rain in the playground and the chaos that is childhood offers more opportunity to bond with other students.

We knew High School would be an entirely different world.

Well, the endless blessings that got us to this point of the campus project have been astounding!

From the Archdiocese providing land, to the perfect selection of faculty to engaging precious families to join us on this educational journey, we know this entire project was beautifully blessed and happened in divine ways with divine timing!

We really can't express enough thanks to everyone who played a role in getting us to where we were today to suffice! The "little school that could" is morphing into "the state of the art campus that DID!"

There is still so much work and advocacy to be done. Both for the new campus and for the rights and dignity of those who were born with challenges. Please lend compassion to families who are supporting a loved one facing a diagnosis.

Advocacy is a wonderful tool, yet it is exhausting. I once had a lady at church tell me "Well, it sure helps that you dress her nice, at least!"

Helps WHAT?? Helps YOU to be more comfortable in her presence? helps you to see her as less offensive, somehow??

I could curl your hair with countless tales of ridiculous encounters, but we choose to focus on the positive experiences we've had.

Annika and Tayla both attended Star of the Sea elementary, with their fabulous supports for learning. She has been provided with a one on one Educational Assistant since pre-K in the private system, but many of her peers in public schools do not have the staff support provided to them currently.



Educators are in low supply right now and it's the vulnerable who pay the price! Also, the maximum Government support for an adult with a disability benefit is ONLY \$200/month!! Can you imagine supporting yourself on that in 2024??? WE won't live forever, and if Annika doesn't secure employment, how will she survive? This is what every disabled person in BC is facing right now. It is absolutely appalling how little value is placed on some lives. So we are doing what we can to try and elevate all people facing discrimination and lack of respect.

Every single time Annika breaks a glass ceiling, it opens the world up for those like her and others. She is not working to garner fame and riches. she is doing what she loves and earns a better living doing it than she would with a typical teen part time job. You can follow Annika's story on IG. @Annika.Jillian

We are here to elevate all people facing challenges. A true test for someone's character is how they treat our Annika. It never fails. We only believe in looking down at someone if we're offering a hand to help them UP!! Let's all vow to do better by vulnerable members of our community. A smile and a Hello go much farther than anyone realizes. Being invisible or being "talked over" is a slight that takes hold over time, delivering the recipient a hit that develops their sense of self based on others' poor treatment or devaluing of them.

God created everyone for a reason. On purpose. We all have gifts! Try to share yours with the world! Nobody has what you have. I deeply thank you for reading our story and being a supportive part of our lives.

With warm blessings,
Lisa Van Vliet



SOCIAL JUSTICE TEAM UPDATE

What does your God ask of you? To ACT justly, to LOVE mercy and walk HUMBLY. Micah 6: 8

On May 14th, we had the special privilege to travel to Vancouver College with 4 Grade 12 students who had previously been involved in a "Service to Advocacy" workshop. The day began with a very informative and passionate presentation by Judy Graves who received an honorary degree from UBC because of her work with the homeless. "In her career as a housing advocate for the City of Vancouver, she sought to obtain a better understanding of the circumstances of those she was trying to help, and the causes of their marginalization."

Our Grade 12 students presented a plan for an awareness campaign about homelessness, but couldn't finish it due to time constraints. We've decided to continue their efforts next year by organizing an event where participants sleep outside for a night to raise awareness and empathy for the homeless. This will take a lot of planning, but we're confident we can make it happen.



To keep our sandwich making programme going we need money, so we hosted a very successful bake sale, and we have one more fundraiser organized for the last week of school. We are grateful to the Knights of Columbus as they have been very generous and have helped us sustain this project. Our work has focused on direct service, such as providing sandwiches to the unhoused. While we want to move from "Service to Advocacy" we feel it is important to continue with this initiative. Encouraged by the words of Judy Graves, we are establishing a connection with the people we serve regularly. We want to know their stories.

As members of our Social Justice Team, we are called to live out the Gospel values of compassion, empathy, and action. It's time for us to expand our mission from service to advocacy, raising awareness and addressing the root causes of homelessness.

Social Justice Team

Alejandra, Ana Sophia, Ava, Annika, Joanna, Olivia, Pearl

Sponsor teachers Mrs. Girvin, Ms. Boyle

ATHLETIC'S DIRECTOR

As the year comes to a close, we at St John Paul II Academy are very proud of our athletic accomplishments. We had over 82% of our students actively involved in at least one extra-curricular school sport, and we competed at several different levels of competition in six BC Schools Sports. This has culminated in 4 banners this year alone, and 10 banners since the school's inception just 6 years ago when it opened its doors to 16 students!

This past year, our fall sports included cross country and volleyball. A highlight was our Sr Girls A Cross Country team, who won Surrey, South Frasers and the BC Provincial title! This was our school's first provincial title and it was very exciting. We also had three volleyball teams; JR Girls, SR Girls and SR Boys. All had successful seasons and many tournaments.

Our winter sport was Sr Boys Basketball which is always a lot of fun. Spring sports included a huge interest in ultimate frisbee. We were able to field two Jr Teams and one Sr Team that competed in the first BC Catholics tournament since covid. Our Tennis team qualified for provincials but was unable to defend last year's AA title.

Our Senior Girls won our 10th banner at the Surrey Championship, with a record 12 provincial qualifiers who will compete at the provincial track meet in Nanaimo in early June.

One of our graduating students has been recognized for her track excellence. Veronica Dee will be attending SFU in the fall on a track scholarship! Congratulations Veronica! Your hard work, dedication, and passion have paid off. We're all so proud of you!



Last but not least, we had our first annual Athletic Awards Banquet celebrating all of our student athletes.

It goes without saying that our athletics could not happen without the huge commitment of our teacher coaches, and the amazing support of our parents.

