

blend

INSIDER VOL 5

LEARNING WITH THE BEST
ROTHERGLEN SCHOOL

AN EXTRAORDINARY
APPROACH TO AN
EXTRAORDINARY SCHOOL
CHISHOLM ACADEMY

ONE PLUS ONE
EQUALS ONE
INCREDIBLE CHALLENGE
THE MATH HANGOUT

LEARNING WITH NUMBERS

SEEING JANE RUN





SCHOOL'S OUT, BUT LEARNING IS ALWAYS IN

Think back to your days in high school. Did your last day of classes go something like this?

As the bell finally rings on the last day of school, the P.A. is cranked to eleven and blasts Alice Cooper's *School's Out* throughout the hallways. As you dump the contents of your locker into your backpack and move down the hallways with your friends, you belt out the lyrics:

Schoooooo's out. For. Summer!
Schoooooo's out. For. Everrrrrrr!

As much as we love the song, Alice Cooper may have missed the boat. School may be out – and it's been ages since anyone at Blend Creative Studio has been a full-time student – but the value of lifelong learning has never been more important.

In this age of rapid change, everyone needs to keep learning to stay ahead of the game. Otherwise, we'll get taken back to school – and not in the fun way.

In this issue of Insider, you'll read about private schools, a math tutor who is scaling his services in order to better educate students throughout the entire United Kingdom, and other stories of how Fiscal Performance's commitment to lifelong learning is also making a positive impact.

It turns out that when you teach children to be innovative thinkers, it helps to be innovative yourself.

So, turn the page and get ready for some learnin'. Because while school may be out, class is very much in session.

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blend





LEARNING WITH THE BEST

Rotherglen School

As people – as well as a creative agency – we are always learning how to do our jobs better than ever before. As they say: practice makes perfect! But in this journey of lifelong learning, it helps to have a good teacher.

It makes sense to open the Eleventh Anniversary issue of Insider with a story about Rotherglen School, as they have been with us since Day One. As one of our very first clients, Blend Creative Studio would not be where it is today without our relationship with Rotherglen.

But we aren't only students in the relationship – to hear Laura Crumb, the Head of School for Rotherglen's Oakville Elementary Campus, talk about Blend is to hear one part of a symbiotic relationship talk about another part. "It's a very respectful and responsive relationship," she says.

Interview with:
Laura Crumb



OPEN HOUSE

ROTHERGLEN SCHOOL

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2019
9:00 A.M. TO 12:00 P.M.

OAKVILLE
ELEMENTARY CAMPUS

2050 NEYAGAWA BOULEVARD, OAKVILLE
905-849-1897 X 1240
TDUPREEZ@ROTHERGLEN.COM

WWW.ROTHERGLEN.COM

“It’s important to have a good, strong team that you can count on, and I would absolutely say that Blend is on my team.”

Over the past ten years, Blend Creative Studio has worked with Rotherglen Schools on a wide variety of projects and initiatives. From identity (Blend redesigned the Rotherglen logo for the digital age, rebuilding it in Vector for multi-medium reproduction), to informative (we designed booklets for each of Rotherglen’s four campuses, as well as for the school in general), to advertisements both in digital and in print, Blend has fulfilled every need Rotherglen could have for a creative agency.

Blend has helped Rotherglen stride into the digital landscape, most notably on two occasions: the first involved a complete redesign of the School’s website and includes regular updates to this day; the second was a Virtual Tour Video produced to showcase the campuses to parents and students during COVID when restrictions meant that campus visits were impossible.

Whatever the project or challenge, Blend has been there side-by-side with Rotherglen. It’s what makes partnerships like ours work!

About Laura Crumb

Every great relationship with a client includes and excellent point-of-contact: a leader who can make clear requests and knows what they want. As Head of School for Rotherglen's largest campus, Laura Crumb is that person for Blend. "I can't even imagine how long we've been working together," she says.

(Ten years, Laura. It's been ten years!!!)

Laura is exactly who you want to lead the ship. She knows each and every one of the students on her campus by name – no small thing, seeing as the Oakville Elementary Campus has 500 students and is the largest of Rotherglen's campuses. It's been a challenge for her recently – the children are harder to recognize with masks on and she hasn't seen them for two years – but it is something that she prides herself on.

For Laura, her job is all about relationships: between her and her teachers, her and her students, her and parents, and yes, her and Blend Creative Studio. "Without relationships, what type of community are we creating?" she asks. "I don't want to be a person behind a desk. I want to be a part of what's happening in the school, so when we have conversations, they're deep and meaningful conversations."

"To hear Laura Crumb, the Head of School for Rotherglen's Oakville Elementary Campus, talk about Blend is to hear one part of a symbiotic relationship talk about another part."



OPEN
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ROTHERGLEN SCHOOL

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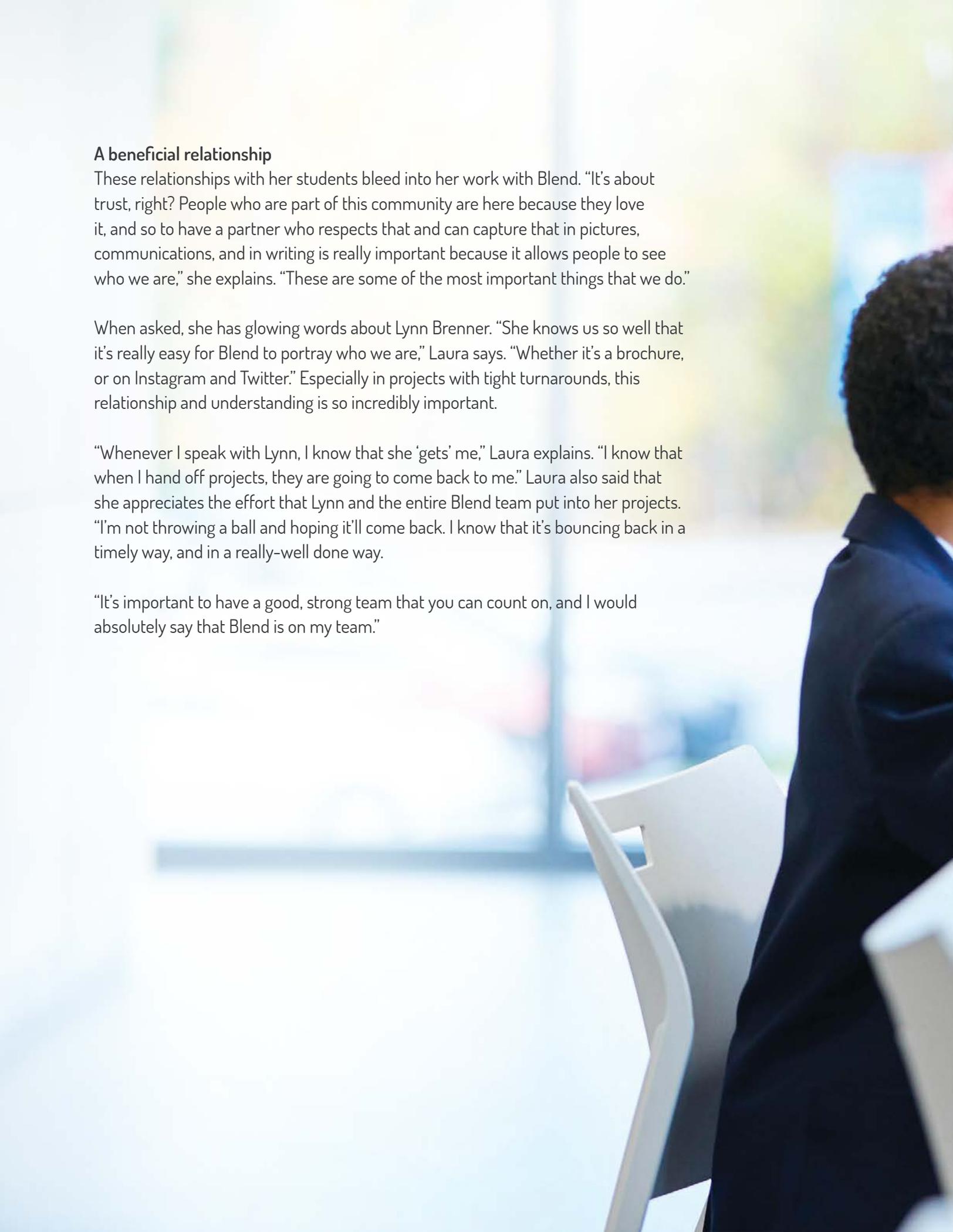
A beneficial relationship

These relationships with her students bleed into her work with Blend. “It’s about trust, right? People who are part of this community are here because they love it, and so to have a partner who respects that and can capture that in pictures, communications, and in writing is really important because it allows people to see who we are,” she explains. “These are some of the most important things that we do.”

When asked, she has glowing words about Lynn Brenner. “She knows us so well that it’s really easy for Blend to portray who we are,” Laura says. “Whether it’s a brochure, or on Instagram and Twitter.” Especially in projects with tight turnarounds, this relationship and understanding is so incredibly important.

