



Island Pacific School

GIVING STORIES



MIDDLE SCHOOL MATTERS

Middle School is challenging and dynamic. It is turbulent and tough at times. Teachers at IPS are continually striving for ways to connect with each child, to inspire them to learn, to captivate their interests and to help them know that they matter. The small size of IPS allows this to happen in many meaningful ways.

While we are small by design and not trying to be *bigger*, we are trying to be *better*. We are making changes to our facilities and programming to enhance what we are able to provide our students as we continue to fulfill our mission. An exceptional education is, first and foremost, built on relationships.

The stories in this booklet talk about those relationships and why our IPS community donates to our school so readily.

We invite you to deepen your relationship with us. Reach out. Connect. Join us as we build a Bridge to the Future.

Sections:

ALUMNI

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PARENT/BOARD

STAFF

ALUMNI



Bronwyn Churcher

Bronwyn Churcher (alum student '00 and alum teacher '14) came to play with her Celtic traditional band Knacker's Yard on December 15, 2018, at the Bowen Pub.

We caught up with her then to find out what she's been doing.

IPS Days

Bronwyn graduated from IPS in 2000, which makes her one of IPS's first graduates. She reflected how in 1997 when she started at IPS, it was really just a single room schoolhouse, on Cates Hill on Bowen Island (now the location of Bowen's Municipal Hall). There were just 23 students in three grades housed in a building no larger than a small house. They worked together in most subjects, but when they needed to do independent study, they simply pulled a

curtain across the room!

"Kellie Rapley (Burnett) was the best teacher I've ever had. She inspired me to get a degree in History, which I followed with a Masters in Social Anthropology". Bronwyn recalled Kelly's background in anthropology, which she infused in her teaching as she shared knowledge about different cultures, imparting her passion into her lessons.

Bronwyn's Masterworks explored the question 'Is violence a choice?' inspired by her grade 8 class field trip to the downtown eastside, she found herself wondering about the stories behind how people ended up there. Her Masterworks presentation became an exploration of the cycle of poverty, violence and drug abuse. She laughs when she recalls her mentor, Pam Matthews' reaction to her submission of 56 pages, "we're going to start having to put limits on how long these are allowed to be!"

In December 2005, Bronwyn was studying at the University of Edinburgh, but was home visiting for Christmas as were her brother and sister. In the early hours of the morning of December 16, a devastating fire completely destroyed the family home on Bowen Island. Everything was lost but most valuable were the family albums. Eva, her mum, worked hard to get photos back and one valuable source was IPS's repository. People were good too about sending photos back to the family, that had previously been given away. "You pull together" Bronwyn said, "it's community".

Teaching

After high school, she obtained a history degree from UBC, a Masters degree in Social Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh, and then her B.Ed. at SFU where she met her partner Christian MacInnis. They taught abroad together, first in the UK and then in China. In 2012, they both returned to Canada to teach at IPS: Bronwyn teaching Humanities and English for two years, and Christian teaching PE, Design Tech and

English there from 2012-2016. They then embarked on their year-long bike trip around the world.

Ted Spear had a huge influence on her years at IPS both as a student, then some years later when she returned as a teacher. "I was always in awe of how thoughtful and intentional and respectful he was. He really cared about what staff thought, asked us how we could improve what we did, year after year. It was really neat coming back to work for him...having him as a boss instead of a principal was an interesting experience!" She recalled how, earlier this year, she was playing with her band, Knackers Yard, at a Victoria pub, and he just appeared, in the audience. He was visiting a friend and had made a point of looking her up and checking in.

She said she started as a substitute teacher with the Greater Victoria School District in September 2017 and enjoys the flexibility of subbing. "I love teaching and hanging out with kids". While some people may find it daunting to go into new classes regularly, she doesn't find it difficult now that she's got six years of teaching behind her. She teaches all levels — elementary, middle and high school and while she enjoys all ages, she finds middle school to be the most wild — "they just have so much energy at that age!" she laughs.

Education or music?