Our banners to date commemorate local, divisional and one provincial championship in notable events:

2018/19 - SSSAA Gr 8 Boys Cross Country
2022/23 - SSSAA Gr 8 Girls Tier 2 Volleyball
2022/23 - SSSAA Jr Tier 2 Ultimate
2022/23 - SFAA Sr Tier 2 Ultimate
2022/23 - SFAA AA Tennis
2022/23 - SSSAA Special Olympics Track & Field
2023/24 - SFAA Surrey Sr Girls A Cross Country
2023/24 - SFAA Sr Girls A Cross Country
2023/24 - Provincial Champions Sr Girls Tier 1A Cross Country
2024/24 - SSSAA Sr Girls Track and Field

Cindy Akyuz
Math, Physics
Athletic Director

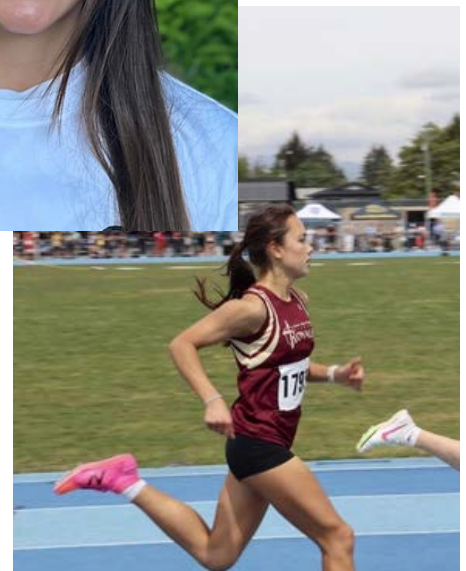


THE ATHLETES PERSPECTIVE

My journey at SJPII has been an incredible chapter in my life, one that is filled with countless memories, achievements, and the continuous support of not only my coaches and teammates, but of the entire school. As I prepare to embark on the next stage of my athletic endeavors at Simon Fraser University, where I will compete for their track & field/Cross Country teams, I find myself reflecting on the fortunate experiences and accomplishments that have been shaped by my time at SJPII.

When I first attended SJPII in grade 8, I never imagined the opportunities that awaited me, especially since we were a small school with a developing athletic program at the time. One of the things that I admire about our school is that everyone is encouraged to participate in sports allowing them to explore their athletic potential, unlike larger schools where only a select few get the chance. The inclusive environment at our school has not only allowed me to thrive as an athlete, but has also built a strong foundation in our school's athletic program as it flourished over the years. I never imagined that I would be leaving with a collection of banners from Cross Country, Tennis, Track & Field, and Ultimate frisbee. These banners have reflected the hard work and dedication by all athletes with the support of coaches. Their support in our growth as athletes has played a major role in our successes and improvement.

As I look forward to committing to SFU for Track & Field and Cross Country, I am excited for the new experiences that lie ahead. The scholarship that I have received is a recognition of not only the hard work and dedication that I have put into this sport, but also the support and encouragement of my coach. My coach at SJPII allowed me to recognize my potential, giving me these opportunities to continue competing at the university level which I never thought was possible. I am proud of who I have become as a result of growing in an environment like SJPII, and I am ready to embrace the upcoming challenges and victories in the future years.



Veronica Dee

WORLD YOUTH DAY 2023

By Lizzie Formosa and Katrina

World Youth Day 2023 was in Lisbon, Portugal. The theme for World Youth Day was “Mary arose and went with haste.” There were a million pilgrims including our group of 40 from Vancouver and Toronto.

We celebrated with Pope Francis and famous priests like Bishop Baron. There was a priest who was a DJ, and we had lots of fun dancing. I met a lot of cool people, and we exchanged souvenirs. Thank you to the School and Mrs Yuson for inviting us to join her.

I would highly recommend World Youth Day to other people.

Lizzie Formosa



For me as a chaperone, WYD 2023 was an amazing display of young adults practicing their faith in huge numbers. We celebrated the Stations of the Cross, Adoration and Mass with Pope Francis as well as learning catechism with renowned bishops. I feel fortunate that I was able to attend.

Katrina



"As the official videographer and photographer for the Legacy Video project, ground-breaking and golf event, I've had the incredible opportunity to document some of the most memorable moments of Saint John Paul Academy II. Working on this project has been a professional endeavour and a personal journey that has deeply connected me with this community.

From the very beginning, my involvement with the Legacy Video has been a blend of creativity, dedication, and passion. Seeing this project come to life with the stories of students, board members, and families has truly been an absolute joy. There's something profoundly moving about capturing the first steps of a new venture and witnessing the anticipation and excitement in the eyes of everyone present. The groundbreaking ceremony was more than just an event; it was a moment of history, the beginning of a new chapter for the school, and I felt honoured to document it.

Throughout this project, I've had the chance to work closely with students, staff, and parents. Each interaction, each story, and each moment has added a unique layer to the narrative we are building. The Legacy Video isn't just about recording events; it's about preserving the spirit of the school, the essence of the community, and the memories that will be cherished for generations to come.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this work has been the feedback from the school community. Seeing the joy and nostalgia that our videos and photos evoke is incredibly fulfilling. It's a reminder of why I chose this profession in the first place – to tell stories that resonate, that inspire, and that bring people together.

As we continue to capture these precious moments, I am excited about what lies ahead. The Legacy Video project is an ongoing journey, and I am grateful to be part of it. It's not just about documenting the present but also about creating a bridge to the future, allowing future generations to look back and appreciate the rich history and vibrant life of SJP2.

Thank you for allowing me to share my experience. I look forward to continuing this journey with all of you and creating more memories that will stand the test of time."



Zander Lamb



MADONNA HOUSE VANCOUVER

On December 12, 2002, Our Lady of Combermere, patroness of the Madonna House Apostolate (MH), added a new room to her house, this time in the Archdiocese of Vancouver. Archbishop Adam Exner, who had invited the community to come, celebrated the opening Mass.