“Whenever I speak with Lynn, I know that she ‘gets’ me,” Laura explains. “I know that when I hand off projects, they are going to come back to me.” Laura also said that she appreciates the effort that Lynn and the entire Blend team put into her projects. “I’m not throwing a ball and hoping it’ll come back. I know that it’s bouncing back in a timely way, and in a really-well done way.

“It’s important to have a good, strong team that you can count on, and I would absolutely say that Blend is on my team.”





Communication in an age of disconnection

In the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic – and the safety restrictions put in place by schools like Rotherglen – have radically disrupted the ways Laura would normally communicate with her parents and students. She points to the website in particular as an important tool to maintain connection with her community.

And in a period of rapidly-shifting protocols and expectations, we needed to be on our toes. “I made the decision to have an open house. I called Blend on Thursday and wanted a brochure designed and ready by the following Tuesday,” Laura recalls. “And it was done!”

It’s about relationships

Connections, understanding, and intuition like this doesn’t happen quickly or easily: for Blend and Rotherglen, it’s taken a decade of working together. As we both change

and grow, our relationship and understanding of each other changes and grows as well.

In the end, what we do for Rotherglen isn’t what matters: what truly matters is that we know them well enough by now that no matter what they ask us to do, we know why they want it and how they want it to be done.

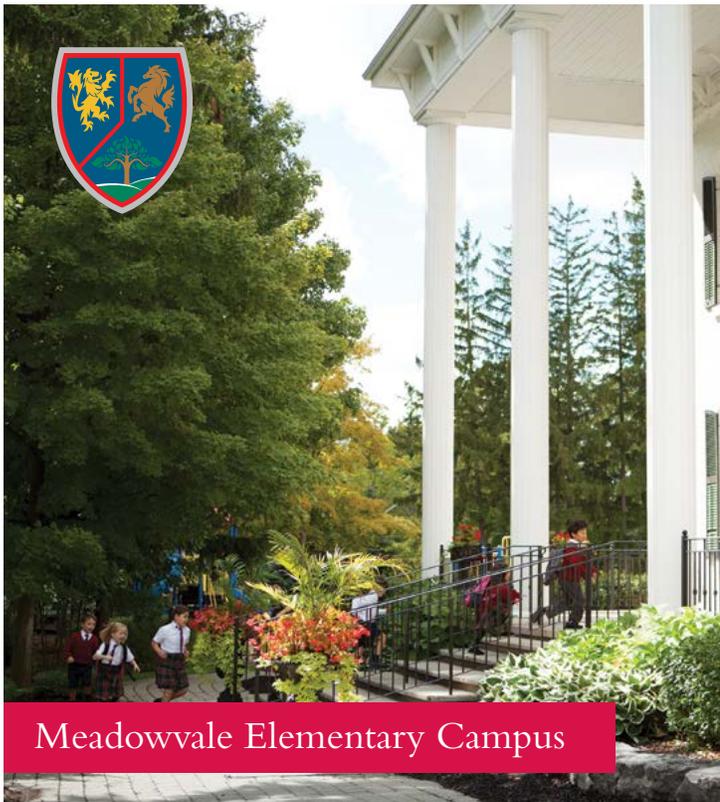
After ten years, what more can we ask for?!

Happy eleven years to: Lynn Brenner

“Lynn loves what she does, and she’s really very good at it. She values her relationships with her clients. You feel taken care of. She knows me and knows where to pick something up. It’s almost like she can read what I’m thinking. She knows what I want; she doesn’t get flustered.”

– Laura Crumb, Rotherglen School

[View more Rotherglen work online](#)



Casa Program (Ages 4 & 5)

Rotherglen’s Primary Montessori classrooms are carefully designed and are comprised of five main areas that focus on experiential, hands on learning. These areas include: Practical Life, Mathematics, Language, Sensorial and Cultural Studies. Music, Physical Education and French instruction are also introduced and incorporated into the program early on.

The focus in the Casa classroom is to foster independence and instill confidence in our students to explore their own learning potential. Students are taught grace and courtesy at a young age, which gives each child a heightened sense of confidence and respect for others and for themselves.

Our Montessori qualified teachers guide our students toward working independently and learning through experience. In this way, students are active participants in their own learning and their intrinsic motivation and eagerness to learn is cultivated. The teacher-to-student ratio in the Casa program is 1:15. Students who experience our Montessori program exhibit superior academic skills in literacy and mathematics and have a solid foundation for future academic success.



IN SUMMARY

1979

Rotherglen School is founded

4

Campuses (2 in Oakville / 2 in Mississauga)

1000+

Students across the 4 campuses

18

Maximum # of students in class

2012

The start of the Blend and Rotherglen relationship

18,000 sq. ft.

Addition put on OE campus in 2018

20,000+

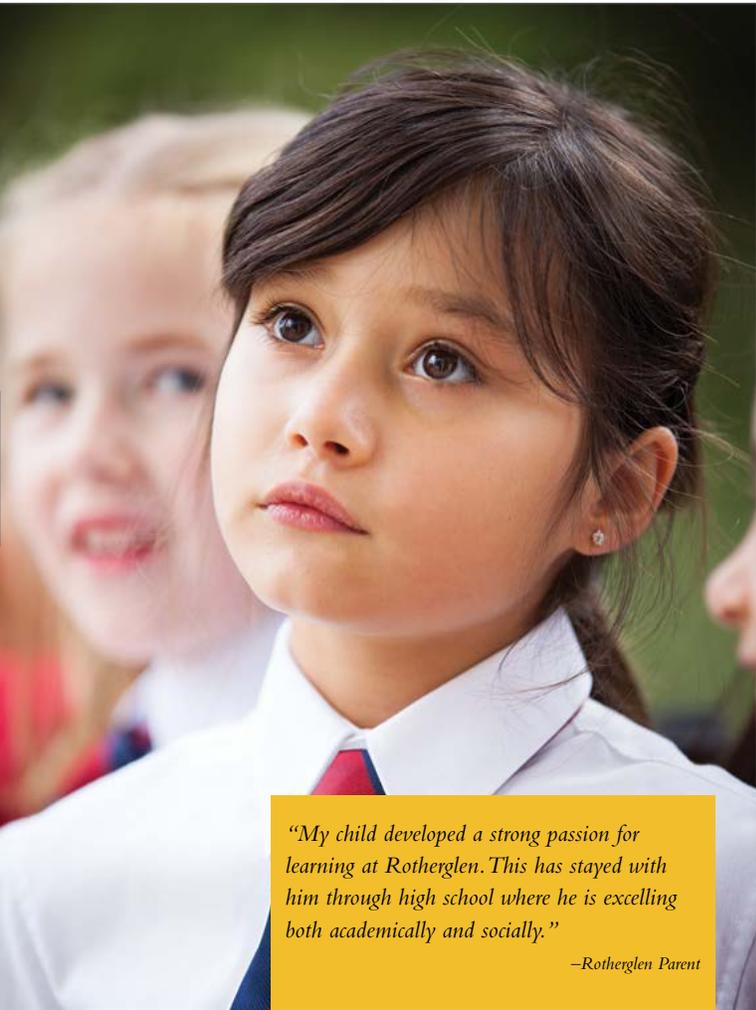
Steps taken to document the new addition: photo/video

250+

High-fives given when working on site (pre-Covid)



Rotherglen School consistently scores in the top 1% of Canadian schools in national standardized achievement tests.



Discover

an education that inspires your child

A Rotherglen education places student learning at the centre of all our activities, programs and curriculum. Differentiated learning has been our approach since our very beginnings. We deliver a curriculum that provides students with the opportunity to acquire knowledge and develop positive values, attitudes and behaviours.

The delivery of instruction at Rotherglen is not a "one-fits-all" approach. We recognize that students differ significantly in their interests, learning styles, abilities, and experiences. Our teaching strategies and supportive resources recognize individual student learning styles and apply instruction at an educationally appropriate pace. We have always believed that this is the quintessential approach to ensuring we are responding to, and meeting our learners' needs as they work through our rigorous and enriched curriculum.

Our goal at Rotherglen is to inspire our students, instill the love of learning, and provide the foundation for success through diversified learning approaches and techniques.

"My child developed a strong passion for learning at Rotherglen. This has stayed with him through high school where he is excelling both academically and socially."

