

# Stories from the Heart



The class of 1976 at their 46th reunion. Sarah is on the far right of the lower level.

## SARAH CASSIDY — THE ALUMNA WHO CAN'T STOP GIVING BACK!

Many of you know Sarah Cassidy '76, or if you don't, you know of her. That's because Sarah has been a consummate Sacred Heart alum for decades now, playing important roles within the Sacred Heart community and network. First, she was (and still is) the Canadian Association of Sacred Heart Alumnae and Alumni (CASHA) President, then the Canadian Ambassador for the Alum Association of Sacred Heart, and now as an Associate of the Sacred Heart — a group of women and men across North America (including 15 members from Halifax) who seek to carry on the mission of the RSCJ — and the Co-Chair of the Associate Leadership Team.

For Sarah, these roles are important to her because she feels such a strong kinship to the School and to the RSCJ who were such an instrumental and formative part of her life and time at Sacred Heart.

Sarah started at Sacred Heart School of Halifax, or as it was known then, the Convent of the Sacred Heart, in 1970 in Grade 7 after having been a student at the Sister Pius Memorial School, a small three-room school in the basement of St. John the Baptist Church in Melville Cove. No stranger to teaching nuns, Sarah immediately felt at home. Her favourite teacher was one of her first, Sr. Margaret Lahey RSCJ, who Sarah says was incredibly vibrant and introduced her students to music, books, and the arts, not because it was part of the curriculum, but because she wanted them to be exposed to the world. Sarah remembers she loved to hike up her habit and play baseball with them.



Prize Day, June 1970. Sarah and her classmates with Sr. Margaret Lahey

Of course, there were many other wonderful teachers during her time at Sacred Heart and Sarah found them to be inspirational women who shared their knowledge and experiences from around the globe. Their devotion to education and the mission empowered her. She recalls that when she graduated she felt like she could take on the world! And she did, she eventually went on to travel to Chile, France, and Italy where she sought out schools and places related to the RSCJ and Sacred Heart, reflecting on the notion that she was part of a much bigger family.

After Sacred Heart, Sarah went on to SMU where she graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce degree in 1979. She enjoyed roles at Irving Oil and Eaton Bay Financial before heading to St. John's where she worked at a firm called Omnifax, where she developed her interest in market research and communications. She met and married Pat, her husband now of 42 years. They started a family and she stopped working in 1984 to stay home and raise her two daughters, both of whom attended Sacred Heart for their formative years.

She went back to work in 1992, this time at Statistics Canada. She just retired after a fruitful 32-year career there.

Many people when asked how they would enjoy their retirement talk about their travel plans or wanting to take up a new hobby. Not Sarah. Sarah talks about taking on more volunteer roles at Sacred Heart! In addition to keeping her existing Network roles, Sarah wants to be more hands-on here at the School. That's because she wants to give back to her beloved Sacred

Heart, to help promote the School and help people understand it's an investment that will change lives, as it did for her, her sisters, her children, and now her grandchildren, including Angus who is currently in Grade Primary and Griffin, who next year will start in Junior Primary.

Sarah was recently in attendance at the graduation ceremonies where she presented the Fountain Academy Alumni Award and the Barat Academy CASHA Award. If she were to address the grads she would have three pieces of advice. First, she would tell them that just like her, they too are part of this amazing global family, one they are always welcome in. Secondly, she would tell them they should carry on our Sacred Heart mission, with courage and confidence. And, finally, she would encourage them to stay connected to our School, even if it means simply walking in the front door now and again to say hello or attend an event.

Speaking of staying connected and carrying on our mission, Sarah will attend the first-ever Sacred Heart Summit in Chicago this September. As she continues to learn, share, and grow in the wisdom and faith of the RSCJ and our Network, she will no doubt share her knowledge and passion through meaningful contributions to our community locally and globally. We are incredibly fortunate to have Sarah in our midst and are so grateful she is such a superstar alumna! Thank you, Sarah, for all you have done and continue to do in service to our School and community.

## SACRED HEART SUMMIT

Just like Sarah, you too can attend the Sacred Heart Summit, an intergenerational learning conference for the global Sacred Heart Family — educators, students (Grades 8-12), Religious of the Sacred Heart, alumnae and alumni, and mission partners. This Summit, slated to take place in late September in Chicago, is an amazing opportunity to explore transformative action in the pursuit of a world characterized by compassion, hope, justice, and solidarity. The Summit will explore global issues of inequality and sustainable futures under the guiding theme of "Hearts Rooted in Change: How Reflection, Analysis, & Transformative Action are Critical to Our Future." Alums can register for the Summit [here](#). If you would like to attend but need financial support, please contact [Miriam Regan](#).



