

Stories from the Heart

Solar Panels, Sustainability, and Sisters!

Future generations of SHSH students will be walking into a greener school thanks to a little luck, a commitment to environmental action, and the generosity of the RSCJ.



Last year, Sacred Heart School submitted a bid to be part of the Solar Electricity for Community Building Pilot Program created by Nova Scotia Department of Energy & Mines in partnership with Clean Nova Scotia, to encourage clean energy transition in our community. Our bid, created in partnership with Natural Forces Construction, led by SHSH parent and supporter Robb Apold, was to design, build, and install a solar photovoltaic (PV) array on the roof of the School and to sell the PV energy created from it to Nova Scotia Power at a 20-year fixed-price contract. We were thrilled to learn that our bid was successful.

That was just the first step. With that win under our belts, we went to work with Natural Forces Construction and completed a feasibility study to ensure we had the capacity and resources to move forward. That study was completed earlier this year, and approved by our Board of Governors. Now all we needed was the financial support to build the system that would allow us to start generating our own energy, and in turn, revenue.



That's when we were blessed with a little divine intervention. The RSCJ has a corporation called The Ladies of the Sacred Heart that oversees an investment fund that typically supports bursary students at our School. Sr. Anne-Marie Conn '65 not only serves on that Corporation, she also sits on the Facilities Committee of our SHSH Board. Aware of the School's solar opportunity, and dedicated to environmental issues, Sr. Conn had the brilliant idea to make the Corporation's remaining funds work doubly hard - for kids and the environment. She proposed that The Ladies of the Sacred Heart Corporation invest the balance of their funds in the solar project with the desire that the revenue from the project be used to support students in need of tuition assistance. The RSCJ enthusiastically endorsed her vision, and their gift of \$169,000 is allowing SHSH to move forward with this opportunity, which is estimated to generate \$15,000-\$18,000 in annual revenue over the next 20 years.

For Sr. Conn, this was personal. She is passionately interested in sustainability, and protecting our planet. "Our planet is a gift from God and we're abusing it. I'd like to see a better future for our earth, and we need to do whatever we can to protect it." She believes further, that this is a great opportunity for our students, to help them reclaim the awe we, and they, felt as little children when we explored nature. While the School is, of course, the RSCJ's greatest legacy, Sr. Conn thinks this investment in the School's sustainable future is a close second.

When she first heard about the solar project, alumna Debbie Coles '71 also wanted in! Her \$10,000 gift was the first donation to the project. Our fundraising goal is \$250,000 - a sum that will fully cover the remaining cost of installation, HST, annual maintenance and replacement parts for the next 20 years. Those who are interested in supporting this project please contact Director of Advancement, [Miriam Regan '80](#).

On behalf of our current and future students, we send heartfelt thanks to Sr. Conn and all of her RSCJ sisters, Debbie Coles '71, and Robb Apold. Thanks to their generosity, the commitment to our future is bright. And green!

Covid Relief Fund Kick-Started By Alumna Tabitha Rogers



In 1989, when Tabitha Rogers wanted to come to Sacred Heart for Grade 11, it was at a time in her life when she needed the ideals and the academic rigour the School offered. First she had to convince Headmistress Ms. Scott to let her in! She did, thankfully, and the chance Ms. Scott took on Tabitha turned out extremely well both for her and for Sacred Heart. Tabitha, who excelled at science in high school, is now a psychiatrist and Clinical Lead for an in-patient psychiatric program in Ottawa. She adores her job and working with her patients. And while she has had to move her practice to a virtual model, she and her husband were gratefully unscathed by the pandemic. When she read about the need for support of the School's COVID Relief Fund, she jumped at the opportunity - she was the first to make a donation to the School's COVID Relief Fund with a generous gift of \$5,000. For Tabitha, it was an opportunity to help another student receive the same life-changing Sacred Heart experience she had so many years ago, and it speaks volumes about her Sacred Heart experience, which she still raves about. We are deeply grateful for Tabitha's strong advocacy of Sacred Heart and of course for her very generous gift.



Welcome to Our Newest Alums!

To say this year's graduating class had an unexpected end to their high school career would be an understatement! Thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Class of 2020 unfortunately didn't get the chance to have many of Sacred Heart's treasured ceremonies in person. But one thing they were intent on having was some kind of personal graduation ceremony where they could see each other. With a little push from our grads, and thanks to the incredible devotion and efforts of our Senior School Academic Team - Principal Wallace MacAskill and Vice Principals Laura Elworthy and Craig Pinches - and a small army of people supporting them, we were able to grant their wish. With permission from public health officials and the first loosening of restrictions in the two weeks before the scheduled graduation ceremony, the team kicked it into high gear and planned an outdoor ceremony in the Patricia Donnelly Courtyard. Each student and their bubbled family had their own designated space overlooking the Courtyard to watch the ceremony. Down below, a limited number of people, physically distanced, carried out the proceedings. You can watch the recordings of the full ceremonies, which were live-streamed on YouTube, [here](#). Thanks so much to the alums who answered the call for greetings; you can watch the wonderful [video](#) we compiled and played to welcome the Class of 2020 as our newest alums. Congratulations to the graduates - we look forward to seeing what mark these resilient and talented young adults will make on the world!