—Rotherglen Parent



Experience the Rotherglen Difference

- Primary Montessori program (Casa - Grade 3)
- Enriched and progressive Elementary program (Grade 4 - 8)
- Qualified, dedicated and engaged teachers
- Small class sizes
- Music, art, science and computer facilities + vibrant arts and athletics programs
- Character and Leadership programs
- Before and after school care, and extensive extracurricular activities

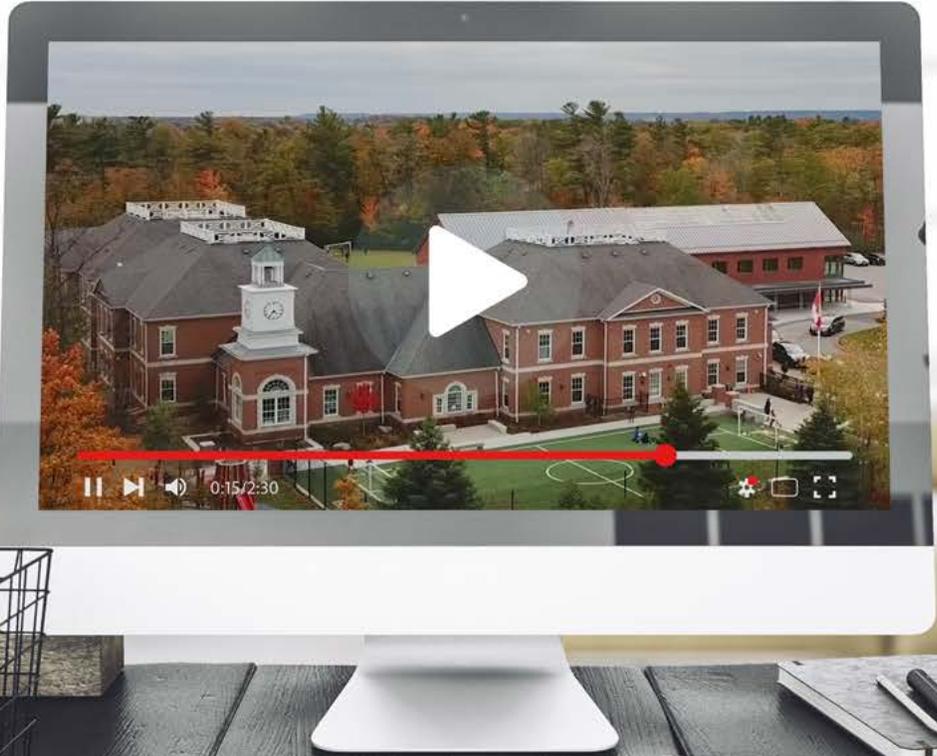
Visit our campuses in Oakville and Mississauga to learn why Rotherglen is what school should be for your child.

W W W . R O T H E R G L E N . C O M

Oakville Elementary Campus
2910 Pecover Boulevard, Oakville, ON

Madisonville Elementary Campus
1000 10th Street, Wood, Mississauga, ON

Oakville Primary Campus
2910 North Line, Oakville, ON



AN EXTRAORDINARY APPROACH TO AN EXTRAORDINARY SCHOOL

Chisholm Academy

Do a quick Google search for 'Graphic Designers' or 'Creative Agency' and, sure, you'll get a lot of results. What sets Blend Creative Studio apart from everyone else on that list is not necessarily the services we provide but, rather, the big vision that we have for ourselves and the clients we work with.

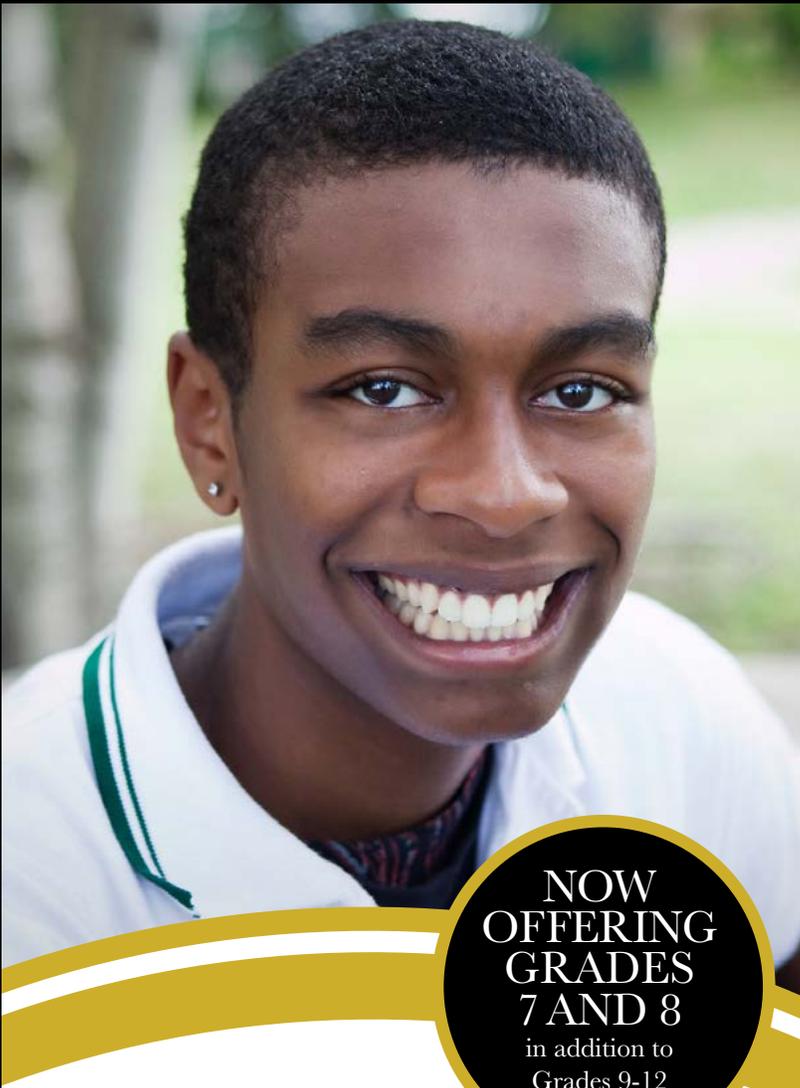
In many ways, that makes us kindred spirits with Chisholm Academy.

Since 2012, Blend has been working closely with Chisholm Academy, a not-for-profit high school in Oakville. What sets Chisholm Academy apart from other independent schools is that Chisholm focuses on students who are experiencing academic difficulties. Chisholm Academy caters to students with learning disabilities, anxiety, Asperger's, ADHD, ASD, and depression among other barriers to scholastic success.

Interview with:

Adam Bernstein





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Accepting Registration for September 2014!

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www.chisholmacademy.com

A different approach...

This focus makes Chisholm Academy different from almost two dozen other private schools in Oakville. That means that Chisholm's approach to messaging needs to be unique as well. "Our biggest competition is the lack of awareness that our services even exist," explains Adam Bernstein, the Associate Director of Chisholm Academy.

It was the need for that different style of approach that attracted Adam to Blend Creative Studio more than nine years ago. "Blend has an enthusiasm and passion for all things design," he says.

As a school in a very competitive market, Chisholm needs to be careful with their resources – a fact that Blend understands. "Blend has a handle on whether or not things need to be refreshed or recycled," Adam says. "They bring their understandings of timings and cost implications to their suggestions."

Both Chisholm and Blend recognize the value of brand recognition and consistency. Instead of reinventing the wheel, Blend prefers to freshen current brand assets and bring them up to modern standards. That's what we did when

"Blend has an
enthusiasm and
passion for all
things design,"

“They come to meet with us. It’s very ‘old-school’ business,” Adam says emphatically. “It tells me: Blend wants to connect in meaningful ways.”

Blend reinvigorated Chisholm Academy’s logo and made it vector-based so that it can be used anywhere and everywhere.

... For a different kind of school

When asked about what sets Chisholm Academy apart, Adam answers quickly: “Our kids find ‘their people’ here.” They’re with other students who are just like them. That’s because Chisholm Academy’s students have unique needs that can’t be addressed in the same way at most other schools.

“Here, they band together and find solace in the fact that they are not alone, and that their struggles are shared by their peers. Here, they’re heard and they’re understood by teachers and staff who are uniquely qualified to provide them with the individualized attention they both want and need,” Adam says proudly.

In recent years, Chisholm started to use Independent Education Plans (IEPs) for its students. IEPs are tailored for each individual student to fit their personal requirements. The goal is to create a structure in which an individual



SUMMER SCHOOL SUCCESS

- Grades 1-12 and High School Credits
- All Subjects
- Organization and Study Skills
- Essay Writing
- Foundation Skills for High School

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student's needs are met so that they can succeed to the best of their abilities.

Adam says getting that across in a way that cut through the clutter was a difficult challenge, one that Blend was instrumental in helping with. "We were running the line between being very blunt and very catchy," Adam says. "'We help kids overcome learning difficulties' is our tagline. There's got to be something in the message that stands out."

Adam worked with Ali Khamis, Creative Director at Blend, to update Chisholm Academy's entire look. "When we updated the logo, we included the line 'The IEP School,'" he explained. "It was a clear beacon to parents of children who need a highly specialized and individualized approach to education. And it also helped us select for potential, appropriate clients."

"Becoming known as 'The IEP School' was a big coup for us, just in terms of differentiation."

Genuine class

When it comes to communicating the idea of Chisholm and its students, Adam says that difference between Blend and other creative studios is night and day. "Our kids are regular kids. We see them as happy kids because they're happy at our school. That's real, and that's genuine."

Blend never had an issue capturing that authenticity, according to Adam. "People all want to be heard, understood, and respected," he explains. "Blend does a great job with all of that."

Furthermore, Blend has proven to be flexible at fitting projects into the resources Chisholm Academy has to offer. "Blend knows that we don't have unlimited budget, time, and resources," Adam says. Even so, Blend is able to capture the essence of our school in a way that everybody is happy with – including the students.