I asked Bronwyn whether she considers herself a teacher or a musician. "I love teaching, I've finally found the thing that feeds me creatively and being able to get paid to do it is amazing. We travel all over BC and further afield meeting people, playing music and bringing joy to small communities. I love it." ■

TO READ MORE

<https://islandpacific.org/2018/12/alumni-story-bronwyn-churcher-on-bowen-dec-15-bowen-pub/>



ALUMNI

Katherine Ovenell-Carter (‘03) reflects on the decade plus since IPS

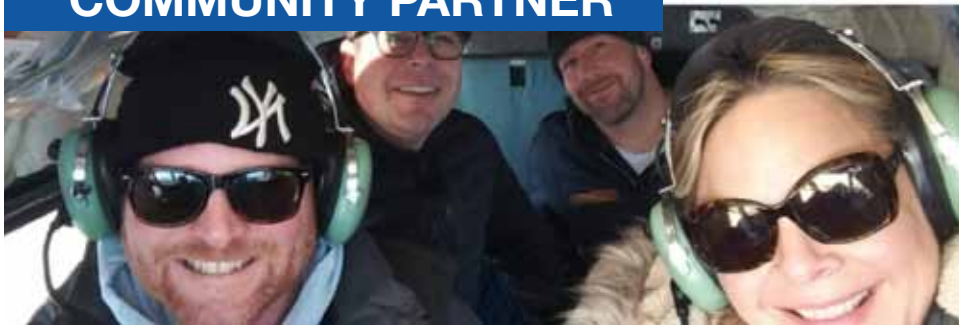
My time at IPS ended well over a decade ago, when I started the daily commute over to West Vancouver Secondary for the International Baccalaureate program. I’d already decided back then that I was going to be a geneticist (thank you Jen for happily feeding my 13-year-old self everything you had on DNA!) so I was looking forward to university. I graduated high school with the Governor General’s Bronze Medal and a full scholarship to SFU, where I studied molecular biology and biochemistry. I worked in an organic chemistry lab there between grade 12 and first year, and everything was on track for that future in genetic research. And then a funny thing happened.

In third year, I took a summer job working for Science ALIVE – a K-12 science outreach program that ran classroom workshops, summer camps, and weekend programs. And I fell in love with teaching science. So, I finished off my B.Sc. and returned to get my B.Ed. so that I could keep doing just that. My PDP module focused on Indigenous education, something I chose after time spent running science camps and programs in Haida Gwaii and Nunavut made me realize I knew far too little about Indigenous history in Canada.

My first full time teaching job was teaching grades 6-8 in Klemtu, a village of about 400 people located in the Great Bear Rainforest. Later, I moved down to Squamish to be closer to home again and taught grade 7 and 8 at Coast Mountain Academy. But I did get the chance to go back to Klemtu this past summer to see my first ever group of students again – now at their grade 12 graduation! It was such a special feeling to see “my kids” grown up and ready for whatever the world offered next.

Now, I teach grade 7 math and science at West Point Grey Academy. I think it’s no coincidence that I’ve stayed working with middle years students, and as a science teacher (though I admit, the math surprised me!).

It’s been years, but I still say “we” when I talk about IPS. The school left its mark on me in so many ways and remains a source of inspiration. I find myself thinking of my IPS teachers whenever I’m feeling stuck in my own work – they’re still teaching me even now. ■



COMMUNITY PARTNER

Scott McIntosh

Fort Langley Air

Kristin and Geoff Jarvis donated a unique and valuable gift to our Fall Bash fundraiser — a private tour of the southern BC Coast, departing from the Salish Sea, traveling over the Coastal Range (and the glaciers and volcanoes of Garibaldi Provincial Park) to the ultimate destination, Princess Louisa Provincial Marine Park, accessible only by water.

The lucky winners Brent O'Malley and Susan Swift, owners of Bowen Island Sea Kayaking, will get to experience the life of a West Coast seaplane pilot from inside one of Canada's most iconic bush planes, the DHC-2 Beaver, before dining on a picnic assembled by alumnus and Chopped Canada Jr contestant Hudson Stiver.

This single donation raised \$5,000 for our Student Financial Aid fund to [keep IPS](#)

[diverse and accessible](#), and the Jarvis Family encouraged me to satisfy my curiosity about why Scott McIntosh, Owner of Fort Langley Air, decided to partner in this generous gift.

What is your tie to IPS?

Scott first heard about IPS from his sister, Kristin Jarvis, who worked as our Communications Director from 2014 – 2017 and whose daughter Oceana is now in Grade 6. “Kristin plays a pivotal role in our family-owned business, and guides our communications, marketing and engagement strategy. She is a promotions juggernaut. When she and Oceana told us about the fundraiser, they showed me how it was a fit. How could I say no?” he jokes.