The graphic features a red background. On the left, there is a stylized tree with green leaves and a heart-shaped root system containing the letters 'SHS'. In the top right corner, there is a white '50' logo with a heart shape around it. The main text is centered and reads: 'SACRED HEART SUMMIT 2024' in a white serif font, followed by 'hearts rooted in change' in a white script font. At the bottom, the dates 'SEPTEMBER 29 – OCTOBER 2, 2024' and the location 'HYATT REGENCY MCCORMICK PLACE | CHICAGO, IL' are written in a white sans-serif font.

SACRED HEART SUMMIT 2024

hearts rooted in change

SEPTEMBER 29 – OCTOBER 2, 2024  
HYATT REGENCY MCCORMICK PLACE | CHICAGO, IL

# THE MACINNIS SISTERS - ACTIVIST FARMERS



Sisters Rebecca '12 and Jessie '09 MacInnis, owners of Spring Tide Farm in Lunenburg County, are a special breed of farmers. They are passionate about growing high-quality and sustainable fruits, vegetables, and flowers on their small two-acre farm, yet they are perhaps even more passionate about the human element of farming, food production systems, and climate change. They are more accurately, farm activists.

Jessie graduated from Sacred Heart in 2009 and then went on to Mount Allison University where she graduated with an International Relations Degree and then to the University of Manitoba for a Master's Degree in Human Rights. She is currently a PhD Candidate there in the Faculty of Environment, Earth, and Resources and the Department of Environment and Geography. Activism runs deep in Jessie's veins.

Her younger sister Rebecca graduated in 2012 and she took a different path, travelling to McGill University where she pursued her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sustainability, Society, and Science in the Geography Department. Unsure of her next move, she joined Jessie to work a season at Waldegrave Farm in Tatamagouche. It wasn't long before she discovered that it was, in fact, her calling just as it had become for Jessie. Together they started their own farm, Spring Tide.

The MacInnis sisters are first-generation farmers. It was not part of their family DNA, and it wasn't originally on the radar. Rebecca does talk about being shaped by their early days at Sacred Heart and the focus on social justice, where they began to understand more about

inequity. That foundation helped lay the groundwork that started to take shape during their early days at Waldegrave Farms where they saw first-hand the importance of sustainable farming and the need to build equity for those who make their living from farming. Through their passion, they have discovered that farming is not just about harvesting what you grow from the land that you cultivate, but that there is an entire political system at play in the food systems that shape our society, and that to contribute meaningfully to that system, they had to think about farming differently.

Rebecca and Jessie participate in agroecology, a more equitable and ecological movement or way of life that prioritizes solidarity among farmers and farmworkers, respect for Indigenous land rights, and food sovereignty. They also care deeply about placing community at the forefront of their farm and life to make a meaningful contribution to those they live and work alongside. Their business includes a strong Community Supported Agricultural CSA model with about 100 customers, some of them from the Sacred Heart community, helping them sustain their farm on an annual basis.

Their activism has led them to big stages. Jessie is a board member of the National Farmers Union in Nova Scotia and participates in La Via Campesina — an international movement to support and defend peasant agriculture — regionally and internationally. In 2021, she participated in the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, COP26, in Scotland to raise awareness of how climate change impacts small farmers. This year, they were part of a documentary series called “Depth of Field: Films About Farming” created by the National Farmers Union to showcase sustainable agriculture and put a face to small-scale farming across the country. Spring Tide Farm was one of three farms in Nova Scotia and 40 across Canada to be featured, and it’s an insightful look into their world



The work is very physical, but that doesn't phase either of them. Rebecca also loves that farming allows her to use her critical thinking and problem-solving skills — cultivated at Sacred Heart — to figure out how to adapt to changing conditions, grow crops more efficiently, bring more awareness to their work, and minimize their impact on the land.

We're not sure if we're more proud of their contributions to sustainable farming in this province or of their activism that is providing such a meaningful impact for so many, near and far. They are shining examples of how to embody Goal 3 and we are deeply inspired by their actions. We also expect they are just getting started!