When we likened Blend working around Chisholm's unique needs to the way Chisholm works with their students, Adam laughed and agreed. "Blend does what we do!"





A family relationship

Adam also sees a lot of Ali in his father, Howard, Chisholm Academy's Executive Director. A trained psychologist, Dr. Howard Bernstein has been helping children at Chisholm since 1980 and is responsible for the direction the school has taken to focus on children with learning disabilities.

"They're both characters!" Adam laughs, talking about Ali and Howard. "They're both great guys, very funny, and they enjoy being so!"

Asked to describe the personalized care Ali and Lynn bring to their work, Adam is quick to point out that both do their best to "take time out to meet in person" with he and his dad. "They come to meet with us. It's very 'old-school' business," Adam says emphatically. "It tells me: Blend wants to connect in meaningful ways. It tells me: Blend value and nurture relationships. It tells me: like us, Blend approaches their clients as uniquely qualified individuals who deserve the very best."

"Extraordinary!"

Happy eleven years to: Ali Khamis

"With Ali, it's never strictly business. There's lots of hanging out and talking and laughing. A number of times we've gone out for a drink of scotch. It allows us to connect in a real, meaningful way that's relaxed. Ali never hesitates to come visit us in person. It's the little things like that that demonstrates that he cares. We have a relationship, and that's so incredibly important to us."

Chishom Academy 2021 Graduation

Chishom Academy
THE REP SCHOOL

Chantal Kreviazuk
Eleven-time award-winning singer/songwriter, actress, and humanitarian

Russell Peters
Comedian, Actor, and Producer

Chishom Academy

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Individual Education Plans for every student
 chisholmacademy.com

OPEN HOUSE
Saturday, April 26 from 10am - 2pm

Overcome Academic Difficulties
Individual Education Plans for every student
 chisholmacademy.com

SUMMER SCHOOL
Register today for Grades 1 through 12

Overcome Academic Difficulties
Individual Education Plans for every student
 chisholmacademy.com

LIMITED SPACE
Available for September in Grades 7 - 12

IN SUMMARY

1971

Founded as a professional tutoring service

1980

Dr. Howard Bernstein becomes Executive Director of Chisholm Academy and expands its educational offerings

2000

Chisholm facility was completed, with additions in 2002 and 2005 as they continue to grow

2012

Chisholm Academy becomes the IEP school and offers all students a tailored education plan

2017

Chisholm Academy becomes a not-for-profit school

Grades 7 to 12

Private Senior Elementary + High School

93%

Graduates are accepted to the post-secondary institution of their choice

15

Maximum class size

The Chief

What Chisholm students call Dr. Bernstein!

2012

The start of the Blend and Chisholm relationship



ONE PLUS ONE EQUALS ONE INCREDIBLE CHALLENGE

The Math Hangout

When we start chatting to Rishi Shah via Zoom, founder and lead tutor of The Math Hangout, a poster of a music superstar in the background catches our eye.

“Are you a fan?” we ask. Rishi laughs. “I mean, yeah, I teach his kids,” he replies. “More than his music, I’m amazed that he makes me tea when I come to his estate.” [Sorry, we can’t divulge who the superstar is, only that he has sold tens of millions of albums and has increased the profile of countless world music singers and songwriters].

Interview with:

Rishi Shah

THE MATH
Hangout+

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MAKE A
DIFFERENCE**

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As an in-demand math tutor based out of London, U.K., Rishi is used to working with high-profile clients and their children, so much so that he's gotten used to it. "For me, it's all about the maths," Rishi says. "And in helping their kids tackle increasingly complex problems with relative ease."

Specializing in one-to-one tutoring, the majority of his students are referred to him by Britain's top private schools. "They identify students who need help beyond what the school system can provide," he explained. Rishi's service is very highly specialized and his approach to each student is different because he recognizes that every student is one of a kind. After identifying where the student is at in terms of math, what's challenging them, and what they hope to accomplish, Rishi guides them every step of the way.

Math is not the Problem

There's just one challenge, as far as Rishi is concerned. One times one still equals one, no matter how many fancy math equations you use. The problem Rishi is trying to solve is how to keep his one-to-one tutoring style, but impact multiple students at the same time and extend his reach to include the entire United Kingdom without him over-reaching or becoming overwhelmed.

That's where Blend Creative Studio factors into the equation.

Together, Blend and Rishi are working to create The Math Hangout, a new system and platform for math tutoring that will use discussion boards and live tutoring video sessions to reach more students than Rishi ever could before.

The key to The Math Hangout's future success is maintaining the specificity of the tutoring that Rishi excels at. Anyone can look up how to solve for 'x' on YouTube, but Rishi's lessons take questions from actual A-level papers and exams being used in the U.K. right now. With Blend's help, soon students will be able to learn how to solve math problems that are written in the exact same style as the questions their teachers will ask them the next day.

Unsurprisingly, the project has been a long-term one. The solution to finding the optimal way to offer the service at the same quality that superstar musicians expect for their children is one we are working on day by day as time allows.

A Meeting of Champions

But the question you're probably asking yourself is how did Blend – based in the land of maple leaves and maple syrup – meet up with a tea-totaling math tutor from across the pond?

The answer is sure to raise eyebrows: Ali and Rishi met in rather strange circumstances, through a shared love of an

After identifying where the student is at in terms of math, what's challenging them, and what they hope to accomplish, The Math Hangout guides them every step of the way.

PROBLEMS SOLVED

IF MATH IS THE PROBLEM, WE ARE THE SOLUTION.

No matter what your math goals are, you can reach them with The Math Hangout. Our tutors have experience helping students gain admission to and succeed at some of the most prestigious schools, colleges, and universities in the country...and around the world. With our guidance, along with hard work, you can achieve whatever you put your mind to.

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NEWS AND INSIGHTS



online game, Marvel's Contest of Champions. At the time, Rishi was one of the best players in the world, and when Ali was stuck on a difficult challenge, Ali didn't hesitate to reach out to him on a forum Rishi had set up to talk about the game.

Rishi not only helped Ali make it to the next level, but they took their relationship to the next level, too. "I'm the kind of person who likes to know the people they play with," Rishi explains. "And getting to know Ali, I was very interested because what he was doing with Blend is what I wanted to do with my company, namely, building an online community."

Although Rishi's project hasn't yet seen the light of day, the progress that has been made speaks to Blend's patience, persistence and desire to ensure everything works perfectly. Not allowing the project to stagnate and by continuing to look for solutions, is what Rishi appreciates most about working with Blend.

Ali and Rishi don't see this project as simply expanding Rishi's reach – both see that the work they are doing has the potential to change the entire landscape of maths education throughout the United Kingdom. The specificity of Rishi's problem-solving, plus accessibility in order that anyone can participate in the lessons will equal a new platform that will multiply its reach with the ability to impact the lives of students from the northern tip of Scotland to the White Cliffs of Dover.

Our final answer may grow out of the forums and chats that Rishi set up to talk about Contest of Champions, or it may look entirely different. Whatever the final shape of the project, Rishi is sure that it will be because of the help of his friends at Blend Creative Studio.

"I don't think I'm a big deal, really. But Ali believes in it. And he believes in me," Rishi says with a smile. "And, for me, that's reason enough to keep trying to find a solution."

NEW IGCSE MOCK EXAM ONLINE NOW

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THE MATH
Hangout+

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“For me, it’s all about the maths,”
Rishi says. “And in helping
their kids tackle increasingly complex
problems with relative ease.”









SHOW AND TELL

Check out some further examples of work we've done for various schools and educational services.

[View more work online](#)

ENGAGING YOUNG MINDS

PROSPECTUS & ADMISSIONS



Experience the Fern Hill Difference
fernhillschool.com



Admissions

Each year, we welcome new families into our school and we welcome the opportunity to share additional information on what distinguishes a Fern Hill education and the many benefits our school can provide for your child.

We accept applications from Preschool through Grade 8 throughout the year, but we encourage you to begin the process in the fall of the year prior to admission. Fern Hill holds two Open Houses each year usually in October and February and appointments with our Admissions Office can be arranged to tour the school while it is in session.

Fern Hill seeks students who will benefit from the pursuit of our mission. In order to determine that our programme can meet a child's needs, we first assess an applicant's ability through a carefully developed entrance evaluation geared to the child's age. Arrangements for evaluation can be made through the Admissions Office.

Your child's completed file will include the application fee, a copy of the applicant's birth certificate, a copy of the applicant's previous year report card, and a copy of the applicant's most recent report card.

We also maintain a waiting list of qualified students for whom we initially have no space and accept new students from this group as openings occur.

Hot Lunch and Beverage Programme

At Fern Hill, students have the opportunity of taking part in the Lunch and Beverage Programme. This service provides the option for your child to have a hot meal from one to five days a week. If you wish to send your child with a packed lunch, you also have the option of taking part in the Beverage Programme, which provides your child with a cold beverage (milk or juice) each day of the week. Please refer to the Hot Lunch and Beverage Programme brochure for more information.

Before & After School Programmes

One of the nicest problems we have at Fern Hill is getting the students to leave! Many parents find that their child asks to take part in the after-school programme, even when it isn't necessary, so they can spend more time with their friends. Please refer to the Before and After School registration form for more information.