In his memorable homily, the archbishop issued a passionate call to the members of MH to live fully the Little Mandate given by the Holy Spirit to the foundress, Catherine Doherty. In this way, he expected them to become saints!



Above photo (L-R) Julie Coxe, Victoria Fausto, Doreen Dykers, Archbishop Exner and Sandra Woods.

In 2007, MH moved from the house on the grounds of Rosemary Heights Retreat Center in Surrey, close to Star of the Sea parish, to a house across the street from St. John the Apostle parish in Vancouver. Looking back, we marvel at God's work in creating among the MH members a community of love into which all are welcome and in which all can experience the transforming love of God.

THE LITTLE MANDATE

Arise – go! Sell all you possess.
Give it directly, personally to the poor.
Take up My cross (their cross) and follow Me,
going to the poor, being poor,
being one with them, one with Me.

Little – be always little! Be simple, poor,
childlike.

Preach the Gospel with your life – without
compromise!
Listen to the Spirit. He will lead you.

Do little things exceedingly well for love of
Me.

Love...love...love, never counting the cost.

Go into the marketplace and stay with Me.
Pray, fast. Pray always, fast.

Be hidden. Be a light to your neighbour's
feet.

Go without fears into the depths of men's
hearts. I shall be with you.

Pray always. I will be your rest.

This new foundation was made possible through the generosity of Msgr. Gregory Smith, Fr. Stanley Galvon, and several members of the Star of the Sea Parish. The Knights of Columbus and the CWL worked hard to renovate a garage into a chapel, and to prepare a space for all who came to pray at Madonna House. Since those first days, many different staff members have served in the archdiocese for varying lengths of time.



At present, those assigned to Madonna House Vancouver are (as seen in the photo (L-R) Philomena Lim from Singapore, Lisa Diniz from India, and Emmanuella Kim from Korea.

Perhaps you are wondering, what is Madonna House? We are a Catholic community of laymen, women, and priests, whose lives are modeled after the Holy Family, who served in hidden ways in Nazareth to form a community of love. Our foundress, Servant of God Catherine de Hueck Doherty, a refugee from the communist revolution in Russia, is a saint for our times, who overcame challenges in several nations and cultures. Catherine was a pioneer in the lay apostolate in North America and a leader in social justice in Canada and the USA, establishing the Friendship House movement in the 1930s and 1940s.

In 1943 she married Irish-American newspaper reporter Eddie Doherty. Supported by her husband, she founded the Madonna House Apostolate in Combermere, Ontario in 1947. The little community has now grown to include 7 missions in Canada, 4 in the US, and 3 international locations.

Members receive the PAX-CARITAS cross upon making promises to live the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, eventually for life.



Catherine's writings are a powerful testimony of God's work in the ordinary and inspire hope in every situation. She referred to MH as "the people of the towel and water," having taught the members to serve as Jesus instructed his disciples to do at the Last Supper. Such service takes creative forms in Vancouver, from monthly mornings of recollection, neighborhood music concerts and garden gatherings to service at the parish, assisting with faith formation and being available for fellowship. When needed, MH staff are extraordinary ministers of the Holy Eucharist to the housebound.

Catherine envisioned MH as a place to restore all things in Christ. Its members are readily available to those who come to their door (painted blue in honour of Our Lady). Some stop by for chitchat over a cup of tea or coffee. Friends come to help with gardening and share in the celebration of saints' days or for an Epiphany party. The community of love extends to the local neighborhood, where staff have babysat for families or taken the elderly to medical appointments. MH Vancouver has a lending library that offers a wonderful selection of books by the foundress and many other spiritual writers.

Catholic high school students have volunteered in different ways, including gardening, helping with parish lunch for seniors, and making pysanky (Ukrainian Easter eggs) during Lent.

Many friends helped build the poustinia (desert in Russian), a small hermitage where one can fast and pray for a day. It is a place of spiritual restoration, where a person can sit with the Word of God and let the Word penetrate, heal, and restore the soul. Renewed and strengthened, one can then go forth and serve anew.

A description of Madonna House Vancouver can be found on the website,

www.madonnahouse.org under Field Houses. MH Vancouver also has an Instagram presence @madonnahousevancouver.

People from the archdiocese have visited the main center in Combermere, Ontario for clergy retreats, a family retreat in the summer, or for an extended time of personal immersion in MH community life.

For those discerning the priesthood, there is a 6-month Spiritual Formation program. More information about the community; the monthly newspaper, Restoration; Catherine's writings; and the writings, music and art of MH community members can be found at www.madonnahouse.org.



Angie Dee
Friend of Madonna House



CITY OF FOCUS

We all know we should not judge people on superficialities like the way they look, dress, who they associate with, where they shop, which school they attended, or what car they drive. However, this does not stop us from doing exactly that and, more often than not, we make the wrong assumptions. I am mindful of the aphorism, "People are so judgemental; you can just tell by looking at them!"

Here are some examples, taken from contemporary life and history, in which appearances are vastly misleading.

The outer appearance: An older volunteer who sets up readings, furniture, and program sheets for the daily Masses at a local church and is often mistaken for the custodian.

A leading businessman in the city who lives a quiet unassuming life.

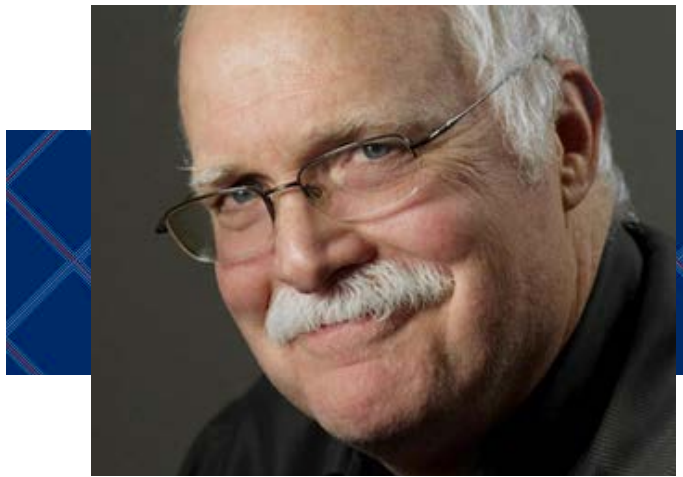
A banker and stockbroker who lived in London, England, in the 1940's.