# ALUMNA LEAH PHILLIPS MOVES BACK JUST IN TIME!



It was Sacred Heart's luck that Leah Phillips '13 moved back to Halifax earlier this year from Toronto where she had been living and working because it meant she had time on her hands to be part of an important art project here. Leah, a textile artist, agreed to lead the creation and execution of a new Sacred Heart mural to replace the one that had hung on the side of Jennifer's of Nova Scotia for years. Leah worked with two Grade 12 students, Elianne Cao and Hannah Sarty under the guidance of Senior School Art teacher Caroline Hamilton-Gillis to design the new, colourful mural to celebrate our 175th anniversary while incorporating some of Halifax's most distinctive landmarks. Once the artwork was created and transferred to two large plywood boards, students from both the Elementary and Senior Schools helped using a paint-by-number system.

Art is Leah's passion, it just took a little time to discover! After graduating from Sacred Heart in 2013, Leah spent a year as a residential and teaching assistant at Kilgraston, a sister Sacred Heart school in Scotland. She then returned to Halifax and attended the University of King's College where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology with a minor in journalism. And while this program doesn't necessarily speak to arts, it's there that she discovered both her interest in and talent for art and craft. Wanting to leverage this interest, Leah headed to Sheridan College in Toronto where she completed a Bachelor of Craft and Design specializing in Textiles.

Last year, while she was still in Toronto, Leah was asked to create an installation for the hip downtown hotel, The Drake. Her work, entitled "Liminal Lily" features a digitally printed fabric lily with plastic piping incorporated within the petals that give it a 3D appearance.



It's a stunning piece of work and reflects Leah's personality and talent; a talent that she brought to our new mural which was recently installed outside of Jennifer's of Nova Scotia on the Dresden Row side. We invite you to drop by and take a look at the finished piece. A big thanks to Leah, Elianne, Hannah, and Caroline for this new legacy piece and a chance to very publicly celebrate our anniversary.

## SPEAKING OF OUR 175<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

It was a year of celebration, activity, and memories as we marked this very special school year. Our 175th theme was everywhere this year, from our opening of school that included 175 cupcakes to our social media series Memorable Moments, from making 175 lunch packages for community members in need to our blood drive to collect 175 donations. We also hosted a special 175th Thanksgiving Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica which also honoured St. Madeleine Sophie's Feast Day. As part of the Liturgy, our RSCJ were recognized for their 175 years of love, dedication, and loyalty to our community and Sophie's mission. We were honoured to have Their Honours Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia Arthur and Patsy LeBlanc take part in our celebration. Following the Mass, community members joined us back at the Heart for a reception as alums and community members from across generations shared memories, good cheer, and gratitude for our remarkable School and community. What a joy it has been to celebrate this auspicious milestone. We look forward to the next 175 years!



## A TIP OF THE HAT TO ALUMNA AND ARCHIVIST SHEILA DONAHOE

A shoutout to Sheila Donahoe '64, one of our most engaged alumna and our volunteer archivist. Sheila spends untold hours in our archive curating and documenting some of our most important School artefacts and stories. Sheila was instrumental in helping us compile images and context for dozens of Memorable Moments posts over the course of this very special 175th school year, many of which hadn't seen the light of day in decades! If you missed these interesting tidbits, they are archived on our website [here](#). Sheila does this work with little fanfare and a lot of passion, and we extend our deepest gratitude to her for being the keeper of our stories.



# ALUM DAY

On May 10th, we had the pleasure of welcoming back generations of alums for our annual Alum Day. As we traditionally do, we started the day by breaking out our formal china to host a well-attended Tea in our Large Parlour. Later in the afternoon, alums, PALs, faculty, and friends enjoyed the action in both gyms during the Old Boys and Old Girls basketball games which were both as fun as they were competitive. The day culminated with a reception at which alums joined past and current faculty, PALs, and a host of others to reminisce and catch up over beverages. Thanks to everyone who took the time to join us. Next up is the Wine & Cheese on December 20th from 5:30-8:00 p.m.