The best way to learn more about Fern Hill is to come for a visit.

We would be happy to provide you with a tour of our school and the chance to meet some of the people who help make Fern Hill School an extraordinary place.

To arrange a visit, please contact the Admissions Office at 905-257-0022.

We would love to show you our school.



Mission and Philosophy

Fern Hill School encourages independent thinking and cultivates individual talents in a supportive classroom environment. Students are encouraged to explore their individual interests and develop academic skills. We are dedicated to academic excellence and to the development of self-confident and positive contributors.

Fern Hill creates learning environments that are engaging, diverse and supportive; where talented, dedicated faculty and students are encouraged to interact in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. Students are well prepared for the future in a manner that enables them to discover the joys of learning and the importance of community.

Our faculty sets us apart. Learning is facilitated through a highly trained teaching staff of subject-specific educators. Our teachers specialize in specific areas of instruction throughout the school. We believe that students who are taught by teachers who are passionate and trained with a love of a subject will transfer their vibrant energy and expertise to the learning environment.

Fern Hill seeks to discover and nurture the special gifts each student possesses and to deepen each student's understanding of the complexities of the world around them.

Like the Dylan Thomas poem from which we take our name, Fern Hill is alive with the structure to learn and the support to let our students fly, enriched with ideas and substance, light as air when it's time to play, yet solidly grounded in the core values of a well-organized home. It's a belief that begins in the halls of Fern Hill School and an attitude that lasts a lifetime.





Scholarships available to students in Grades 5-8

We keep our class sizes small to allow our teachers to engage the students at every level. Conversations in the hallways go beyond school work. Teachers know our students as individuals – their ideas, their opinions, their interests and ambitions.

Oakville Campus, 3300 Ninth Line
Road Oakville, ON 905.257.0022



Scholarships available to students in Grades 5-8

Fern Hill School's Burlington campus is pleased to offer a number of entrance scholarships to promising students who have demonstrated high achievement in the areas of academics, arts, athletics or citizenship.

Burlington Campus, 801 North Service
Road Burlington, ON 905.634.8652



Give your child the opportunity to experience a school like no other.

We keep our class sizes small to allow our teachers to engage the students at every level. Conversations in the hallways go beyond school work. Teachers know our students as individuals – their ideas, their opinions, their interests and ambitions.

Scholarship Application:

The scholarship program at Fern Hill opens up a world of opportunity to students who many not normally consider an independent education. Fern Hill School, an independent school co-educational school for students in Preschool to Grade 8, is regarded as one of the pre-eminent elementary schools in Canada.

Burlington Campus, 801 North Service Road Burlington, ON 905.634.8652
Oakville Campus, 3300 Ninth Line Road Oakville, ON 905.257.0022

Oakville

Independent Schools



A Great School is
Waiting For You



ALL SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, January 25, 2014

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

To learn more,
and for school locations,
visit us at:

www.educationoakville.com

Oakville
Independent Schools

A Great School is
Waiting For You



ALL SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE
Saturday, January 19, 2013
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

To learn more,
and for school locations,
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Invest in your child's future.

Choosing your child's educational path is an important decision, and finding the right school is the beginning of the journey.

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an independent education.**

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Independent Schools



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Benefits of an Independent Education

- Enriched programs in the arts, music, athletics and languages
- Smaller classroom settings in safe, nurturing environments
- Enthusiastic, highly-engaged teachers who offer a student-centred focus
- Accessible educators that work with families, offering strategies and approaches to achieve academic success
- The freedom to implement learning approaches that ensure each student's needs are defined and individual talents are recognized and cultivated

**IMAGINE
YOUR
CHILD
HERE**



**Open House
Sat. Jan. 23rd
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**



**Find out how your child
can achieve a truly
outstanding education.**

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Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12
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COLLABORATION**



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337 Trafalgar Road, Oakville
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MacLachlan's small school approach embodies a strong sense of community and a warm family atmosphere. Our teachers' enthusiasm inspires the freedom to learn, discover, accept challenges and achieve.

**MacLachlan College: this is
where your child belongs.
Visit us to show you why.**

Inquire about securing early
acceptance for September 2015.

**THIS IS MY
SECOND HOME**

MacLachlan's small school approach embodies a strong sense of community and a warm family atmosphere. Our teachers' enthusiasm inspires the freedom to learn resulting in happy children who love coming to school.

**MacLachlan College: this is
where your child belongs. Visit
us so we can show you why.**

905-844-0372 ext. 235
admissions@maclachlan.ca
337 Trafalgar Road, Oakville
www.maclachlan.ca



While you commute to and from work, imagine your child at school here.

MacLachlan College, this is where your child belongs.

APPLY NOW FOR SEPTEMBER! PK - GRADE 12



Just 2 minutes south on Trafalgar Road.

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enroll@maclachlan.ca
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MacLachlan College

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Learn about our new Bursary Fund for qualifying students entering Grades 8, 9 and 10 in September 2016.

Individual tuition assistance is also available at all grade levels to mission appropriate students on a financial need basis.

Now accepting applications for September 2016.

MacLachlan College Open House

MacLachlan's small school approach embodies a strong sense of community and a warm family atmosphere.

We invite you to attend our Open House on Saturday, October 25 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

This is where your child belongs. Visit us to show you why.

Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12

905-844-0372 ext. 235
admissions@maclachlan.ca
337 Trafalgar Road, Oakville
www.maclachlan.ca





We believe in a learning environment based on each child's individual needs, abilities and learning pace. This methodology leads to children who have great self-awareness, high self-esteem, and a love of learning and challenges.

SMS at a Glance

- Integrated Curriculum
- Character Education
- Intrinsic Motivation
- STEM Learning
- Before & After School Care
- Busing & Transportation
- Hot Lunches
- Summer & March Break Camps
- Enrichment Programmes

SMS promotes a nurturing, cooperative and non-competitive environment in a multi-age early childhood programme. Our warm environment provides a space where children are celebrated and respected for their individuality. Our thematic programme richly integrates literacy, problem solving and scientific inquiry across the curriculum, providing children at different developmental levels with multiple opportunities for active learning.

At SMS, we build strong student/teacher relationships, offer flexible instructional groupings, and opportunities for the children to become leaders and mentors.



10 Boniface Ave,
Kitchener, ON N2C 1L9
519.744.1423
www.smschool.ca



Early Childhood Programme

519.744.1423 | www.smschool.ca



Our accredited Montessori Preschool and Kindergarten programme is the foundation of the SMS experience.

From our youngest students in our Toddler programme to our six-year-olds getting ready for Grade 1, the classrooms are designed to support children's academic learning through the internationally renowned curriculum of Dr. Maria Montessori.

The Montessori method emphasizes a student-centred approach and develops the potential of the child by using special teaching materials in a deliberately prepared learning environment. Montessori trained teachers guide learning with a focus on independence which encourages creativity, curiosity and confidence. Montessori children are given the trust and respect to make their own choices and judgments. They are given space to explore their interests at a pace that is comfortable to them.

Our Toddler, Prima Casa and Casa programme is structured by multi-age classrooms. Children range in age from 18 months to 2 1/2 years in the Toddler classroom, 2 1/2 to 4 years in the Prima Casa classrooms and 4 to 6 years in the Casa classroom. These mixed-age groupings are a basic tenet of Montessori practice which allows children to work at their own level of ability while interacting with children at different levels. Younger children challenge themselves by relating to older children, who, in turn, consolidate their own learning by assisting younger classmates.



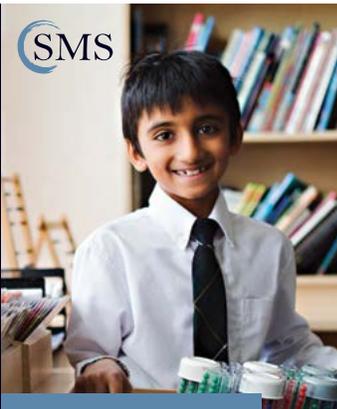
At SMS we are committed to helping our students to become self-aware problem solvers, active global citizens and confident leaders.

SMS at a Glance

- Integrated Curriculum
- Character Education
- Intrinsic Motivation
- STEM Learning
- Before & After School Care
- Busing & Transportation
- Hot Lunches
- Summer & March Break Camps
- Enrichment Programmes



10 Boniface Ave,
Kitchener, ON N2C 1L9
519.744.1423
www.smschool.ca



Elementary: Grade 1 to 6

519.744.1423 | www.smschool.ca



The SMS Lower and Upper Elementary programme inspires a lifelong love of learning and exploration.

At SMS, your child will enjoy an inspiring learning environment, dedicated teachers, supportive staff and ample opportunities to discover their passions and strengths. We provide trusting and inclusive learning environments that enable students to develop confidence, take risks, and learn according to their personal style. With a low student/teacher ratio and smaller class sizes, our students receive personal attention and individual interaction with their teachers.

The continuum of learning from Toddler, Prima Casa and Casa to Elementary and Junior High builds, challenges and reflects the educational needs of each student. Although our programme is based on Montessori principles, a Montessori background is not required to join our school at any grade level.

