

# Stories from the Heart



## 101 AND STILL GOING **STRONG!**

**Ruth (Wallace) Graham '43** is a bit of a joker. In fact on her calendar that she keeps in her home, she has April 1st circled so she can remember to play yet another prank on her friend who falls for it every year. According to Ruth, she's the most gullible person she's ever known. And at 101, Ruth has known a lot of people!

Ruth is Sacred Heart's second oldest living alumna. She attended Sacred Heart from Grade Primary to Grade 10, and still fondly remembers her days here. With the exception of the uniforms. They were, according to her, a hideous brown colour.

Ruth was one of 15 children, the second youngest girl of seven. As good Catholics, or "big-time Catholics" as she put it, all of the girls came to the "Convent" while all of the boys went to Saint Mary's.

It was, of course, a very different time and in a very different school. She was taught by the nuns whom she recalls as being very kind and very fun. And she would know, as it seems having fun was Ruth's only mission in life. She didn't take her studies too seriously; the only thing she excelled at she says, was having a good time. University, which was rare for women at that time was offered to her but she scoffed at the notion as she had "...no more ambition than her cat."

Instead, Ruth took secretarial courses at Mount Saint Vincent University, content working in various offices here and abroad over her career. It was wartime during her years at MSVU, and Ruth recalls her family taking an active part in the war effort, with four of her brothers serving in the military and two of her sisters volunteering with The Canadian Red Cross. Ruth helped out in a different way — she got herself and her friends to the local dances so the men stationed in Halifax would have some company. It was there that she met her first love, Don. But because Ruth felt marriage proposals were a dime a dozen at that time, she declined his in favour of waiting for Don to return. Unfortunately, Don was killed in action. A couple of years later, his mother invited her to come to the UK to visit, and Ruth ended up staying to live and work for a short time, which was a great adventure.

It wasn't until decades later that Ruth accepted another marriage proposal. This time from Bruce Graham. She was 65, and just about ready to settle down! They lived a happy life together for many years until Bruce passed away in 2011.



Ruth's favourite memories of her time at Sacred Heart are the retreats. Held once a year, these three-day spiritual breaks were required for all of the students and they got to "board" for the weekend — a big adventure. They were supposed to pray and remain quiet. Ruth did not. They were also supposed to renounce boys and other frivolous undertakings. Ruth did not. In fact, she recalls after one of the retreats, her boyfriend at the time was waiting for her at the gate when she got out.

Ruth has had a full life. She spent most of it in Halifax, working and enjoying her very extended family. She has also volunteered extensively, and dabbled in art over the years. In 2014 she combined the two when she was volunteering at The Daily Bread and started drawing some of the local unhoused people she was helping. In these portraits, Ruth captures the humanity of these individuals and lets them know they were seen. Many of these portraits can still be found in the basement of Saint Mary's Cathedral Basilica. You can read more about this special undertaking [here](#).

Ruth is a familiar face for many in the Sacred Heart community. She has been a strong supporter and great ambassador of Sacred Heart. When she can, she attends alum events, Christmas Fairs, and other School activities. She also goes to the Barat Spirituality Centre, which is just down the street from her Spring Garden Road apartment, for Sunday mass. It was there in December that they celebrated her 101st birthday with a breakfast and cake that she enjoyed immensely. She's wondering what will be on tap for her 102nd!

# FULL CIRCLE MOMENT FOR ALUMNA AND SOON-TO-BE TEACHER

## Sarah Polley



We are thrilled to welcome Sarah Polley '16 to Sacred Heart for her fourth and final teaching practicum on her way to graduating with her teaching degree from St.FX. It's quite a full-circle moment for Sarah as she takes on the teaching load of her former teacher, Kathleen Bekkers.

Sarah always knew she was going to be a teacher, she felt called to it. And since science and math came easily to her, she knew that's where she wanted to specialize. She graduated from the University of Toronto in 2021 with an Honours BSc with a major in Human Biology and a minor in Education and then moved to Antigonish for her final two years in the Education Program.