“On top of that, our digital content and social media strategist is John Stiver (whose son Hudson graduated from IPS in 2017 and whose daughter Wiley is currently in grade 7.) John and Kristin really believe in the school and we have shared values about how important the right support is for kids at this age.”

Tell me about your views on social responsibility

“Yes, community initiatives – it’s so difficult to actually settle on which cause to support. The way we’ve done it historically is we chose a charity that is aligned with our values and beliefs. We think giving all kinds of kids a chance is a natural fit to grow our community and our economy.

“At the end of the day, what matters most to me is the safety and happiness of my family, and a big part of that for my kids is finding the right educational fit for them. Independent schools are doing important work. My wife is very connected to Brentwood where she attended high school. We have one child heading to Shawnigan



Lake School for grade 8 next year, and then our oldest is in grade 10 in a public high school. We live in a community of friends and neighbours of every financial background. This year we are lucky enough to be able to afford Shawnigan, and I think every kid that is driven to be part of a community deserves the best

chance. I really could have used a school like IPS or Shawnigan as a kid and we would never have been able to afford it. I am impressed with schools that commit to economic diversity and financial aid.

“And, what comes around goes around. Kids who get help to follow their passion at a school that cares about them, hopefully turn into adults with that same global consciousness.”

What makes a semi-retired entrepreneur buy a float plane company?

Scott is an entrepreneur, a self-made risk taker, who comes from a family of pilots — both his father and grandfather were bush pilots. But he didn’t necessarily think he’d end up in an aviation business when he started his career.

“I grew up surrounded by pilots, and my own career started off in a truck transport business right out of high school, and we evolved over 30 years. I had intended to be in transportation for longer – I figured it would be a going concern for the rest of my career...but conditions were right, my partners and I were approached by a buyer, their offer was compelling so we seized it and sold the business in 2016. ■

[Read the full interview at https://islandpacific.org/2019/02/fort-langley-air-donates-to-ips/](https://islandpacific.org/2019/02/fort-langley-air-donates-to-ips/)



Steven Klein ('01)

An article in the Washington Post prompted us to check in with Steven.

After completing my PhD at the University of Chicago and spending a year in Italy as a fellow at the European University Institute, this fall I started as an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Florida. My research as a political theorist focuses on 19th and 20th century European political thought - the same area as my IPS Masterworks project, which was about anarchist political thought in the 19th century. IPS quite literally set me on this path. While in Italy, Renée, my partner, gave birth to our son, Jacques, who joins our 5-year-old daughter Iris. Renée is an art historian who is working towards becoming a lactation consultant. We naturally found time to travel while we were in Italy - here we are in Volterra, in Tuscany. ■

Rick Brzezowski

A story from my past and another reason why I love and support IPS

Several years ago, I opened a box and found my grade 7 year book (class of '75 – yikes, I'm getting old). Incredibly, my class had 36 students and in looking at everyone's picture, it reminded me of the wide range in academic, behavioural, and social-emotional development. It highlighted that it was more of an exercise in crowd control than education.

I grew up on the “wrong side of the tracks” in a proud hardworking community in North Edmonton that did not have the opportunity to experience the power of education. Only about 20 out of almost 600 students in my grade 12 class went on to post secondary. I remember tutoring two students in a buddy system in this grade 7 class who had severe academic struggles. There were many others as well, and most of them quit before finishing high school. In hindsight, what is evident to me is that the learning strategies program we have at IPS would have vastly improved many of these people's lives.

IPS gives our students many advantages and learning strategies is an important one because it helps our students develop important learning skills which leads to



Rick Brzezowski sits at one of the new study carrels recently installed with his family's funding

warranted confidence and improved self esteem – what could be better! I love IPS and one of my joys has been watching a wide range of students thrive at IPS who would likely have had a much different outcomes in my day. We are very fortunate to have IPS. Because of that, my family has made a 5 year commitment to fund innovation and professional development in our learning strategies program and I encourage other families who have seen the huge benefits of this program to participate in helping to improve the program from excellent to extraordinary.

Finally, I would also like to give a heartfelt thank you to Amanda, Diana and Jen Z. for all they do to make our Learning Strategies Program so successful. ■

COMMUNITY PARTNER

Massender Family



Ian and Jill Massender and their daughters Alexis and Kylie are extremely pleased to be joining the IPS family this fall.