Our Approach to Learning

SMS prepares children to learn, think, grow and succeed through innovative Montessori programming. Our teachers foster an environment of inquiry by encouraging independence, responsibility and respect, motivating students to be caring, confident and compassionate citizens of the world.

The continuum of learning from Toddler, Prima Casa and Casa to Elementary and Junior High builds, challenges and reflects the educational needs of each student. Although our programme is based on Montessori principles, a Montessori background is not a required pre-requisite to join our school at any grade level.

As students progress through the years, they are empowered to take responsibility for their learning and to engage in purposeful exploration. A large component of our learning philosophy incorporates practical life experiences. This lends itself to the natural inclination children have to seek independence and control of their own lives.



SMS at a Glance

- Integrated Curriculum
- Character Education
- Intrinsic Motivation
- STEM Learning
- Before & After School Care
- Busing & Transportation
- Hot Lunches
- Summer & March Break Camps
- Enrichment Programmes

SMS is a CCMA accredited school. The Canadian Council of Montessori Administrators promotes standards of excellence for Canadian Montessori educators and programs in order to help children reach their full potential.



10 Boniface Ave,
Kitchener, ON N2C 1L9
519.744.1423
www.smschool.ca



Nurture. Inspire. Challenge.

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Welcome to SMS

Founded in 1996, Sunshine Montessori School (SMS) is a place of joyful and active learning where children from their earliest years through adolescence develop a love of learning. We provide a warm and nurturing environment where students can realize their potential by igniting their natural curiosity for discovery, challenge and academic success.

SMS is a co-educational, independent Montessori school that provides students aged 18 months through Grade 8 with a dynamic and enriching learning experience.

Our Mission

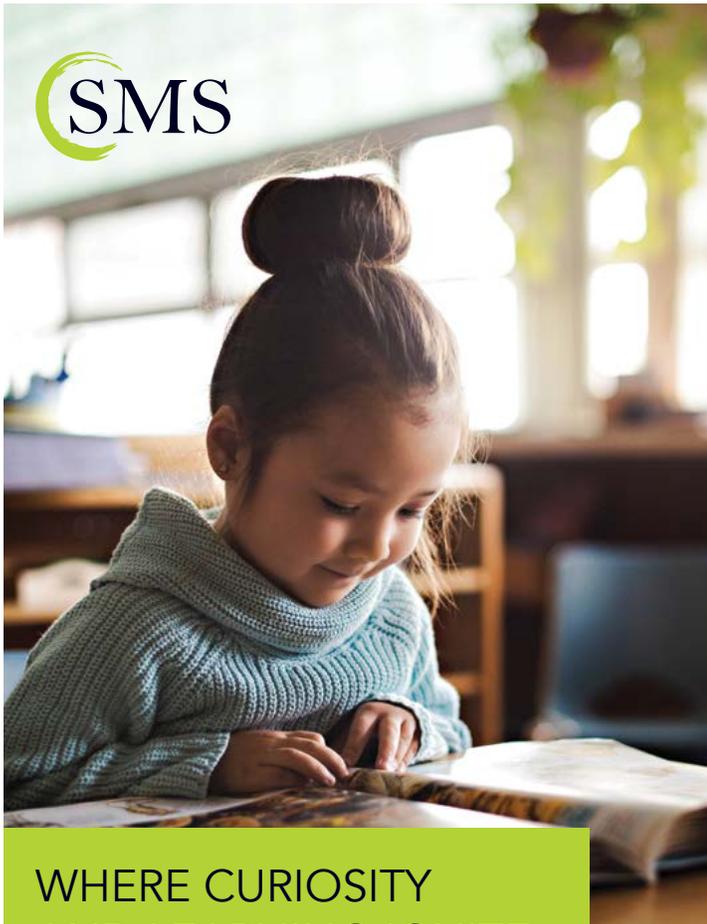
"To nurture and ignite each child's curiosity and love for learning in a diverse and enriched environment"

At SMS, we value children as individuals who develop at their own pace and learn in their own way while nurturing each child's natural curiosity and love for learning. Our programme features student-centred, multi-age classrooms that emphasize an inquiry-based model of learning. Students are empowered to take increasing responsibility for their learning and to engage in purposeful exploration.

Expanded academic challenges and expectations and a focus on leadership and community responsibility, result in an education that prepares students for the complex and ever-changing academic and social challenges ahead.

Diversity, inclusivity and respect are our core values and represent who we are as a community. Our learning environment includes a range of backgrounds, cultures, and languages which create a natural and unique sense of global awareness and reflect who we are on a daily basis.

Together, the school and community create an environment where children are encouraged and inspired to forge their own path, take challenges, collaborate and discover connections together.



WHERE CURIOSITY AND LEARNING IGNITE

SMS is a place of joyful and active learning, providing challenging academics and individualized attention in a supportive and diverse community where learning is always exciting.

SPRING 2018 OPEN HOUSE DATES

Wednesday, April 11 – 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.
Saturday, April 14 – 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Tuesday, April 17 – 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.
Saturday, May 5 – 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Tuesday, May 15 – 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

The best way to learn about SMS is by visiting us. We invite you to come see our classrooms, observe our teachers and students working collaboratively, and see our school in action. You'll experience the vibrant, rich environment of SMS first-hand, and begin to get a sense of what sets us apart.

Come Visit Us to Learn More



Sunshine Montessori School

Toddler/Preschool – Grade 8

10 Boniface Avenue, Kitchener, ON N2C 1L9

519.744.1423 | admissions@smsschool.ca | www.smsschool.ca



WHERE CURIOSITY AND LEARNING IGNITE

At SMS we are committed to helping our students to become self-aware problem solvers, active global citizens and confident leaders.

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Sunshine Montessori School

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519.744.1423 | admissions@smsschool.ca | www.smsschool.ca



YOU

ROCKED IT!

We are so proud of you.



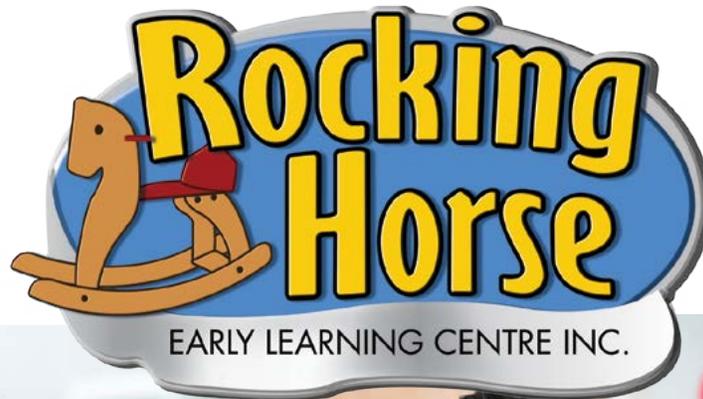
"It is IMPOSSIBLE for us to not speak about what we have seen and heard." ~Saint Peter



WAY TO BE AN AWESOME DEFENDER!

We are proud of you.

"Live with passion and compassion, proceed with optimism." ~Saint Peter



A welcoming place for every child

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- ▶ Three Emergent Curriculum Programs wrapped in a warm and caring environment
- ▶ Friendly, qualified RECEs
- ▶ Two outdoor playgrounds
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- ▶ Preschool, JK/SK and Before and After School Care
- ▶ Nutritious snacks and a hot lunch prepared on site by a Certified Food Handler
- ▶ Located inside Rockmosa Community Centre
- ▶ Subsidized spaces for families who qualify

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rockinghorseelc.com

WHY STEM EDUCATION IS SO IMPORTANT FOR OUR FUTURE

Written by:
Rishi Shah

Let's take a short journey through time. Darwin's theory of evolution has persuasive arguments that we have evolved from primitive beings roaming the plains of Africa 2.4-1.4 Million years ago. Over time the multiple human races (yes, we weren't the only ones) saw one species in particular rise to become more dominant than the others, namely Homo Sapiens.

We started by learning how to control fire and build tools to help us hunt. As our success grew, our curiosity and determination enabled us to traverse land and the oceans to spread across the planet. We began to understand how to domesticate animals for labour and harvest our own crops, settlements were built, our communities grew and the agricultural revolution was in full swing.

As labour became more intensive, our need for harnessing energy evolved and huge power stations arose. This began the industrial revolution and our dependence on non-renewable fuel sources. Humans changed the landscape in order to access more energy and we started to use machines to dominate land, sea, air, and even started our journey into the cosmos. The birth of computers followed by the internet have allowed the expansion of our race to move at exponential levels. Now

more than ever, we have access to more information than any single person can digest in 1000 lifetimes.

And so, we arrive at modern day man, living in a world surrounded by technology where we want everything to be faster, more powerful and instantaneously accessible. Who knows what the future holds? Maybe we will build settlements on other planets and even harness the power of our own sun, at which point energy will be virtually limitless. It may not even stop there and we start harnessing energy from other stars and even our own galaxy and beyond.

At this point you're probably asking yourself if there is any point to this journey? How did we start from primitive beings to become modern day humans?

The answer is S.T.E.M.

What is STEM?

STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Today almost every aspect of our lives can be linked and associated with STEM.

Science is everywhere in the world around us, both man-made and natural.