As part of the program, she is required to take on four teaching practicums. Since she had such a positive experience at Sacred Heart as a student, she wanted to come back to experience life on the flip side of the coin. So, for her final placement, she made a special application for an "alternate" practicum in the private school system so she could join us.

Sarah has already been through three practicums in the public system, and although she enjoyed each of them, so far her time here stands apart. First, because the teachers, many of whom she had herself, have been so welcoming, and secondly because she finds the atmosphere here so different. She feels there is a higher standard at Sacred Heart, with well-behaved students who are focused. It makes for much easier classroom management.

Sarah's practicum will last until June when she will finish her degree and receive her teaching certification. With that in hand, she plans to head to the United Kingdom to teach for a year before hopefully heading home and perhaps back to Sacred Heart to continue her career.

We're thrilled that Sarah has come back and is giving back, carrying on our important educational legacy.

# FACULTY PROFILE

## Jared Griffiths



Sports have always been a major part of Jared Griffiths' life. Since the age of three, he's played just about every sport imaginable. He excelled early at hockey and played at the AAA level in his youth, but he switched his focus later in high school to soccer. A move which paid off when he earned a scholarship to the University of Maine at Presque Isle in Northern Maine. There he played hard and worked hard, graduating in four years with a BSc in Physical Education and an accompanying teaching certificate.

After substitute teaching for a year in the public school system, Jared arrived on the doorstep of Sacred Heart School in 2009, at the tender age of 22. He's been here ever since; working his way up the administrative ladder.

He first started out as a part-time PhysEd teacher for the Elementary School and Girls' Highschool, now

called Barat Academy. After seven years, he moved on to become the Athletic Director, a role he enjoyed because he gained invaluable experience on the administrative side, especially when he worked with then Head of School Sr. Anne Wachter to combine the boys' and girls' athletic programs into one strong and unified Sharks program. It was also an opportunity to keep close to his sporting roots while mentoring and nurturing young student-athletes.

Over the years, as he watched his students and colleagues learn day in and day out, he realized he wasn't done with his own educational journey and especially wanted to learn more about advancements in pedagogy. In 2020, he started his Master's degree in Educational Leadership at Memorial University. And because his hands weren't full enough with his faculty workload, studying for his Master's, and taking care of his young family, when the opportunity arose to start in a new role as the Dean of Students in the Elementary School, he jumped at it. For him, it was an opportunity to overcome what he considered a new challenge; something that has defined his whole life. It was a pretty natural transition two years later when he moved into the role of Principal, one for which he's about to celebrate his two-year mark.

Jared loves being a Principal. Or at least 95% of the time he does! He knows that parents or even staff won't always agree with his decisions, but he also understands it's part of the role. What he does love is helping someone, whether a student or a faculty member, accomplish something they didn't think they could. That philosophy is also what compelled him to start coaching soccer, which he now does at the elite level. Bringing his passion for the game and ability to draw out the best in people have earned him accolades and success as a coach twice winning Coach Of The Year for Soccer Nova Scotia. Last year, his women's soccer team won the bronze medal at the Canada Games.

This year has been a special one for Jared. He is now a Sacred Heart parent as his oldest child, Hayden, is in the Junior Primary program. Jared has always loved Sacred Heart for the strength of our community, but now that he's seen it in action on an even more personal level, he is overwhelmed by the value of the program and the care his son is receiving. He's excited to have his youngest son, Emmett, start attending in the 2024-25 School Year.