# THE CLASS OF '64 CELEBRATES A MILESTONE REUNION



A small but mighty group, the Class of 1964 have kept in touch since they graduated and recently gathered in Halifax to celebrate their 60th reunion! The reunion strategically coincided with this year's graduation celebrations, and in fact, alumna Eileen O'Dea Kelleher gave the address to this year's Barat Academy graduating class and spoke beautifully about how so much has changed over the intervening 60 years but that so much remains the same, especially when it comes to the values and worth of a Sacred Heart education. She was joined by 14 of her classmates in the audience, some in white gloves, to celebrate the special day. As part of their reunion, they also enjoyed a welcome reception, dinner at McKelvies, mass and a tour of the refurbished stained glass windows at Saint Agnes Church, and a closing brunch at Lynne Donahoe's home in White's Lake. Needless to say, it was a wonderful opportunity to reminisce, catch up with one another, and share many, many laughs!

If you're interested in planning a class reunion, like the Class of 2003 is already doing for their 22nd reunion next year, please be in touch with [Miriam Regan](#) who would be happy to help.

# Congratulations TO OUR NEWEST ALUMS!



## Barat Academy Class of 2024

Top row (L-R): Abigail Ehrhardt, Polina Bogomol, Hannah Sarty, Lauren Holmes, Laya Lawen, Mabel Gerard, Laura Faloon  
Middle row (L-R): Mary-Jacqueline Bent, Margaret Johnston, Annaleisa Sonnichsen, Noah Goedkoop, Camilla Poulsen, Raeya Smith-Evans  
Bottom row (L-R): Aarushi Patil, Hannah Matheson-Newman, Elspeth Simms, Elianne Cao, Elisabeth Cormier, Isabel Kaizer



## Fountain Academy Class of 2024

Top row (L-R): Rory MacGregor, Silas Choo, Aidan Eisan, Odhrán Heavey, Julian Cooper  
Middle row (L-R): James MacAskill, Tony Hou, Tony Liu, Brooks Sheppard, Sebastian Tector, Sam Somerton  
Bottom row (L-R): Milan Savani, Devin Huang, George Chedrawy, Nathaniel Duguay, Gabe Huntsman

# Tidbits

Congratulations to **Kogie Esteban '20**, who graduated recently from St.FX with a Bachelor of Science with First Class Honours. Kogie is relocating to Halifax and will next pursue his MSc in Chemistry at Dalhousie University this fall.

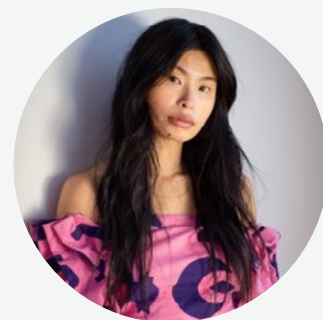


Well done to **Sophia Giammario '21** who is working with fellow Dalhousie students as part of the student-led society, Friends of MSF, which raises awareness and funds for Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), a global non-profit that taps doctors around the world to provide medical humanitarian aid.

Congratulations to **Robert Walsh '21** who was part of this year's rowing team at UBC where he's studying Applied Science. The team had great success this year, including a big win at the Brown Cup. Read all about it [here](#).



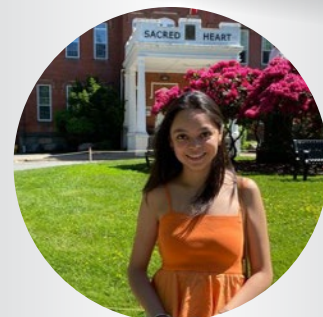
Kudos to **Jaden Lawen '21** who just finished his 3rd year of Civil Engineering at Dalhousie University and was named a Sexton Scholar, a significant accomplishment which recognizes outstanding academic achievement.



A standing ovation to **Kayan Choi '06** who was recently promoted to Executive Producer at Outside Editorial in Toronto. You can read her exciting news [here](#).

Congratulations to **Gwyneth Fountain '19** and her partner who welcomed a baby boy, Theo, into the world earlier this year, and to **Christie Chipman '11** and her husband who also welcomed a baby boy, Calvin, into their lives.

Hats off to former Fountain Academy student, **Jack Bennet**, who has been called to the bar.



Well done to **Angela "Emefa" Tagboto '16** who is taking on an exciting new opportunity as Global Talent Intern at Chanel in London, England.

Congratulations to **David MacDonald '16** on his recent engagement as well as his move to Ottawa to take on a new position as Communications Advisor at Hydro Ottawa.

Welcome back to former international student **Silvia Silva Rios** from Mexico who attended Sacred Heart during the 2015-16 School Year. Silvia recently dropped in for a visit and to see how things have changed since she was here last.

# 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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