As I look out my window, which overlooks the East-West Garden at Renison, I see the light dappling the trees, and hear the soft wind blowing, bringing a sense of excitement as we move closer to the end of summer and the beginning of the fall term at Renison. I love summertime – the warm weather, barbeques, beach time, and the more relaxed feel to the days, but as September arrives, the promise of crisp temperatures, cool evenings, and brightly coloured leaves floating to the ground always lifts my heart and fills my soul. It’s a new beginning, a new season, and new opportunities.

Renison Reports has offered us many opportunities over the years to share our stories, our growth and our news. Re-designed in the spring of 2014, Renison Reports has been very well received and offered us the opportunity to showcase our school, our students, our staff and our faculty in a new, vibrant format.

Two years later, we are changing again – offering Renison Reports in printed format once a year and providing an opportunity for alumni and friends to receive a short weekly online update, This Week at Renison, so that you can be informed as our news happens. To sign up, visit: uwaterloo.ca/renison/alumni/week-renison-sign

In this edition, you will read about Renison in the Community – how we don’t just teach how to be good citizens, but we actualize how we, at Renison, are good citizens in our world.

Whether it is providing residence space for Crown Wards or offering English language training bursaries to new immigrants, Renison demonstrates that by training people for careers in the helping professions, we model how to be part of the help.

Sed coelum solum – One sky over all, Renison’s motto. But not just our motto; the words reflect who we are.

Caroline Tanswell
Director of Institutional Advancement
Grade 11 Social Science students came to Renison for a two-day seminar that included workshops and an overnight stay in residence.

Renison’s energy efficient HVAC system was featured in Plumbing & HVAC magazine by Bruce Nagy. Visit plumbingandhvac.ca

Renison launched Accessibility Matters on Global Accessibility Awareness Day to support student safety and accessibility.

Vinh Nguyen shares his story as a refugee from Vietnam to an assistant professor in UW magazine and his work to enhance refugee support.

Treetop Don, Margaret Girodat, commemorates her time as a student and resident at Renison with an impressive evergreen tree tattoo upon her graduation.

Sharon Roberts launched the FurScience Facebook page to promote her study of furries with fellow members of the International Anthropomorphic Research Project (IARP). Facebook.com/furscience

Ontario’s 29th Lieutenant Governor, The Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, met with Renison’s principal during her visit in April.

Runqi-Jack Li won first place at the 34th Ontario Japanese Speech Contest for his speech about mutual learning and overcoming communication barriers.

Ultimate Floor Challenge encourages residents to make friends, build trust, and get a rewarding experience living at Renison.

Third year SDS student Emma Roy shares her student experiences and her humour as she navigates life while struggling with anxiety on her YouTube channel Emma Marceline.

The Deanery of Waterloo hosted an event at Renison to welcome Bishop Linda Nicholls, the incoming Visitor to Renison as Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Huron.
At Renison, we are committed to empowering this new generation of learners, such that they may be fully equipped to offer into the world all that they have the imagination, capacity and potential to offer.

Some years ago when my youngest daughter was in early high school, she was struggling with a variety of things. As was often our habit, she accompanied me on one of my work trips – this one to Atlanta. After all of my meetings were done, we hit the tourist trail and went to the amazing Civil Rights Museum which lives there. We experienced the chronological drama of the movement from slavery to civil rights as we walked room by room. The story of human courage and perseverance in the face of terrible conditions was incredibly moving. And then we came to the last room. In this final chapter of the story the museum was telling, there was silence. No videos. No recorded speeches. Silence and a single Civil War era mule cart. We approached the plaque which interpreted the meaning of the mule cart. It was the mule cart which had carried Martin Luther King Jr.’s body in his funeral procession many decades before. As we stood there in silence, Anna reached for my hand and said quietly, “Well, I suppose if there is a place in history for a mule cart, there is a place for me.”

At Renison, we believe that there is a place in history for all. Our job is education toward empowerment – that all learners who come to us may find their place and hold it with their hearts, all in.