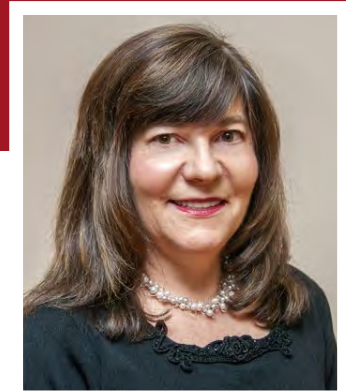
Even though Jared isn't in the classroom, or the gym, teaching on a daily basis, he still stays very close to the students. In addition to being on the playground daily, he coaches in the Track and Field and Cross Country programs. He also stays connected with and follows the lives of a number of our alums. He's pumped that after years of trying, this year he, a number of faculty, and a handful of alums will together tackle the Cabot Trail Relay, a 276-kilometre, 17-stage relay running race across the Trail in Cape Breton in May. Naturally, he asked for the hill stage. He recognizes it will be difficult and bring him outside his comfort zone, but that's precisely the point! It's the same focus and determination that has defined much of his life.

During the off-season (let's stick to our sports theme shall we), Jared loves nothing more than spending the summer with his wife Joy, their boys, his parents, and extended family at their beloved cottage outside of New Glasgow in Blackpoint. It's the life he remembers and loved as a child — having summers off is one of the reasons he chose teaching in the first place — and one he feels privileged to provide to his own children.

Jared imagines his career will always keep him here at the Heart. He hopes to get back to teaching at some point once he starts to slow down — which won't be for a while given he has two very energetic young boys — but in the meantime, he's relishing his role as Principal and being able to play an important part in a community he holds so dear.

# CASHA MERGES WITH AASH; REMAINS AS A KEY CANADIAN ALUMNI RESOURCE

*With contributions from Sarah Cassidy '76*



Many of our alums are aware of the Canadian Association of Sacred Heart Alumnae and Alumni (CASHA) which began collecting dues from the six active Canadian Alumnae Associations: Winnipeg, Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax in 1986. The purpose of CASHA was to represent Canada in the **Association Mondiale des Anciennes du Sacre Coeur (AMASC)** and to set up a Canadian Hospitality Register so we can accommodate alumnae/alumni from all over the world. CASHA encourages activities of the local Associations at the Sacred Heart School of Halifax and Sacred Heart School of Montreal. This has been done through the support of Robotics, Prize Day awards, Wine and Cheese Receptions, golf tournaments, conferences, blood bank drives, bursary dinners, RSCJ efforts, alumnae/alumni passports, and wherever they're there to help.

CASHA has decided to take a hiatus. A vote was taken on February 19, 2023, that CASHA accepts AASH's offer to join their alumni association until such time in the future that CASHA forms a new executive to govern CASHA. Canada will still have voting rights to remain as a member of AMASC. During the motion, heartfelt thanks were given to the CASHA executive and to the many who have volunteered over the past 36 years. AASH is The Associated Alumnae and Alumni of the Sacred Heart (AASH), a non-profit organization of all alumnae and alumni of present and former schools and colleges directly associated with the Religious of the Sacred Heart in the United States and Canada. Learn more about AASH [here](#).

Sarah Cassidy '76, current CASHA President, has been invited to assume a role on the AASH Board as the CASHA ambassador. She will attend AASH meetings, liaise with the AMASC hospitality network, build relationships and provide open communications with North American and global alumni. She will also encourage attendance at AMASC world congresses and AASH conferences.

Speaking of which, all alumni are encouraged to join the Canadian contingent at the 44th National AASH Conference to take place on May 18-20, 2023. There, **St. Philomena School of the Sacred Heart in Portsmouth, RI**, the newest school in the Sacred Heart Network, will honour the future with great joy. Visit the website for details: **Upcoming Events | AASH - Associated Alumnae & Alumni of the Sacred Heart**.

There are still many ways for Sacred Heart School of Halifax alumni to get involved and be part of our AASH and AMASC family. For more information, contact **Sarah Cassidy**.

# CLASS OF 2013 REUNION



The **FIRST-EVER** (we think!) class reunion featuring our alumnae AND alumni is on for this June! The Class of 2013 invites its members to join them for their ten-year reunion. June 2nd will feature a class event at Sacred Heart, and on June 3rd, significant others will be invited to join the festivities. The reunion details are being finalized, so if you want in on the action, contact **Emilie Barakett** today! And check out these photos from graduation; do you remember that Jesus was painted red then?!