Technology is continuously expanding into every aspect of our lives from how we live and work, to the food that we eat and how we sleep.

Engineering is the basic design of urban areas, from roads to skyscrapers. It also tackles the challenges of changing global climate and make our environment more eco-friendly.

Mathematics and its laws govern what is theoretically possible and provide a logical solution to all the problems we are able to solve. It is in every occupation, every activity we do, and is used to improve our lives and make predictions on our future.

As a math teacher I have personally encountered negativity towards learning math and science. My students question the relevance of math all the time, and I don't blame them. Schooling generally doesn't apply learning to real life applications; it's more about passing exams according to a syllabus that has hardly changed in a century.

Our education system has become more about producing good test takers. This crushes the passion of certain subjects when they are considered to have exams that are "hard" to pass. It makes me very sad to hear a student say they are glad to never have to do math again after graduating school. Ironically, it will most likely be the subject used in everyday life more than any other.

Why STEM Education?

According to censuses within first world countries, STEM occupations are growing at an estimated 25%, while other occupations are growing at a fifth of that rate. STEM degree holders have a higher income even in non-STEM careers. Science, technology, engineering and mathematics workers play a key role in the sustained growth and stability of the world economy and are a critical component to helping the development of humanity.

STEM education creates critical thinkers, increases scientific literacy, and enables the next generation of innovators. It is this innovation that leads to new product

design to give us a better quality of life and help sustain our economy. Science literacy and critical thoughts depend on a good foundation of knowledge in the STEM areas. It is clear that most jobs of the future will require a basic understanding of math and science.

The most current example of how important STEM has been can be seen throughout the world where COVID has taken over our reality. Behind the scenes of government and politics, it was STEM that gave us all the data and analytics to help us contain the spread and deploy vaccines at phenomenal speed to every corner of our world. Despite these compelling facts, mathematics and science scores on average among students are lagging behind other subjects.

By exposing students to STEM and giving them opportunities to explore STEM-related concepts, they will hopefully develop a passion for it and maybe even pursue a job in a STEM field. Programs like Engineering For Kids and computer coding camps provide opportunities to see how concepts relate to life in order to spark a passion for further STEM-related education and careers. STEM activities provide hands-on and minds-on lessons for the student. Making math and science both fun and interesting helps the student to do much more than just learn.

“Too often we give children answers to remember rather than problems to solve” – Roger Lewin

However, it is not only about sparking passion and interest; we must start to accept that in the 21st century, scientific and technological innovations have paved the way for globalisation and a fast-moving knowledge-based

economy. To succeed in this new highly technological society, students need to develop their capabilities in STEM to levels beyond what has been considered acceptable in the past.

STEM education provides students with a well-rounded foundation of skills to help them understand and infer a wider range of concepts. The application of knowledge and ability to problem solve is crucial to be able to thrive in many industries and keep pace on this journey across a never-ending information highway.

Who benefits from STEM?

By now I hope to have laid down the groundwork to show the answer to this question. In short, we can all benefit

from STEM education and its awareness. Whether as a student, parent, educator or innovator, every person can play a role.

We have made huge advancement to help bridge the ethnic and gender gaps sometimes found in math and science fields. Initiatives are constantly being established to increase the roles of women and minorities in STEM-related fields. STEM education breaks any traditional bias of gender roles.

I challenge you to consider how far humanity has come and where we would be without STEM. It is truly the main reason we are so far ahead of all other species on this planet, and I'll conclude with a thought I pass down to all my students: "Wonder is the beginning of Wisdom".





LEARNING WITH NUMBERS

Blend Creative Studio isn't the only lifelong learners in the building. In fact, sister company Fiscal Performance Inc. is also dedicated to always searching for new ways to better serve our bookkeeping clients.

Fiscal Performance Inc. has taken courses and pursued certifications that we believe represent the future of bookkeeping and accounting. Our entire bookkeeping staff have become Quickbooks Certified ProAdvisors, giving us the inside track on how to best use this incredibly robust suite of bookkeeping software. This approach to rapid learning has helped immensely during the COVID-19 pandemic. As government programs, regulations, and expectations change daily, Fiscal Performance has stayed on top of it all to deliver incredible service in a time when business has been unpredictable.

Always the student, we want to take this chance to pass along some knowledge of our own.

In this section of Insider, you will read stories about how Fiscal Performance is staying ahead of the curve of growing technological changes to ensure that our clients' books are always kept clean. Rick Johal, the CEO of Certified Professional Bookkeepers Canada will teach you about the value a certified bookkeeper can add to your business, while our Managing Director Tracy Khamis will share with you her experiences of using the Knowledge Bureau platform to learn new skills.

But first, Tammy from Teach Me My Way, one of our fabulous clients, is here to challenge the way we think about learning.



DON'T USE COOKIE-CUTTERS: TEACH ME MY WAY

By TammyLynn Hebblethwaite

When Tracy Khamis calls you, you pick up the phone. I've been lucky to call Tracy my bookkeeper and friend for fifteen years, and I immediately made time to sit down when she asked if we could chat.

Tracy told me that the latest issue of Blend's Insider would be focused on education, and that she thought that Teach Me My Way would be perfect for it. So, thank you Tracy for the chance to tell you my story.

What we do

I am the Director of Services for Teach Me My Way Services Inc. I started Teach Me My Way fifteen years ago so that I could help facilitate learning and build confidence in our students.

Our team features a multi-disciplinary team of caring professionals that focus on a core group of skills: Speech and Language Skills, Social Communication and Play Skills, Behaviour Management, School Readiness and Academics, and Daily Living and Independence.

But more important is who we are teaching these skills to. The majority of our students are children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

I'm sure you have some ideas about what autism means and how it affects children. I'm telling you that children with autism are much more than their stereotypes. Autism impacts how the individual perceives things in the environment and how they socialize with others. It will impact not only the person's social interactions and communication skills, but also how they learn and interact within their environment.

Teach Me My Way

A quote by Ignacio Estrada also speaks to a core value at Teach Me My Way Services: "If a child cannot learn the way

we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn." Many educational programs take a cookie-cutter approach to learning, but that does not work for our students. We focus on each learner's current skills, needs, and unique learning style to create an individual learning program. We then incorporate listening, answering, movements, visuals, and other sensory experiences into the teaching process. As the learner acquires new skills and knowledge that will positively impact their life, we continue to build on these skills to encourage the child to reach their fullest potential.

It is all about learning

When we approach each student - along with their caregivers - on an individual basis, we're best able to fit our teaching methods to the student, and each student can be more successful. When we acknowledge the individual, we as a group get better.

If you are ever struggling to teach someone something new, I urge you to use a different perspective: is how you are teaching better for you? Or for your student?

And if you are ever not learning something, try looking for a new way to learn. A different approach that is better suited to your needs and capabilities will help you learn better and faster.

After all, to teach is to facilitate learning. If you aren't learning anything, then are you really teaching?

TammyLynn Hebblethwaite is the founder and owner of Teach Me My Way Services on the Hamilton Mountain. She is fascinated with speech patterns and child speech pathology.



**CPB
CANADA**

**CERTIFIED
PROFESSIONAL
BOOKKEEPERS
OF CANADA**

CHANGING HEARTS & MINDS - A BOOKKEEPER'S TALE

Over six months ago, I joined the Certified Professional Bookkeepers of Canada (CPB Canada) as the new Chief Executive Officer. Upon arriving, I was excited for the potential of a relatively new professional association (founded in 2007) representing a long-standing profession.

The title of “bookkeeper “ is often underappreciated and struggles to combat the stereotype of a narrow career focused on basic accounting tasks. As an example, there is no “bookkeeper” term in the French language. Instead, the Technicien (ne) Comptable is translated back as an Accounting Technician. It is fair to say that CPB Canada and its certified members are helping redefine the bookkeeping profession and move beyond any previous stereotypes.

A Certified Professional Bookkeeper (CPB) is held to a high standard for experience and knowledge and must demonstrate core knowledge expectations by passing a national exam in advanced bookkeeping. Once a CPB, members maintain the designation through a stringent Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct and annual professional development requirements, like Chartered Professional Accountants (CPA).

The CPB certification allows organizations and clients to maintain confidence in the support they receive. For many of our members, this client base includes small and medium-sized businesses, ranging from industries such as healthcare, hospitality to agriculture and every other sector across Canada.

So, what don't you know?

Well, today's bookkeeper is technologically astute. With

a burgeoning series of financial technology and cloud-based apps available, the landscape for the professional bookkeeper shifted dramatically. This turn has automated a great deal and allowed our CPB-holding members the chance to utilize their knowledge and skills by providing a higher value service.

More than ever, CPBs are providing clients with specialized accounting and business advisory services. The pandemic recently saw many small businesses rely on their bookkeepers to aid them in navigating a myriad of government support programs nationally and across provinces. Additionally, the hardship of pandemic called upon CPBs to advise their clients on business recovery, financial workflows, at times - pivoting their businesses and generally thinking of helpful ways to improve bottom-line results.

CPBs are well equipped to offer clients insight into their financial story. While some non-certified bookkeepers limit their work to recording financial transactions, the Certified Professional Bookkeepers of today allow business owners to focus on their passion, knowing that a skilled and experienced accounting professional will handle their books, enable them to understand the financial health of their business and offer them timely advice and solutions for growth and success.

