

Via the Seine | Special Report

A salute to our 2020 graduates

A message from Wendy Bloomfield, Chair, Board of Trustees

The end of this school year has been vastly altered from what any of our students expected – especially our Grade 12 graduates. Their convocation ceremonies and grad celebrations will look very different this year, but they are standing strong and making the best of the situation, and we are all so very proud of them.

I've watched thousands of students graduate from our schools in my many years as a Seine River School Division

trustee and chair of the board, and every one of them went through a lot to get to that point. We celebrate and applaud the achievements of each of our 320 graduates, despite these difficult circumstances.

From now until the end of June, our Via the Seine Special Reports will include a tribute to the graduates from our three high schools: Collège Lorette Collégiate, Collège St. Norbert Collegiate and Ste. Anne Collegiate. 🍌

EAs go the extra mile for students

When Michelle Goossen needed to connect with a student for whom online interaction wasn't enough, she got creative. The Educational assistant (EA) at Ste. Anne Elementary School zipped over to the student's home on her ATV on his birthday, for a quick visit from six feet apart.

Goossen, like the Division's other 150 EAs, has gone above and beyond to learn new technology, provide one-on-one support and maintain important connections with creativity and humour, says Grade 5/6 teacher Jenna Desilets.

"Our EAs are essential," says Elaine Lochhead, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services for SRSD. "They play a valuable role in supporting our students – including the most vulnerable – and they do it in their own unique way specific to the students' needs."

When schools were closing, the Division's I.T. Department reconfigured school laptops for EAs, so they could connect with students online, Lochhead says. But EAs have also helped ensure students without Internet access stay connected. Several EAs make weekly treks between their schools



🍌 EA Michelle Goossen poses for a "we miss you" message collage from SAE staff to students and families.

and students' homes to deliver schoolwork packages and retrieve completed assignments, such as Charlotte Genthon of Collège Lorette Collegiate.

"Charlotte has made great connections with those students and their families," says Francine Lepage-Lemoine, CLC's Vice Principal and French Program Coordinator for the division.

At Richer School, EAs connect one-on-one through video chats, do live book readings and offer reading support, and help students with their individual work.

"For many students, connecting with a familiar face and receiving that support has become the highlight of their day. They have meaningful

conversations that help develop oral language skills," explains RCH Resource Teacher Lisa Zubert.

Liette Weir, Vice Principal at École Ste-Anne Immersion, says it's clear EAs have students' best interests at heart.

"Our EAs have special connections with many of our students. Supporting them in remote learning has ensured consistency for those students during this time," Weir explains.

Classroom EA Tanya Montebruno has been an incredible help to Chantelle Desorcy, a Grade 5/6 teacher at Ste. Anne Elementary –during distance learning and before.

"Tanya has been a constant support in whatever I need – strength, compassion, endurance or empathy. EAs are often the unsung heroes of education, but they play a huge role in the academic, social and emotional success of our students and our staff community," Desorcy says.

EAs Tamie Funk and Emily Park have also done wonders keeping students engaged and connected, echoes Robyn Woytowich, another Grade 5/6 teacher at SAE.

"Our EAs have been such a gift to both teachers and students through this time of uncertainty." 🍌

Meet our SRSD Grad 2020 Valedictorians

While convocation will look different for our Grade 12 graduates this year, they'll still get to hear inspiring words from their Class of 2020 co-valedictorians, whose addresses will be delivered by video later this month.

Ste. Anne Collegiate



Bianca Siem

Bianca helped promote school spirit and positive environments as part of the Respect Ed, Student Leadership and WE ARE groups. She enjoyed the hiking club, eSports and basketball, and was a volunteer scorekeeper at tournaments.

She plans to study medicine after pursuing her Bachelor of Science degree at U of M.

Bianca's advice: When tough times happen, it can be easy to give up, but instead just take a break. Just keep trying and go after your goals with all your heart!



Daniel Martens

Daniel went through school leaving no doors unopened, giving his all to everything he tried – including band, leadership, volleyball, basketball and track and field – and is proud that his hard work resulted in the honour of

being chosen as a valedictorian. He is starting at U of M this fall with plans to later study biology.

Daniel's advice: Slow down and smell the roses. We have a whole life ahead of us and there's no need to stress or overthink anything. Appreciate the moment.

Collège Lorette Collegiate



Owen Kirk (*French Immersion*)

Owen spent his years at CLC balancing academics and sports, including volleyball, badminton, golf, baseball and hockey. He enjoyed being part of the PhysEd Leadership group. Owen is deciding between attending the

U of M this fall, or heading west to the U of Calgary.

Owen's advice: The Great One (Wayne Gretzky) said it best: "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." Take every opportunity you're given, to become the best people I know you can be.



Kaylen Guay (*English Program*)

Kaylen looks forward to sharing her CLC memories, and the challenges her peers have faced these last few months, as a valedictorian. She participated in the Social Justice Group and other fundraisers at school while

also training as a competitive gymnast. After pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree from the U of M, Kaylen plans to further her education in the medical field.

Kaylen's advice: Keep a positive attitude, focus on the things you enjoy and stay optimistic about the future.

Collège St. Norbert Collegiate



Noah Cornborough (*French Immersion*)

Noah played for both CSNC's championship football team and the school hockey team, and he enjoyed playing a role in the *Festival Théâtre Jeunesse*. He plans to attend U of M this fall and hopes to pursue a career in radiology. Noah also wants to give back by volunteering as a coach for CSNC's football team next season.

Noah's advice: Stay true to yourself, and always do what feels right, because the right path is waiting for you.



Tyler Everley (*English Program*)

Tyler filled his time with music – band, choir, jazz choir and musical theatre – plus soccer and volleyball. He was also a leader of CSNC's peer support and mental health awareness groups. Tyler hopes to attend the musical theatre program at Sheridan College in Ontario in the future.

Tyler's advice: Embrace these ever-changing times with an open mind. Be open to the opportunities being presented to us in return for the graduation we expected. 🍌

A timely message to fellow grads

With so much being changed in our lives, we need to grieve and let our emotions out. But then, let's keep our heads up and remember why we are where we are. We're all adapting to not just living, but thriving, through the uncertainty of a global pandemic. We need to seek comfort and find strength in each other, and grow from this experience to become better, stronger, even more exceptional people.

– Tyler Everley,
CSNC Co-Valedictorian