Empowering students to find their place. Toward that end, we practise this commitment not only in the classroom but also in our way of life – our offering to the community of which we are a part, locally and globally. For example:

- Renison offers a fully-funded opportunity for students who are Crown Wards to live in residence during their first year of university.
- A bursary is available to our new friends from Syria who wish to learn English as a second language.
- We have completed an accessibility audit of our practices and buildings, resulting in a new accessible website and a work plan to improve accessibility in our buildings.
- Accessible residence rooms are subsidized, as needed, to ensure no one is without the opportunity to live at the school where they study.
- We are welcoming three students from India, who are enrolled in a school for the blind in India, to take a summer ESL program through the English Language Institute.
- Our new Walls to Bridges program offers university courses to people in the correctional system through two different programs designed for the Grand Valley Institution for Women and Stonehenge Therapeutic Community.
- A new immigrant bursary offers language training through our BASE (Bridge to Academic Success in English) program.
- We are a part of WUSC (World University Service of Canada), offering support through programming to WUSC-sponsored student refugees.
- Humanities 101 is a volunteer-driven university level course, taught by Renison faculty, for people in the community who wish to take a post-secondary course with the intent to begin studying for an undergraduate degree.

Together, through a Renison education which empowers, may we find our place in the creation of a more just, sustainable, and liveable world.

Wendy L. Fletcher, Ph.D
Principal and Vice-Chancellor
Craig Fortier is an Assistant Professor with the Social Development Studies program with extensive experience in social work. He has worked with the Ontario Trillium Foundation and with the Grassroots Youth Collaborative. He completed his Ph.D. in Sociology at York University with his dissertation being “Unsettling Movements: Decolonizing Non-Indigenous Radical Struggles in Settler Colonial States”. Craig’s research and publication have been primarily in the area of the social movements, colonization/decolonization, Canadian politics and Indigenous theory.

Zack Marshall’s research and practice is focused on transformative social change. Interested in both direct practice and policy change. Zack has over 15 years experience working in the fields of mental health, harm reduction, and sexual health. After obtaining his MSW from Wilfrid Laurier, he worked with young people and their families at Griffin Centre in north Toronto where he supervised a team focused on LGBT2Q services and in 2006 they started the first group in Canada for queer and trans youth labelled with intellectual disabilities. He is cross-appointed in Social Development Studies and the School of Social Work.

Karen Spencer is the newest member of Renison’s Board of Governors. An alumnus of Renison, she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Development Studies followed by a Master in Social Work at Laurier. Karen is the Director of Client Services at Family and Children’s Services of the Waterloo Region.

Congratulations to Renison’s Honorary Senior Fellows: John English (2009), Joe and Stephanie Mancini (2014), and Fellow, James Walker (1988), on receiving their appointments into the Order of Canada.
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN SDS:
The Apprenticeship Experience

BY FLORENCE BRAY

“Learning is experience. Everything else is just information.” – Albert Einstein

Lauren Hird (above) has one piece of advice for students who are considering the fourth-year Social Development Studies Applied Apprenticeship course: allow yourself to be a learner.

Volunteering with Extend-a-Family was Lauren’s first time working with those labelled with a disability. It was an experience she hadn’t anticipated but quickly came to enjoy. It pushed Lauren to learn about herself as a service provider, an employee, and a citizen.

Lauren was allowed to create her own self-directed experience, delving into aspects of the position that she found interesting, and when she was eager to learn more, she could request new work. The hands-on experience helped Lauren gain insight into an entirely new career path—one that she is now seriously considering, thanks to the Applied Apprenticeship course.

In the Social Development Studies (SDS) Applied Apprenticeship course, students volunteer in community organizations for 6-8 hours per week per term in addition to attending seminars at Renison. The seminars focus on conceptual learning while developing practical skills, and discussions frequently explore content from various courses both in Social Development Studies and other programs. Also included are discussions about self-care in the helping professions. Learning takes place on several levels: the community and how an organization relates to other organizations; the organization itself and its work culture; and the personal and interpersonal areas as students carry out their activities.