CPB Canada, through its Certified Professional Bookkeeper Certification is redefining the bookkeeping industry. It is time to join many small and medium-sized businesses embracing the CPB as a recognized accounting professional and an integral part of your business advisory team.

I leave you with this simple question, is your current bookkeeper certified?



Rick Johal, CAE

CEO - Certified Professional Bookkeepers of Canada





WHERE DO YOU GO TO LEARN? I GO TO THE KNOWLEDGE BUREAU

By Tracy Khamis

It's been longer than I like to admit since I've set foot in a classroom. Nevertheless, I'm always looking for new places and new opportunities to learn. It's how I can best help Fiscal Performance stay on top of ever-shifting trends in accounting and bookkeeping, and how I can empower my coworkers to offer the best services possible to our clients.



I know everyone says that, but I mean it! I believe that you owe it to your clients and coworkers to learn as much as possible so that you can help them succeed.

Designations and Programs

The Knowledge Bureau quickly became my first choice of learning platform.

They are a Canada-based financial education institute, so the information I learn is relevant to me and my clients. All of their courses are online, so that they are accessible (and, during the pandemic, safe) no matter where you are. And finally, their course offerings are designed to fill in the gaps in your education.

Knowledge Bureau offers seven different designations - proof that you have taken and passed the course - which keep your knowledge up-to-date and gives you and your clients more assurances in your abilities. I recently completed the Distinguished Financial Advisor-Bookkeeping

Services Specialist™ Designation Program, which gave me tools and knowledge to better help Fiscal Performance's clients.

Continuing Professional Development

If you don't see one of their designations that's right for you, Knowledge Bureau also offers series of events and webinars that supplement your learning and award educational credits.

For those in the financial world, taking these credits every year ensures that we are best able to provide the best services we can to our clients. Some designations require CPD credits to maintain your membership as well, which helps the entire program.

Lifelong learning

Ultimately, the ability to go to one place and take relevant, valuable courses is an incredible thing! Any way that learning can be made easy and accessible should be taken advantage of. As I said before, I believe that everyone owes it to themselves, their coworkers, and their clients to learn as much as possible.

Because if you're not learning, then how do you know that you are doing the best job that you can do?

Tracy Khamis is the Managing Director of Fiscal Performance Inc. A lifelong learner, she enjoys good food and great company!





SEEING JANE RUN

You can't see Jane but, thankfully, we know she's there. That's because she's always been there: before there was a Blend Creative Studio, Jane was an advocate. Before there was Khamis Design, Jane was an avid supporter drumming up business for us and sending us leads. Jane's been there and believed in Ali since before, well, since before Ali believed in himself and in his creativity.

"Ali has so much talent, and such a wonderful personality. He didn't seem to be aware of that before I began working with him," Jane says. "His talent isn't just his design or his vision, but his client service and kindness goes so far. I encouraged him to explore that and take a leap of faith."

Jane Hamilton, founder of See Jane Run Communications, an advertising agency, has a keen eye; she's always on the

lookout for talent. Years ago, (neither Jane nor Ali will say exactly how many years but it's more than 15), she saw Ali's work. She never looked back. "It was the style, the typography, the colours – everything," Jane exclaims!

But it wasn't just the design. Jane really appreciated how Ali approached business. "Ali is a quiet, thoughtful person that doesn't storm through a room – he's there to take it in. He might not have the answers for you right there, because he goes away and takes time to reflect. How to listen and when to listen, how to speak and when to speak, he's very good at that."

In an issue of Insider that is all about learning, we'd be remiss if we didn't talk about one of our favourite teachers. A long-time collaborator on a variety of projects – most

of which were in the educational space and helped Blend establish relationships with a lot of our partners that are in this issue – Jane has always pushed us to greater heights. It was Jane who encouraged him to start Khamis Design and then Blend Creative Studio.

Sometimes, all it takes is a nudge from someone who believes in you.

Now, years later, Jane has left corporate communications behind (for the most part), but she won't say that she's retired because she's busier than ever. Her day-to-day is full of activism and advocacy for a wide variety of charities, organizations and causes, although she is most involved with Project Autism.

"Project Autism is a grassroots program that provides experiences for adults, youth, and children on and not on the spectrum," Jane says. "It's a wonderful, beautiful thing, because everything it does, it does for free." For someone who genuinely cares about education, that means a lot.

Jane is quick to tell us about the financial difficulties that Project Autism helps to address. "It's hard. You're often dealing with single-income families, and there are lots and lots of challenges," Jane says. "The needs are great, but the resources are few. So, I was really taken in by what Project Autism was doing and what they were offering, and I just wanted to help."

Her first goal with Project Autism was to raise money for a floor curling kit, which in turn got several Project Autism children and youth involved in the Burlington Special Olympics. "We were really proud of that," Jane says. "That was something that I never thought that I would do, but it was one of the most fulfilling experiences in my life."

When the pandemic hit, and schools started to shut down and transition to digital learning, Jane got to work again. People on the autism spectrum often have difficulties in standard classrooms, even when they have support workers to help them focus, concentrate, and learn. The sudden shift to a different form of learning certainly wouldn't help matters.

"At the beginning of the pandemic, I was writing a lot of grants, and we secured a large grant from the Red Cross for equipment, computers, and laptops so that we could start ZOOM classes for these people for whom school – and online school – wasn't going to do anything for them," Jane says. "And so, we started five classes a day and we went from there. Everything from photography, to ecology, to music, to cooking – I mean, I did a cooking class for them and there was a man who was 27 who had never learned to cook before!"

"He asked me, 'Chef Jane, is this something that I could do?' And I replied, 'Of course you can! You guys can do anything that you put your minds to!'"

"That's the part of Project Autism that I just love: a lot of these people hear 'no' a lot in their lives, or 'you can't do that,' when we say: 'yes, you can!'"

And that's really the part of Jane that we love, too: Jane is an 'empowerer,' someone who will push you to accomplish your goals, even if you don't know what those goals are yet. "I just like seeing people succeed," Jane says about herself. "I don't necessarily see that in myself, but I like to bring that out of other people."

If there's one lesson we can all learn from Jane, that's it.

"This is my chance to say thank you (in writing!). Jane is an amazing person, and I am so lucky to have met her. Her support, friendship, and mentoring have been a huge part of not only my career, but my personal life. She definitely has her own room in my heart"

– Ali Khamis

[Learn more about Project Autism here](#)



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MARTINIS

WINTER WARMUPS!

If you're like us at Blend house, winter is not our favourite season. Snow. Cold air. Slippery sidewalks. No thank you.

But it does give us an excuse to cut through the winter chills with these comforting drinks.

Fireplace optional, but highly recommended when you sit back and relax with these winter cocktails.

Cheers!

KAHLUA HOT CHOCOLATE

INGREDIENTS

2 cups milk
2 tbsp sugar
1 1/2 tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder
1/4 tsp cinnamon
A pinch of nutmeg
1 oz Kahlúa coffee liqueur

For serving:

Mini marshmallows
Salted caramel
Chocolate syrup

DIRECTIONS:

In a medium saucepan, combine milk, sugar, cocoa powder, cinnamon and nutmeg over medium heat until heated through, about 2-3 minutes.

Remove from heat and stir in Kahlúa.

Serve immediately, garnished with mini marshmallows, salted caramel and chocolate syrup, as desired.



EGGNOG

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

2 eggs, separated
1/4 cup sugar, divided
1 1/2 cups whole milk
1/2 cup heavy cream
1/2 cup rum, bourbon or brandy
Garnish with grated nutmeg

DIRECTIONS:

In a large bowl, beat the egg yolks with 3 tablespoons of the sugar until fluffy

Stir in the milk, heavy cream and your spirit of choice

In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites with the remaining 1 tablespoon of sugar until soft peaks form

Fold the egg whites into the yolk mixture

Divide between four glasses

Garnish each with freshly grated nutmeg



SPICED IRISH COFFEE

SERVES 2

INGREDIENTS:

PUMPKIN SPICE WHIPPED CREAM

- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1 1/2 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp pumpkin spice (extra for garnish)

INGREDIENTS:

IRISH COFFEE

- 1 1/2 cups freshly brewed hot coffee
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 4 tbsp Irish whiskey

DIRECTIONS:

PUMPKIN SPICE WHIPPED CREAM

Whip all ingredients to stiff peaks

DIRECTIONS:

IRISH COFFEE

Divide all ingredients between two glasses

Pipe the whipped cream onto each drink.

Sprinkle with pumpkin spice



WE TEACH TO YOUR CHILD'S WAY OF LEARNING

Teach Me My Way SERVICES

Teach Me My Way Services is a caring and professional centre that uses a multi-disciplinary approach to learning. Our primary focus is determining your child's unique learning style in order to create an individual plan for their growth and development. We provide services for all ages 2 to 25 year old learners, and their caregivers too.

In addition to one-on-one therapy, our team promotes opportunities for peer interaction and friendships through group programs.

"If a child cannot learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn."

- Ignacio Estrada