They have arrived with a bang, generously supporting our Community Partners Program last month which helped bring our total to just over \$9,000, thank you to the Massenders!

Ian is a veteran Fire Captain in Vancouver and while on island, he operates his own real estate business (which began here in 2004). Jill assists with the business, volunteers with school activities, as well as being full time Mom to their twin daughters. Alexis and Kylie have varied interests, from Frisco (their Giant Schnauzer) to walking, skiing, boating, playing soccer, dance, and time with Bud and Nan Massender (their grandparents) — one busy family!

We look forward to welcoming them to IPS in September 2019. ■

COMMUNITY PARTNER

Dee Elliott & Frazer Elliott



Dee Elliott

Dee Elliott and her son Frazer Elliott have generously donated towards our new Community Partners Program initiative.

Recognizing that IPS students are excellent ambassadors in our community and that the values of our school align with the best qualities of the Bowen community, they wanted to support our Community Partners Program, specifically the *“Kids in Motion”* initiative. This option focuses on, amongst other things, our pollinator garden and natural habitat around our school property.

Teacher Pam Matthews is embarking on the pollinator garden project with her students, drawing on knowledge from local experts in addition to her own skills and expertise. Stay tuned for more news from Pam on this exciting enterprise!

Thank you Dee and Frazer for supporting this important initiative! Find out more about Dee and Frazer at bowenhomes.ca. ■



Frazer Elliott

DEE ELLIOTT
PERSONAL REAL ESTATE CORPORATION


**Macdonald
Realty**

COMMUNITY PARTNER

Ames Family Foundation



The Ames Family Foundation generously donated \$5,000 our Financial Aid Fund to *keep IPS diverse and accessible*.

Our connection with the Ames Family is through John Olson, IPS parent and board member, and past president of Ames Tile & Stone Ltd. When John took over as President of the company in 2010, he was only the second non-family member to hold this position. Ames Tile & Stone Ltd. has won several business awards including Canada's Best Managed Companies (for the ninth year in a row) and Canada's Great Places to Work award. IPS is very fortunate



John Ames

to have John's skills as he starts his first year serving on our Board of Directors.

Before recently stepping down from that position, John worked with the Ames Family to secure this generous donation, available to us in perpetuity. Thanks also to Carol Harrison, Administrator for the Ames Foundation, for facilitating this generous gift.

As a non-profit, independent school, we are committed to a strong Financial Aid Program to ensure that no child is denied entrance to IPS based solely on financial limits.

The Ames Family Foundation has helped a student attend IPS and we extend our heartfelt thanks to them! ■



John Olson

COMMUNITY PARTNER

The Cape on Bowen

Sincere thanks to Candy Ho for working with us in developing our Community Partners program: *Kids in Motion* initiative, providing funds to help us purchase new sporting equipment and support our pollinator garden and natural habitats projects.

The Cape on Bowen believes in long-term community building that facilitates residents to grow in place and age in place. Children are the creators of our future, and they are our hope.

We are so immensely proud and blessed to have the opportunity to support Island Pacific School for the amazing work that they do with all their heart and dedication. This school ensures that kids not only receive the best possible academic education, but most importantly, they experience a program that nurtures and guides them in their development of character - their compassion, and sense of citizenship and responsibility for the world immediately around them, and the world at large.

During my visit with the school, I had the honour of meeting their leadership, who are passionate and committed to the school's vision and philosophy through not just their words, but their actions. We know that the school will continue to cultivate children who thrive in their formative years, and go on to give the best of who they are for the rest of



Candy Ho

their lives.

We want to do our part to not only support the school financially, but also through other meaningful endeavours, whether that is helping them to give access to more Bowen children, or by integrating The Cape into their outdoor and natural habitat initiatives.

For more information about the Cape on Bowen, visit their website at <http://thecapeonbowen.ca> ■

the CAPE ON BOWEN

COMMUNITY PARTNER

Osborne Cane Serious Injury Lawyers



Jacqueline Cane and David Osborne are the parents of Finnsson, a grade 6 student at IPS.

Through their law firm they generously donated to our *Kids in the Digital Age* option of the Community Partners program. This contribution will help us purchase an entire set of Chromebooks for the school in the 2019 - 2020 academic year, putting updated equipment directly into the hands of our students. ■



COMMUNITY PARTNER

Cormier Family



Chris and Karen Cormier are parents of IPS students Harrison and Malcolm.