Students submit “reflection papers” as part of the course requirements, in which they reflect on an experience in the placement that may have presented a challenge or unexpected situation. They are also required to develop learning goals that they work on during the term and discuss with their mentors in placement. The goals frequently represent skills that students wish to develop, and they are encouraged to “try new things they may not have thought of.”

If you’re part of a non-profit organization that may be interested in mentoring an SDS student, please feel free to contact us at sds@uwaterloo.ca for more information!

ASTLEY FAMILY FOUNDATION GRANT
Supporting Community-Based Research

BY COLIN DURKIN

The Astley Family Foundation awarded Professor Trish Van Katwyk $20,500 to explore young people’s self-injury narratives through dance. Professional choreographers work with participants aged 13-18 chosen through a series of interviews, analyzed for subjective and shared characteristics, to help develop the choreography. A performance of the dance is planned for the end of the 13-week program. It is anticipated that one of the outcomes of this project will be a therapeutic approach to self-injury that incorporates movement and community-based dialogue.
CONNECTING
ANGRICAN AND MUSLIM
COMMUNITIES

BY RIAMARIE PANACHIKA

In an upcoming fall series titled “Dealing with Our
Darknesses: An Anglican-Muslim Conversation about
Transgression, Penitence, and Transformation,” Renison
will be exploring the multiple societal and inter-community
challenges faced by the Muslim and Anglican community.

The series, which features three discussions, aims to build
greater dialogue between the communities regarding
perceptions of faith and work to increase understanding for
the ways faith has been used in shaping history.

“It’s recognizing that, within
religion, in the communities
that practise particular faiths
or traditions, it’s not all light,
it’s not all good stuff. There
are bad things that happen
too, and sometimes religion is
actually used to justify some
of the bad things,” says Marilyn
Malton, director of Renison’s
Institute of Ministry.

These discussions will touch
upon challenging topics
explains Malton, ranging from
the power dynamics of faith
globally to, more locally, to
understanding perceptions of
gender. “Part of what we’ll be
doing is looking at what our
scriptures and our theology
actually say about how we
understand God, we’ll be
laying that out and clearing up
misconceptions,” Malton said.
She is further hoping to
explore the perceptions
leading to Islamaphobia and
misunderstandings surrounding the
Anglican expression of Christianity.

“We recognize that really terrible
things have been done in the name
of religion, and we’re not running away
from that,” Malton says. “Let’s put
that stuff on the table and deal with
these difficult things rather than deny
that they happen in our communities.
There’s truth telling in that, and that’s
very powerful.”

Each discussion will also feature
the guidance of community leaders.
Based on the discussions and the
input of community leader, at the end
of the series, a resource book will
be compiled and published for both
learning and reflection.

“Discussion gets people really
involved and engaged in these issues.
As more and more people join the
conversation, they become a catalyst
for change in their own congregation
or mosque.”

Ultimately, with each challenging
topic and recalling of historic
misdeeds, questions will have to
be asked: “How do you deal with
that within your community? What
kind of response can we give from
the perspective of our faith? What
kind of strategies can our faiths
actually offer to people who have
experienced trauma whether it’s at a
national level or a personal level?”

According to Malton, such
discussions create a visible presence
and dedicated space for inter-
community development. “You
can’t underestimate how much of
an impact that could have. So the
next time somebody is walking
down the street, maybe they’ll think
differently about someone who’s
visibly Muslim, because they have
a greater understanding. In a way
that’s simple, and in a way it’s a life-
long process as we come across our
own prejudice, our own biases.

This project is made possible by a
$10,000 grant Renison was awarded
by the Anglican Foundation of
Canada.
WALLS TO BRIDGES

Breaking down social barriers with peer-to-peer learning

BY TRACEY ANTONIO

Renison’s School of Social Work has partnered with Stonehenge Therapeutic Community in Guelph through the innovative Walls to Bridges program to offer Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) students the opportunity to become classmates with men and women undergoing rehabilitation from substance abuse.

A Canadian nationwide initiative, Walls to Bridges provides a collaborative educational experience that allows both “inside” and “outside” students to have a voice in this unique circle pedagogy style classroom. While inside students undergo long-term treatment for drug or alcohol addiction, as a group they learn about mental health, addictions and social work responses. Students learn to break down social barriers through shared stories and conversations of their life experiences.