A day laborer in his sixties in Alexandria, Egypt, in 600 AD.

The unseen truth: This older volunteer is a retired neurosurgeon who was the tenured UBC Professor and Head of Neurosurgery for 12 years at the UBC Division of Neurosurgery and its hospitals.

This businessman has for years anonymously visited and befriended prisoners both in and out of prison.

This banker and stockbroker, Nicholas Winton (née Wertheim), assisted in the rescue of 669 children, most of them Jewish, on the eve of World War II. On a brief visit to Czechoslovakia, he helped compile a list of children in danger of persecution.



After returning home, he worked to fulfill the legal requirements of bringing those children to Britain and finding homes and sponsors for them. His humanitarian accomplishments remained unknown and unnoticed by the world for nearly 50 years until 1988.

This day laborer was a monk called Vatalis of Gaza. At the age of sixty, Vitalis traveled to the city of Alexandria, Egypt, where he hired himself out as a day laborer. Legend states that each night he would take his daily wage to one of the many prostitutes in the city and offer her a night's respite from her work. He would pass the night in conversation and, when she slept, he would pray for her.[This practice was condoned by the Church, and many of the prostitutes he ministered to abandoned their profession and became wives and mothers.

As we walk through life, let us not assume we know someone solely by their outward appearance. All the people mentioned above were followers of Jesus and were being guided by His love and calling on their lives.

"But the LORD said to Samuel, ...The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7

Blessings,
Tom Cooper Founder and President
of City in Focus



HeadsUpGuys is an online resource dedicated to preventing suicide and supporting men in their fight against depression. Our mission is to improve mental health literacy among men, reduce stigma, and provide strategies for effective self-management, ultimately inspiring men to live healthier lives.

The need for HeadsUpGuys became apparent when a survey in a doctor's office revealed that men frequently experienced suicidal thoughts but did not share these with their doctors. This discovery led to the creation of an anonymous online platform tailored specifically for men and their families.

Our website offers practical tips and articles that equip men with tools to combat depression, along with recovery stories from men who have faced similar struggles. Additionally, our international therapist directory helps men connect with local mental health professionals. We offer self-guided courses on mindfulness, anger management, relationship skills, and managing negative thoughts, and we are currently expanding our suite of tools to include more interactive assessments that gauge stress in key areas like relationships, work, and finances, providing personalized feedback and advice.

The importance of our mission is underscored by alarming statistics: men die by suicide at three times the rate of women in Canada, the US, and the UK, and suicide is a leading cause of death for men under 50.

Men are also much less likely than women to seek help for their mental health, with over 75% of men completing our Self Check meeting the criteria for probable depression.

HeadsUpGuys was developed to address these unique challenges and fill a critical gap in mental health services for men. Our content is derived from evidence-based research and includes perspectives from both clinicians and patients to ensure its accuracy and relatability. We envision a world where men prioritize their mental health and suicide is no longer a leading cause of death for men of any age.

Founded by Dr. John Ogrodniczuk, a Professor of Psychiatry and the Director of the Psychotherapy Program at the University of British Columbia (UBC), HeadsUpGuys operates as a program under UBC's Vancouver Campus on the traditional territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. Since its launch in 2015, our resource has reached over 4,500,000 visits from countries around the world.

HeadsUpGuys supports men's mental health in a positive, inclusive, and mutually supportive way, welcoming individuals of all backgrounds regardless of gender, race, or sexual orientation. We do not support discrimination or Men's Rights Activism and stand against misogyny.

Our operational costs are funded exclusively through private donations, allowing us to continue providing this vital resource to men globally.

For more information, visit [HeadsUpGuys](https://HeadsUpGuys.com).



DEPRESSION IN MEN

IT'S NOT A SIGN OF WEAKNESS, IT'S A FACT... GUYS GET DEPRESSED.

COMMON SYMPTOMS

- FEELING DOWN OR HOPELESS
- CHANGES IN SLEEP
- TIRED OR HAVING LITTLE ENERGY

OTHER SYMPTOMS IN MEN

- ANGER OR IRRITABILITY
- FEELING STRESSED OUT
- FEELINGS OF GUILT

HEADSUPGUYS

HEADSUPGUYS HAS HELPED MILLIONS OF MEN WORLDWIDE IN THEIR FIGHT AGAINST DEPRESSION BY PROVIDING TIPS, TOOLS, INFORMATION ABOUT PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, AND RECOVERY STORIES.

SHARE OUR RESOURCE

LET THE MEN IN YOUR LIFE KNOW THAT RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE.



in



INFO@HEADSUPGUYS.ORG

SUPPORT HEADSUPGUYS

JOIN THE FIGHT AND DONATE TO KEEP HEADSUPGUYS GOING



BETTER STARTS HERE

HEADSUPGUYS

FOR MEN. ABOUT MEN.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH AND PREVENTING SUICIDE

HEADSUPGUYS.ORG



TAKE OUR STRESS TEST

- IDENTIFY COMMON STRESSORS THAT CAN LEAD OR CONTRIBUTE TO DEPRESSION.

- SHARE THE RESULTS WITH A DOCTOR OR THERAPIST TO KICK-START YOUR CONVERSATION AND RECOVERY.

FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

- TIPS FOR SUPPORTING A GUY WHO MAY BE FIGHTING DEPRESSION
- HOW TO MANAGE SUICIDE RISK
- HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF WHILE SUPPORTING OTHERS



FIND A THERAPIST

- OUR THERAPIST DIRECTORY MAKES IT EASIER FOR MEN TO FIND QUALIFIED THERAPISTS WITH EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE SUPPORTING MEN.

- TALK THERAPY IS ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND WIDELY USED TREATMENTS FOR DEPRESSION.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

IT IS POSSIBLE TO BEAT DEPRESSION

A LOT OF GUYS HAVE MADE IT BACK FROM DARK PLACES THEY NEVER THOUGHT THEY WOULD RETURN FROM.

VISIT HEADSUPGUYS.ORG

- PRACTICAL TIPS FOR FIGHTING DEPRESSION
- HOW TO REACH OUT AND BUILD A SUPPORT SYSTEM
- INFORMATION ABOUT PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
- OVER 80 STORIES FROM MEN WHO HAVE FOUGHT DEPRESSION

TRY OUR SELF CHECK

OUR SCREENING TOOL, THOUGH NOT DIAGNOSTIC, CAN HELP INFORM A GUY ABOUT HIS HEALTH AND PROVIDE PROMPTS FOR ACTION.



WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Welcome to our HeadsUpGuys Community.

If you are representing or inquiring for a group or organization, please see [Our Partners](#) page for how to partner with us.

VOLUNTEER WITH US

We are always open to having committed volunteers join us in our mission to prevent depression and suicide.

Potential volunteer roles include helping with outreach, blog writing, web or marketing expertise, graphic design, social media promotion, video production, etc.

We meet individually with potential volunteers to carve out a role that is beneficial to both us and you.

To learn more, please [contact us](#) with some about yourself, why you are interested in helping, and the skills and expertise you would bring to HeadsUpGuys.

SUBMIT YOUR STORY

We maintain an ongoing series with [over 100 depression recovery stories](#).

If you are a man who has fought depression, please reach out to info@headsupguys.org for more information about our submission process.

SHARE ON SOCIAL

Sharing a link to our home page or a specific article you found helpful via social media can help start important conversations and remove the stigma around depression.

Highlighted Videos:

- [HeadsUpGuys PSA \[0:30\]](#)
- [Surviving Depression and Suicide: Josh's Story \[3:45\]](#)
- [Men, mental health and ending the 'man up' mentality | CBC News: The National \[5:42\]](#)

HELP RAISE FUNDS

Start a fundraiser to help raise funds and awareness of depression in men.

Fundraisers are a great way to create awareness within different communities, start important conversations, and help ensure our resources can continue to stay active and grow into the future.

Learn more about how to:

START A FUNDRAISER

MAKE A DONATION

Help sustain HeadsUpGuys. Please see our [donation page](#) for more information on how to make a donation.

DONATE NOW



SHARE PRINT MATERIAL

Health clinics, counselling centres, university student health centres, pharmacies, mental health presentations and workshops, etc. can share our printed resources.



THE POWER OF A PERSONALIZED MUSIC PLAYLIST IN DEMENTIA CARE



In the quiet corners of countless homes and serene halls of nursing facilities, the silent battle against dementia rages on. Over 477,000 Canadians aged 65 and older are grappling with this condition, often facing the harsh realities of social isolation and depression. Amid this struggle, a simple yet profoundly impactful tool has emerged: personalized music playlists. Picture your elderly neighbour, her memories slipping away like sand through her fingers, suddenly humming along to a familiar tune from her youth. This is the transformative power of music in dementia care a tool that brings light and connection to those living in the shadows of memory loss.

The Heart and Science of Music

Music has a unique ability to touch our souls and stimulate our brains. When someone listens to music, both hemispheres of their brain light up, creating a powerful harmony that can enhance memory and cognitive function. Imagine your loved one, lost in the fog of dementia, finding clarity and calm through the rhythmic beats of their favorite song. Studies have found that music set at 60 beats per minute can synchronize with the brain, inducing alpha brainwaves that promote relaxation and reduce stress. This can soothe agitation, a common challenge in dementia care.

Moreover, music increases blood flow to various parts of the brain, delivering vital oxygen and nutrients that boost cognitive function.

This means that your father, who struggles to remember your name, might experience moments of clarity when his favorite childhood melody plays. Upbeat tunes can lift spirits, reduce depression, and encourage movement, transforming a dull afternoon into a joyful dance party.

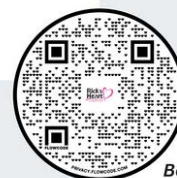
Emotional and Social Harmony

Music has a profound emotional impact, especially for those living with dementia who often feel isolated and disconnected. A familiar song can evoke memories of special moments, providing comfort and a sense of continuity. Imagine the joy on your grandmother's face as she hears the song that played at her wedding, her eyes lighting up with recognition. This emotional connection can alleviate loneliness and foster a sense of community and belonging.

Creating personalized playlists, tailored to the individual's tastes and memories, can amplify this effect. By including songs that hold personal significance, caregivers can unlock a treasure chest of emotions and memories.

THE ONLY SOLUTION TO THE OVERDOSE CRISIS IS COMPASSION

You never know what battle the person next to you is fighting. This Christmas Season let's work on spreading KINDNESS, EMPATHY, and GRACE.



Be the reasons some smiles today. Be the reason someone feels loved and believes in the goodness in people."

~ Roy T. Bennett



This personalized touch not only deepens the emotional response but also promotes social interaction. Picture a family gathering where everyone sings along to grandpa's favorite tunes, creating new memories while honoring old ones.

Creating the Perfect Playlist

Creating a personalized music playlist for a loved one with dementia is a labor of love. Start by talking to family members and friends to learn about the person's musical preferences and significant songs from their past. Was there a song that always played during family road trips? Was there a favorite artist they couldn't get enough of? Are there any songs associated with key milestones in their life? Compile these cherished tunes into a playlist that can bring a smile to their face.