In addition to Chris sitting on our board of governors, they have both donated many hundreds of volunteer hours over the years their sons have attended IPS.

They directed their donation to the *Enhancing Student Spaces* option of our Community Partners Program. This gift allowed us to purchase much needed equipment and desks for our Learning Strategies Program. ■

FACULTY



Jennifer Henrichsen

Jennifer Henrichsen is Island Pacific School's Assistant Head and math teacher. Well, that's her official title, but as with any of our staff, you'll find out that her role is varied and far reaching. Here is a little excerpt from a recent interview...

Jen has worked on and off at IPS for almost 20 years. She started at IPS from 2000-2003 and left Bowen with her growing family for seven years including stints in New Brunswick, Argentina and then Ghana for three years before returning to Bowen and IPS in 2011.

While in Ghana Jen discovered the Royal Seed Orphanage (RSO) and volunteered her

time to teach science, help organize fundraisers and ultimately started the pen pal program with IPS students. It's now been over 10 years of pen pal letters going back and forth. "It's so awesome because it's the whole global citizen experience, it fits into my personal worldview and that of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme that we offer. It's these things that I think are hugely important for kids to have connections with people and to actually know that they have the power to do something."

Five years ago, three IPS students initiated a triathlon event (Tri4Ghana) and raised \$42,000 for the RSO. As a result, 11 Ghanaian children who lived there were able to begin their high school education. These 11 students graduated in 2017! They have now entered the workforce with skills and job opportunities thanks to their education. Three of the students returned to RSO, but this time as teachers earning a salary.

Jen's career began as a wildlife biologist and she has also worked as a programmer for provincial parks so it was a natural progression from loving nature and the sciences to sharing these passions with the students.

It's interesting how you found this small school that was very aligned to your ideas and how you connected with Ted Spear.

Well, it was honestly perfect when I met Ted (Spear) at IPS. In my head I was ripe to hear him, and he needed someone to

They need to concentrate on middle schools because this is where you set them up. It's a crucial age, a crucial time in their development when they need to have as many mentors as close as possible.

run things and I had camp experience, I had leadership in camps and parks and I had math and science. I could teach both subjects. I'd just done a big paper on inquiry, and inquiry is a key feature of the philosophy at IPS. That was our first conversation – about inquiry.

What lights your fire? Why do you love working at IPS?

What gives me energy? Kids give me energy. And teaching, I've got a whole class of engaged

kids doing something that they find really worthwhile and it opens their eyes.

What do you think are the biggest challenges that middle schools face today?

The thing is there aren't middle schools! To me, that's it – what is the biggest challenge for BC education? They need to concentrate on middle schools because this is where you set them up. It's a crucial age, a crucial time in their development when they need to have as many mentors as close as possible. I think in our education system middle schools are more important than people realize. At this age which is a time of huge development, it's critical to set them up with the challenges that they need, to set them up with the 'engineered experiences' that actually help them be responsible, confident human beings, committed to a better world. ■

Read the full interview at:
<https://islandpacific.org/blog/>



PARENT/BOARD

Elizabeth Wooding, Simon Bicknell and family

Elizabeth Wooding, IPS parent and board member talks about what IPS means to their family...

IPS means so much more to me than simply being a great little school that my kids go to. It embodies a whole philosophy around learning and ultimately — life. IPS is about character and it weaves this into every aspect of its fabric. At IPS big questions are asked directly and indirectly: Who are you? Who do you want to become and why? And how do you want to be in community with others? To me this is the essence and the primary building block to education and to life, and why Simon and I want to support IPS today and into the future.

Simon and I donate to the school because we want to see it continue to be a centre for community that focuses on youth, weaving character into each layer of its fabric. ■

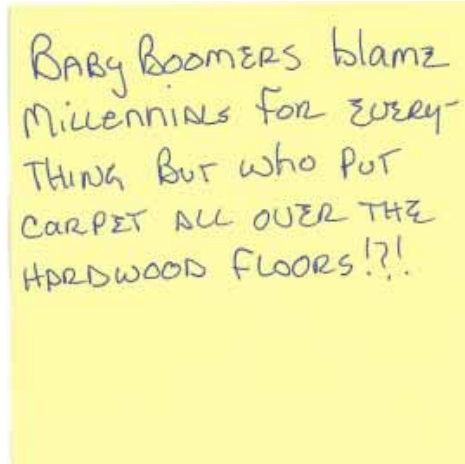
STAFF

Rio Bailey

I caught up with Rio a while back and was telling her how much her donation meant when we launched our 2nd Annual Giving Appeal last year.