Speaking of which, if you're a classmate of Charlotte Karam's from 1994, please **reach out to her** as she would love to organize a reunion next year to celebrate 30 years. Charlotte, who lives in Ottawa, dropped in recently during a visit to Halifax with her children. They toured the School and Charlotte entertained her kids with memories and stories of her time at Sacred Heart. She was almost a lifer, she attended from Grades P-11.

If you want to organize your own class reunion of 10, 20, 30 years or more, please reach out to our Director of Advancement and Alumni Relations, **Miriam Regan '80**. And if you're ever in the neighbourhood and want to drop in, please do!



*Moonlight and Magic  
2023*

This year's annual Big Hearts Bursary Benefit will take place on April 22nd at Pier 21 and we are absolutely thrilled that alumni Sabrina Secord '14 and Alec Chedrawe '16 will together co-host this special evening. If you're in Halifax, why not join us! There will be magic in the air and in the room as we come together as a Sacred Heart community to raise money in support of our Bursary Fund. We will share a delicious meal, enjoy a magical evening, bid on incredible live auction experiences, and dance the night away under the moonlight to the sounds of Big Fish. It's a night not to be missed! Round up your classmates, friends, and family and join us. Tickets can be purchased [here](#).



Can't join us in person? Stay tuned for details on our online auction which always includes a fabulous array of items. Or, you can [purchase 50/50 Raffle Tickets](#) with half of the proceeds going to the winner and half to our [Bursary Fund](#).

You can always make a donation directly to the Bursary Fund; we welcome your gift in any amount. Our Bursary Fund supports students who wish a Sacred Heart education but may not have the means to afford it. Students from different socioeconomic and geographic backgrounds add valuable voices and perspectives to our entire Sacred Heart community. Thank you for your generosity!



# Tidbits



Congratulations to **Alex Whalen '06** and her husband Bryan who just gave birth to their son Henry Hirsch Whalen. Mom and baby Henry are doing well.



Wedding bells were ringing for **Allison Pressé '06**, who was married on New Year's eve to Paul Glancey, and past student **Emma Walker** (pictured here), current Elementary teacher here at Sacred Heart, who married Jonathan Kester over the Christmas break.



Congratulations to **Devon Cassidy '02**, who joined the partnership ranks at Cox and Palmer in Halifax early this year. Devon practices in condominium real estate, restructuring, insolvency and corporate/condominium law.



Well done to past student **Jack Bennett** and **Katelyn MacFadyen '16** who represented Dalhousie Law School at the Gale Cup Moot competition, a prestigious National Moot Court featuring students from law schools across the country. Jack and his partner were one of four teams chosen to go to the finals where they placed second in the country. That debate program really paid off!



Kudos to **Mattea Roach '15** who successfully championed her pick, Ducks, from Nova Scotia author Kate Beaton to win this year's CBC Canada Reads competition. Mattea's debating skills and eloquence were on display during the competition. You can learn more about the novel, the author, and why Mattea chose this important Canadian story [here](#).



Hats off to **Sabrina Secord '14** who has started her first year of Otolaryngology at Dalhousie University's Department of Surgery. If (like us) you're unfamiliar with that term, it is the study of head and neck surgery; quite the medical speciality!

Nicely done **Emma McLean '16** who graduated in June with a Master's Degree in Computer Science from Stanford University and has now started working for Apple in Wallets, Payments and Commerce, in Cupertino, California.



Congratulations to **Sarah MacAskill '21** who after playing Ringette for the past 12 years, fulfilled her dream and represented Team Nova Scotia at the Canada Games in February.



If you're interested in playing in the Old Boys or Old Girls basketball games, please **let us know** right away.

## 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!**

Support your School! **Donate here.**

5820 Spring Garden Road  
Halifax, NS B3H 1X8  
Phone: 902-422-4459  
**shsh.ca**



@sacredheartschoolhalifax



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