Consider the tempo and mood of the music. Include calming songs for moments of relaxation and more energetic tracks to lift their spirits and encourage movement. Modern technology makes this easier than ever; digital music platforms allow you to store and play these playlists conveniently, adapting as your loved one's preferences change.

Real-Life Impact: Heart For Music Program

Rick's Heart Foundation's "Heart for Music" program is a beacon of hope and connection for individuals living with dementia. Recognizing the profound impact of music on cognitive and emotional well-being, the foundation has dedicated itself to bringing personalized music experiences to those in need.

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~ Roy T. Bennett



Through this initiative, volunteers and caregivers work together to create customized playlists that resonate with each individual's personal history and preferences. These playlists are delivered via modern digital devices, ensuring easy access and seamless integration into daily routines.

The "Heart for Music" program not only enriches the lives of those with dementia by unlocking memories and lifting spirits but also fosters a sense of community and shared joy among participants and their loved ones.

By harmonizing the power of music with compassionate care, Rick's Heart Foundation is making a tangible difference in the lives of many, one melody at a time. It has provided personalized music programs to seniors in over 200 care homes across Canada.

TO THE PARENTS OF SAINT JOHN PAUL II ACADEMY STUDENTS

Thank you for allowing me to serve you as the President of the 2023-2024 Saint John Paul II Academy Parent Association. This year has been an amazing opportunity to lead, serve, grow, and make a difference. I would like to express my profound appreciation to the rest of the Executives:

Michelle Ceniza – Vice President
Yvonne Wacker – Treasurer
Daisy Lifvenborg – Secretary
Holly King – Hot Lunch Coordinator
Adriana Manso – Member at Large
Jofranz Gallego – Member at Large
Ralph Ceniza – Member at Large

Of course, the Parent Association would not be without its members, the parents. Thank you all for all your hard work, contributions and support this year.

This year we focused our activities in supporting the students and their activities and creating a stronger community.

The Potluck dinner we had in September was a wonderful opportunity for families to reconnect and welcome new families to SJPII. The evening was filled with laughter, trivia and bingo games that accompanied the delicious food brought by families.

In October parents helped organized the Feast of Saint John Paul II in which the students were also served Saint John Paul's favorite dessert: kremowka, an exquisite cake is made of puff pastry filled with cream.

At the Grade 10, 11 and 12 overnight retreats, parents provided lunch, dinner, and breakfast. In December we assisted the school in various activities such as Open House



Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration, and a Christmas pancake breakfast for students before Christmas break. We also hosted another successful potluck dinner and Christmas cookie exchange.

Maintaining the spirit of Lent, parents provided a hunger lunch our staff and students on Ash Wednesday as it symbolizes, simplicity, self-discipline, and solidarity with those who are less fortunate.

Parents also supported the Student Council and Grade 12's fundraising efforts such as the Valentine's Dance, Mother's Day flower bouquets, and a number of concession stands held during athletic events hosted by our school.

The school's very first drama production "The Trial of the Wicked Witch", was financially supported by the Parent Association. We also held a concession at intermission, with proceeds supporting the Grade 12 grad activities.



SJPII Academy Parent Association disbursed \$7,000 to support the school in various areas such as academics, athletics, extracurricular activities, bursary/scholarship, and Student Council.

I must acknowledge the dedication, contribution and support of our principal, Lorraine Paruzzolo who supported our efforts to make the 2023-2024 a very successful year. I wish her all the best in her future endeavors.



Finally, I am excited to welcome the 2024-2025 Parent Association Executive. The new Executive was elected at the May 30th, AGM.

Silvia Cardenas – President
Margarita Diaz – Vice President
Piotr Majnusz – Treasurer
Samantha Watt - Secretary

It has been an honour to be the President of the SJPII Academy Parent Association.

Gabriela Nieto - President



LADY OF THE MOUNTAIN

Whistler Catholic Community's journey began in December 1986 with the aspiration to construct a Catholic Church, starting with a multipurpose center and later envisioning a new church.

In June 2021, the parish community, inspired by a few individuals, voted overwhelmingly in support of building a new church at Our Lady of the Mountains Parish. This vision aims to create a magnificent spiritual destination, attracting national and international Catholic events while also serving the local community with daycare facilities and meeting spaces.

Through dedicated fundraising efforts, over \$4.5 million has been pledged and raised, surpassing 91% of the \$5 million goal solely through private donations. The community's generosity and commitment have propelled this project forward in just over a year of active fundraising, without financial assistance from the Diocese of Kamloops.



The design process, overseen by the Building committee and Church design committee, has evolved through multiple revisions to incorporate feedback from the community and professionals, emphasizing the spiritual and educational significance of various church elements.

In the realm of evangelization, the parish has successfully hosted fundraising events, Holy Family Caminos, and retreats, fostering a vibrant faith community through Bible Studies and Group Rosaries.

Plans to explore the establishment of a daycare facility in Whistler further underscore the community's commitment to building a strong foundation of faith.