These photos were created using the magic of photoshop! The graduates were photographed individually and our talented Digital Coordinator Sofia Ortega made these wonderful composite photos.

Graduate Kogie Esteban Leaves His Mark Already!

Immediately after his graduation ceremony, new alumnus Kogie Esteban, an international student from the Philippines and this year's Fountain Academy Valedictorian, made a personal donation to the COVID Relief Fund. We thought his valedictory speech was a gift! His donation speaks volumes about his commitment to our School and the positive experience he had during his time here. Kogie says he really wants to give back to the School that gave him so much and he hopes in the future to return here to teach. Thank you so much Kogie for your leadership and generosity!



A 40-Year Reflection

I could say that "it seems like yesterday" when, on a sunny day in the spring of 1980, all 14 of us in the graduating class posed on the grass in front of the portry for an impromptu photo. But that saying would be a cliché. And it would be wrong. It was not yesterday. It was 40 years ago. Neither cell phones nor the internet existed back then. Music was played on cassettes. TV shows were watched when they aired. Cars did not park themselves. Grocery lists were not dictated to Alexa.

Since our graduation, we've gone out into the world as accomplished, polished, professional women. And in that world we celebrated forty New Year's Eves, birthdays and Christmases. We've had 2,000 Sunday brunches. We've awakened to about 9,000 workday alarms and cashed almost 1,000 bi-weekly paycheques. We've gone on to further studies (registering in *person*, with *paper* course catalogues!), and we've travelled (with *paper* tickets). We've had relationships, known the joy of love, and felt the despair of loss.

Of the 12 who remain today, nine of us are still in touch in one form or another (largely with the aid of technology). We've attended 10th, 20th and 30th reunions at a rowdy table (yes, we were "*that*" kind of class). We've supported each other. We've celebrated one another, including the lives of our dear classmates Pauline (Brick) DeLory, 2006 and Heather (Stinson) Deschaines, 2018, who both passed away far too young. We became, *and remain*, a community. A priceless, invaluable community. A Convent of the Sacred Heart Community.

Submitted by Paula Farmer '80

Note - The Class of 1980 had reunion plans to gather in person in June. Due to the pandemic, they will gather on a Zoom call instead. Even a pandemic won't stop these "Old Girls" from staying connected - at least every ten years!



Keep on Dancing!



When the pandemic hit in earnest, Kailena Van de Nes '01, and her husband were still enjoying their March Break on a beach in Mexico. While still on holiday, they realized that their business - KV Dance Studio in Ottawa - was going to need to change fast, and they started plotting their pivot. They were fortunate to get the last flight out of Cozumel into Montreal before the borders were shut down, and then they hit the ground running.

Kailena worked with her team to quickly transition 90 of their regularly-scheduled classes to an online platform while at the same time ensuring their teachers received training in online delivery. It was so successful that Kailena went from teaching 19 classes per week to 32, and her studio instructors were able to teach additional drop-in adult classes. They even hosted an Enchanted Ball Dance Party for 40 dancers in April!

While she recognizes these times are difficult and uncertain, Kailena appreciates that she's been able to virtually teach friends and families across Canada, and that her classes have provided a valuable and healthy outlet for her pupils to express themselves. To learn more visit www.kvdancestudio.ca.



A Special Delivery Loaded With Meaning

Back in early December a lovely bouquet of flowers arrived at the front desk of the School. The card didn't indicate to whom they were for, only from whom they came. Passing by the front desk, Librarian Ms. Tarulli offered to bring them to the library to add some colour there. That same day, Heather White, mother of Grade 8 student Hannah Sarty, wrote to Sister Wachter with a remarkable story. Over 100 years ago, Hannah's great grandmother, Florence Cullom White (pictured here), was sent from New York to attend boarding school at Sacred Heart School of Montreal. That School must have had a meaningful impact on her because for many years after her death, her husband Richard Smeaton White, Heather's grandfather, continued to send flowers to the School monthly in Florence's memory. This story only came to light recently, when Heather's parents learned of it from her aunt, Noreen White Cageorge, who too was a Sacred Heart School of Montreal alumna. To mark the anniversary of Florence's birthday, Heather's parents sent flowers to our School for faculty and students to enjoy. It's a testament to the power of the Sacred Heart network and as Heather so eloquently summed up "... the positive and enduring impact teachers and a school can have on a child's life." Thank you to the White/Sarty family for their thoughtful gift that spans generations.



Choices, Choices, Choices!

Congratulations to Inge Donovan '15 who recently finished her Bachelor of Arts in Architecture from the University of Toronto. Inge was offered full scholarships at three top notch universities in the United States - Princeton, MIT, and Harvard - to pursue her Masters of Architecture degree. Now that's impressive! After many sleepless nights, Inge decided on MIT and will start there in the fall. Inge credits SHSH for setting her up for success. We're awfully proud, and we can't wait to see how Inge will *build* on her success!