Our board led our Annual Giving Appeal with unprecedented support, then we went out to staff and faculty, asking if they could match the 100% participation of their board. With few exceptions, they all stepped up and donated to their school, generously and wholeheartedly, reinforcing our Culture of Philanthropy.



The first of those donations, in particular, still stands out in my mind. I checked my cubby in the staffroom upon arrival the next morning, and there was a small envelope, with cash in it...and a smiley face on the front. It brought tears to my eyes. It was from our cleaner, Rio Bailey. As I was thanking

her, I asked about how she came to be at IPS and what kept her here. Here's what she said:

"I started cleaning IPS in 2014. The one thing that has always stood out is how much I have always felt my work is appreciated. All of the staff at IPS work extremely hard, multitasking overtime and still take the time to say thanks let alone notice. A fond memory that comes to mind is Ted telling me he loves the way I polish the kitchen sink and wished no one would splash water on it. (in my mind I was thinking – Ted, it's a sink!!!)

I started making the morning coffee one day when I saw how crazy busy everyone was at report card time and wrote the note "despierta conmigo" (Spanish: "awake with me") and everyone commented that it made them feel happy and Adrian called me "the coffee fairy". Sold!

I believe the students that attend IPS really do learn integrity wisdom and courage and I am grateful to be part of the team. You are all fantastic!"

NB: Rio continues to leave us regular notes on the coffee maker which we'll share with you from time to time. ■

Join us on our Bridge to the Future



Wisdom.
Courage.
Integrity.

Island Pacific School is an independent middle school intentionally designed to help students develop, engage and contribute to the world around them at a pivotal time in their lives.

Providing a strong foundation for learning enables our students to live their best lives and express the very best of what it means to be human.

Did you know? IPS is an independent, non-profit school, which is different than a private school. The key difference being that private schools can be for profit and independent schools are definitely not.

As an Independent school, IPS has charitable status and donations can be eligible for tax receipts.

Help us achieve our goals

Would you like to specifically direct your gift?

We have several options:

Kids in Motion gym and outdoor equipment, pollinator garden and natural habitats

Kids in the Digital Age technical equipment
Enhancing Student Spaces indoor and outdoor campus improvements

Keeping IPS Diverse and Accessible student financial aid

(more details on our Giving page link below)

- Support our Annual Appeal and become an IPS sustainer with automatic monthly gifts
- Consider a major gift of \$2,500 or more, to help us build our covered area in the rear of the property (you can structure a pledge for a major gift over multiple years)
- Give a named gift similar to the Belluk-Orlikow Performing Arts award. This was a \$10,000 gift to IPS used to bolster initiatives that foster innovation and excellence in the way IPS educates middle school students. The award itself is given at the Rites of Passage ceremony to a student currently attending IPS, who has demonstrated excellence and dedication to the musical, visual or performing arts, and who has contributed to the enhancement of the IPS community through this excellence and dedication.

- Establish a bursary fund gift to honour someone's memory such as the Teal Ander Bursary Fund or the Marg Witty Bursary Fund. These were gifts from the heart that make a difference in students' lives for many years.
- Consider supporting our bursary program over a longer term such as Smooth Stones Foundation has done. This organization is comprised of founding and alumni families dedicated to keep IPS diverse and accessible.
- Consider becoming a **Community Partner** by donating through your business. Click on the Community Partners Program image on the Giving Page sidebar for more information about this.

How can you help?

All interviews and stories were written by Julia McCaig. Contact her to discuss your giving options.

**Julia McCaig | Director of
Development and Alumni Relations**

**604.947.9311 or cell 778.989.0771
julia@go.islandpacific.org**

Visit our Giving Page on our website below and click on the button.

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MONETARY DONATIONS

Every donation is meaningful.

Thank you for your support of **Island Pacific School**.

Simply donate online by visiting our website islandpacific.org/giving

Please consider becoming a monthly donor (IPS sustainer) to help us strengthen our school.

Ways to Donate

100% of your donation goes to **IPS** if you pay by either cheque or e-transfer



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