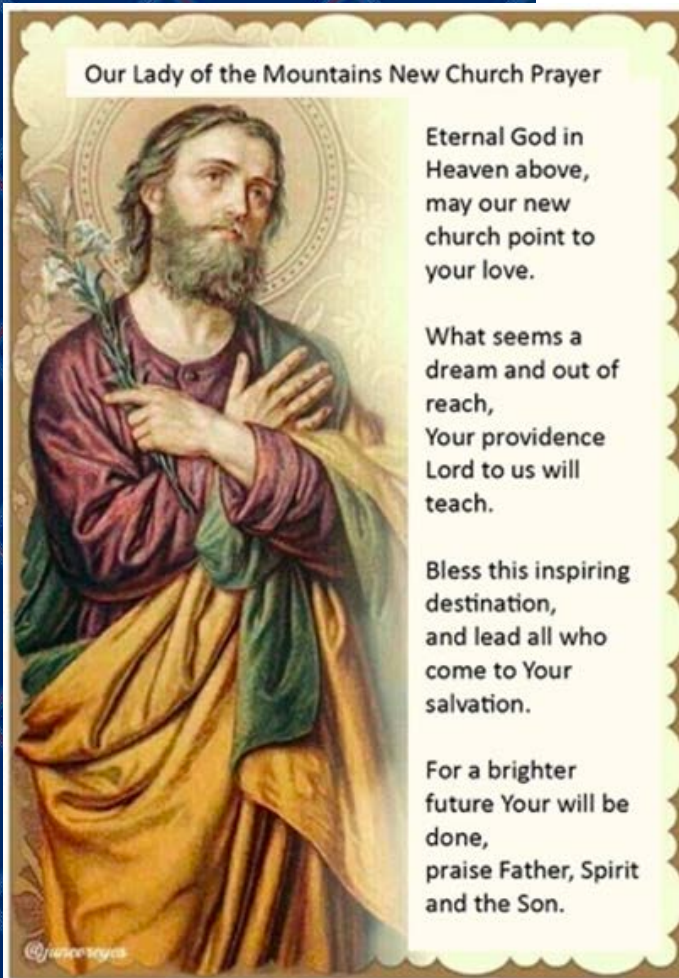
As the journey continues, milestones achieved and future plans, such as completing building permit drawings and commencing construction in 2023, reflect the community's unwavering dedication and anticipation of the blessings that the new Church will bring under the guidance of Fr. Andrew L'Heureux.



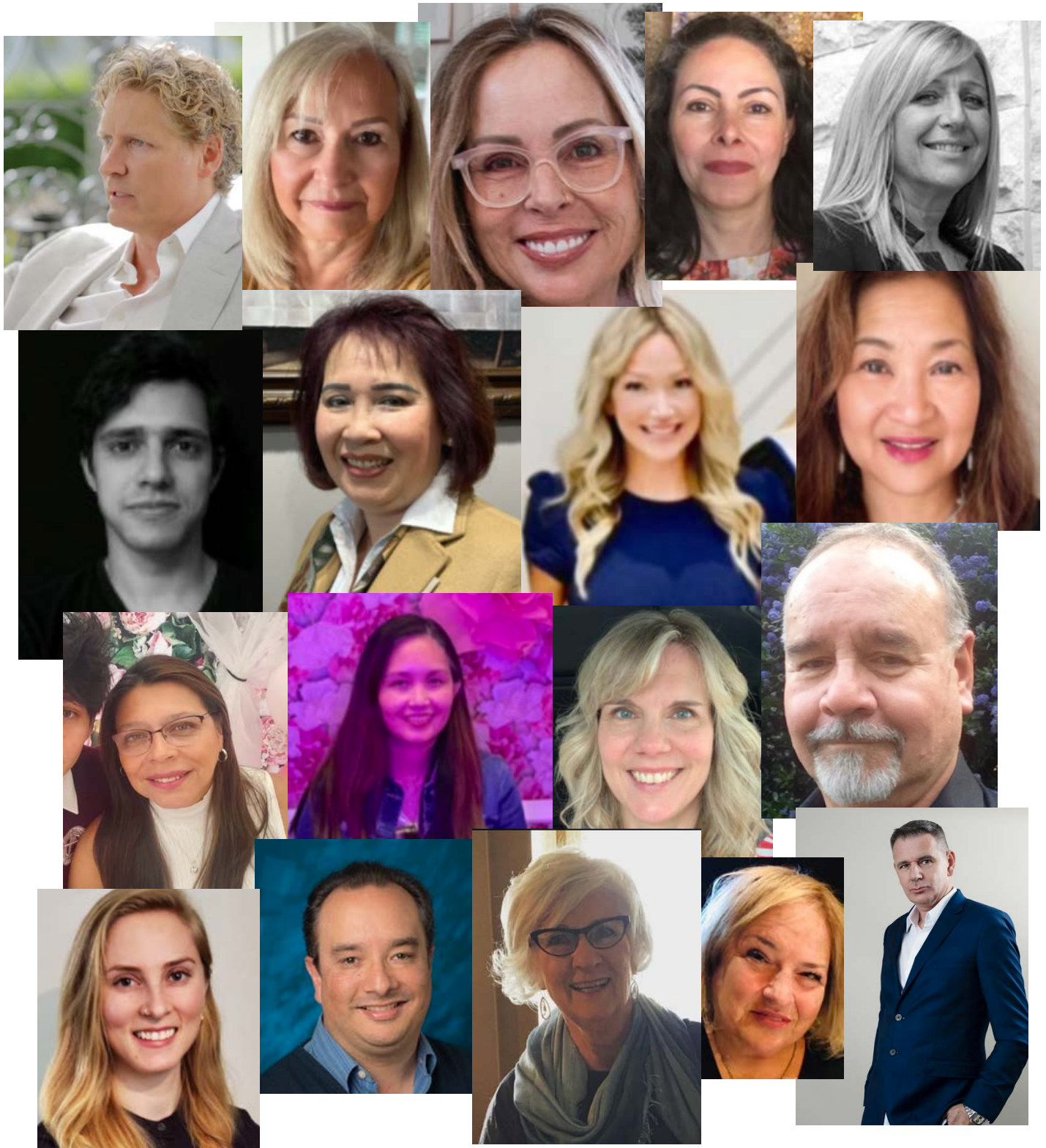
The exciting journey of the Whistler Catholic Community over the past two years has been a testament to God's timing and providence. From a vision to a conceptual design, fueled by parish enthusiasm and discernment, the community has made significant progress towards fulfilling the dream of building a new Church.