The Board Gets Their Man!

The SHSH Board of Governors is pleased to welcome its very first male alum designate - Richard Drake '12. Richard loves school! After graduating from Fountain Academy, he earned a BA in linguistics and a BSc in psychology at SMU, and then went on to Dalhousie where he completed his Master's Degree in experimental psychology. Richard is currently working towards his PhD in cognitive psychology at Dal, focusing on the measurement and training of attention, memory, and multitasking. Outside of academia, Richard and his wife Paige can be found eagerly pursuing their passion for stock car racing. Richard is joining the Board for a one-year term starting in July 2020.



RSCJ Renew Their Vows – *With a Twist!*



Above: Some of our Halifax-based RSCJ from June 2019; first row (l-r) Mildred Peterkin, Madeline Thibeau, Merle Pederson, Theresa Chu; back row (l-r) Anne-Marie Conn, Maureen Little (USA), Sally McLean, Anne Leonard, Kim King, Anne Wachter, Beverley McNamara, Mary-Ann Bates, Norma Heffernan, Josephine Wright, Donna Dolan.

On Friday, June 19th, 2020, the Feast of the Sacred Heart, Religious of the Sacred Heart around the world symbolically renewed their vows, as is tradition. These times in which we find ourselves added a first-for-everyone twist for the North American RSCJ who participated via a Zoom webinar with over 700 people. We were joined by Associates who renewed their commitments to live Sacred Heart Spirituality in their lives - Educators who renewed their promise to educate according to the Goals and Criteria of Sacred Heart Education; Children of Mary who renewed their dedication to Mary, Mother of God; relatives, friends, alums, and colleagues.

It was a grand coming together; albeit a virtual one. The Spirit that has carried each of us through the multiple recent global and local upheavals was present and continues to inspire. Each RSCJ in Halifax (Theresa Chu, Madeline Thibeau, Mildred Peterkin, Anne Leonard, Merle Pederson, Beverley McNamara, Norma Heffernan, Anne Wachter, Donna Dolan, Anne-Marie Conn, and Kim King) has come through this time in her own way, but come through we have. After these recent months, Barat Spirituality Centre is looking toward fall and the possibility of hosting guests and programs once again. Sacred Heart School of Halifax is in full planning mode for how to best meet the educational needs of students while also complying with federal and provincial health protocols. Some have written more during this time and several have been painting; vegetables and flowers have been planted and plans made for the bounty expected; socks have been knit and sweaters completed, many prayers said, and Saint Madeleine Sophie's words have been uttered time and again as we each look at the world from our own perspective and wonder the best way to be a presence of Love, in a world that is in such desperate need. Courage et Confiance.

Submitted by Sr. Kim King, RSCJ



On behalf of our students, faculty, and staff, we send thanks to our Prayer Sisters whose daily prayers are always appreciated, but were especially welcome over the past few months.

TIDBITS

Kudos to **Oisín Heavey '16** who joined the Canadian Army Reserves this year while also pursuing his Electrical Engineering Degree at NSCC. He hopes to combine his engineering degree into a meaningful military career.

Congratulations to **Veronica Vermeulen (Smit) '09** and her husband Matt who recently had a baby boy, Landon Theodore Smit.

A big thumbs up to **Anas (Andy) Samman '16**, who has chosen to pursue his medical degree at the University of Toronto.

Congratulations to **Henry Machum '13**, who graduated from Queen's University with his Bachelor of Law Degree. And congrats are in order as well for his younger brother, **Alexander Machum '15**, who graduated with a B.A. from the University of New Brunswick.

A standing ovation to **Gabrielle Berard '02** and her husband Patrick who recently had a baby girl, Grace.

Congratulations!



Planning a Reunion?



You could be like the Class of 1971 and plan ahead - they've already booked the dates for their 50-year reunion for July 30-August 2 in Halifax next year. If you graduated in 2011, 2001, 1991, 1981, 1971, 1961, 1951, 1941, 1931 or earlier, and want to gather with your classmates, please contact **Miriam Regan '80** for assistance in planning your special event.

2020 – The Year That Changed Everything?

Obviously the last third of this school year was...different. Unprecedented has been used so many times, but it's accurate - there was no playbook for a global pandemic. We are proud of how the School pivoted to a distance learning experience for our students. And while we know it wasn't perfect - we all missed being together - it was a good solution to ensure the health and safety of our students while they successfully completed their year. During the pandemic, we provided a wealth of resources - blog posts, articles, prayers, and information - to our community. You can find all of these [here](#), including our online Prayer Corner which makes it easy for anyone to submit their intentions anytime. You might also enjoy two of this year's excellent speeches which were inspired by COVID-19 - Megan Campbell's Prize Day [remarks](#), and James Compton's Grade 6 valedictorian video [speech](#).

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Share your stories, news, photos, and announcements, or pass along regards to a favourite teacher or former classmate. [Drop Miriam an email!](#)

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