With \$4.7 million raised of the original \$5 million goal, miraculous commitments from generous donors and dedicated parishioners have propelled the campaign forward. The architectural firm, Oberti Oberto, has exceeded expectations, and milestones such as submitting the Development Permit and progressing towards the Building Permit showcase the community's dedication. Despite challenges like cost increases and inflation, the community remains focused on efficient fund utilization while upholding the project's essence of glorifying God. The journey continues with gratitude towards every donor and individual involved, as the Whistler Catholic Community strives to make their parish a spiritual destination of hope and transformation.

By Andy Szocs



THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO IS INVOLVED WITH THE ROYALS BALL



SAINT JOHN PAUL II ACADEMY
PRESENTS

THE ROYALS BALL

JOURNEY BACK IN TIME WITH AN EVENING OF VINTAGE
GLAMOUR AS YOU JOIN US TO SECURE A PROMISING
FUTURE. EMBARK ON A 1924 THEMED FEAST OF THE
SENSES AS WE CELEBRATE AT OUR FIRST GALA, "THE
ROYALS BALL."

*Proceeds go towards student bursaries fund.

◆ ————— ◆
Save the date. October 19, 2024.

And for more information please download our QR Code



KORLE-BU NEUROSCIENCE FOUNDATION

Twenty-four years ago, I was approached in the VGH Neuro ICU by a young Ghanaian neurosurgeon who was participating in a year-long neurosurgery fellowship sponsored by the University of British Columbia Division of Neurosurgery. He was the first Ghanaian neurosurgeon wholly trained in country. Dr. Dakurah asked: Would I consider coming to Ghana to train his nurses? A neuroscience nurse educator at the time, I immediately felt that this was something that I was destined to do. I reached out to my nursing colleagues and a neurosurgery project was born.

Prior to his departure, a list of needs was compiled and within weeks, educational resources, medical consumables, beds and equipment were donated by the Ministry of Health and enroute to Ghana.



Fast forward to today, Korle-Bu Neuroscience Foundation (KBNF) a registered BC non-profit since 2002, as the governance foundation for 2 Canadian charities, collaborates with five national governments and local partners to develop neuroscience care in West Africa. Our foundation pillars include education and training, shipping of medical equipment and supplies, neurosurgical missions and infrastructure development.

Our purpose is to enhance the delivery and quality of healthcare in West Africa. We provide medical supplies, services, and training that would otherwise be unavailable.

Our focus is to develop fully equipped, staffed, and self-sustaining neuroscience programs and facilities.



**Korle-Bu
Neuroscience
Foundation**





Building neurosurgery in any country is daunting. Consequently, KBNF is one of the only foundations (and in some cases the only foundation) doing what we are doing in West Africa. We serve only where we are invited, either by Heads of State, government ministries, university administrators, hospital administrators or neuro specialists. Our principal nations include Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia.

Everything comes at a cost. What motivates KBNF to rise to seemingly insurmountable challenges and deliver expert compassionate care is purpose - embracing the principle that we are born to serve. Serving is a privilege. Heart powered service – caring with your heart, caring with compassion, - reaches the deepest crevices of the soul. Someone cares. Someone really cares about me.

One of our neurosurgery missions to Tappita in the eastern region of Liberia required one of our mission neurosurgeons to transport from the airport 4 hours to Gunta by a health service vehicle, followed by transfer to a trailblazer truck capable of handling rugged roads for the next 4 hour portion of the journey. Entrenched in muck and mire enroute, a second rugged truck was expedited and when embedded once again,

a motorcycle was dispatched. Through the darkness of night, while carrying surgery tools on his back, Dr. Bankole was successfully transported through the jungle to Tappita. And nary a complaint. Our KBNF neurosurgeons and team share this common quality, they are all fearless trailblazers, and they care.

KBNF entered 2023 conducting our 33rd West African mission including our 8th Liberian neurosurgery mission. One patient particularly pressed me daily to be given the opportunity to share his story. Having renewed independence due to restorative spine fixation during our 2022 neurosurgery mission (after being homebound for 7 years due to mobility issues), Thomas was back to have the second phase of spine stabilization on a different vertebrae level conducted. Prior to my departure, I captured his story. With tears in his eyes and his voice broken with emotion, he shared how when he had had no way going forward to financially afford surgery, his life had been restored by KBNF. Advocating for others similarly trapped by encouraging donors of the dramatic impact their support reaches, was his priority.



I am asked how we can be sure that we are building sustainable health care. My answer, we partner with champions. In my books, a champion is a visionary who takes the meagre resources they have and takes the first steps to create an altruistic dream.

My favorite example is a KBNF partner Dr. Gladstone Kessie, founder and director of Mt. Olives Hospital in the interior of Ghana. He dreamed of building a Heart Powered hospital that would open their doors to serve the community and the poor. Dr. Kessie purchased property, a miracle in itself, and on weekends, when he had the funds, he and his wife built bricks.

Thousands of bricks. And when he had enough bricks to start construction, a hospital was built. And KBNF provided the hospital contents. The doors opened, and today, up to 7,000 patients attend Mt. Olives monthly.



A heart powered saying I have adapted from a quote by Edward Everett Hale (1902) cousin of Helen Keller resonates with all our African family:

I am only one, but still I am one,
I cannot do everything, but I can do something,
And I will choose to do the something that I can do.

Everyone can do something, but it's a choice. KBNF makes choices every day. And delivers on those choices. We are /nurturing hope, confidence, and the possibility that dreams both near and abroad may just become reality.

I invite you to join with us, whether a donor or a volunteer, both here in Vancouver or abroad, to partner with our West African community of champions. For more information email hello@kbnf.org or visit our website www.kbnf.org.

Marj Ratel RN BSN
Founder / President
Korle-Bu Neuroscience Foundation / Korle-Bu Foundation (Canada)



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