This program allows inside students to further their education by earning a full credit towards a university degree. In the program’s environment of trust, inside students learn to broaden their scope by seeing opportunities that are outside the current confines of their lives. Likewise, outside students look inward and realize they can build many bridges between themselves and those commonly seen in society as the “other.”

“Part of what typically happens in this class is people struggle with an ‘us vs. them’ mentality, and then as the students participate in the class, that adversarial kind of difference becomes more of a ‘we’ – a community working together toward a common goal,” says Professor Alice Schmidt Hanbidge of Renison’s School of Social Work.

This spring, Renison offered “Mental Health and Addictions: Social Work Responses,” course 470R, which was chosen in collaboration with Stonehenge. Ten BSW students were selected and completed a stringent application and interview process in order to qualify. Inside students met university admissions criteria with either a high school diploma or GED. Walls to Bridges hopes to provide inside students the opportunity to open doors for themselves and find personal success.

Stonehenge Therapeutic Community is a long-term, intensive residential treatment facility that focuses on rehabilitating those whose lives have been devastated by alcohol and drug abuse. Their support of inside students extends to providing classroom space and resources for homework. Since residents do not have internet access, Renison supplied inside students with paper course materials in addition to a text book donated by Oxford University Press.

To teach the class, Hanbidge needed to be certified in the style of teaching designed for Walls to Bridges that is
offered through Laurier University at the Grand Valley Federal Prison for Women in Kitchener. Not only does the training prepare instructors for teaching in jails, prisons, and community correctional facilities, it teaches how to engage students with Freirian principles, Indigenous pedagogy and feminist practice.

Similar to its American counterpart, Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, the Walls to Bridges focuses on transformational educational benefits, creating opportunities for those who are marginalized and oppressed in our society.

“This isn’t about studying the folks on the inside. It’s not community service learning. It’s not part of their practicum. This is very much about peers learning from one another that we all bring our life experiences to the group. All those life experiences are valuable, valid and are important to share while treating each other with respect and dignity.”

Through peer-to-peer learning within circle pedagogy, everyone has a chance to speak. Each member of the group is both a student and an expert – learning from their fellow students as well as teaching based on their personal experiences. The interactive and integrated type of learning offers therapeutic value and gives the group a greater depth of learning. Renison BSW students reported feeling powerfully impacted by learning from those who experienced the negative aspects of the “system” first hand. The meaningful connections students created in this class will be carried forward into their social work careers.

To commemorate the success of the first Walls to Bridges course, instructors Hanbidge and Cheri Blitz (PhD student) hosted an end-of-term celebration. Sitting in their circle one last time, they were joined by Renison’s principal, Wendy Fletcher, and director of the School of Social Work, Colleen McMillan, and the executive and clinical directors of Stonehenge Community. This experience gave students not only a new way of learning but also a safe space in which to move beyond their comfort zone and leave them feeling empowered.
FOUNDERS’ DAY 2016

Our annual Founders’ Day event is a celebration of the driving principles, values, and beliefs of the College since its founding in 1959. Congratulations to this year’s honourees, and thank you for your continued support of Renison University College.

BY BRENDON BEDFORD

L to R: Manfred Conrad, Keith Hipel, Laurie Best (front), Bishop Ralph Spence, Wendy Fletcher, Bishop Robert Bennett, May Yan, Andrew Asbil (back), and Dan Andreae

THIS YEAR’S FOUNDERS’ DAY WAS MADE ALL THE MORE SPECIAL...

This year’s Founders’ Day was made all the more special because it included the investiture of Renison’s new Chancellor, Dr. Manfred Conrad. An Honorary Senior Fellow of Renison (2013), Dr. Conrad has served on Renison’s Board of Governors for eight years. He continues as the President and CEO and founder of
The Cora Group Inc., a corporate real estate development and management company based in Waterloo.

Dr. Conrad is one of Waterloo’s top business leaders and a founding member of Communitech. He is well respected in the community for his strong business acumen, his visionary approach to “living green,” and for his and his wife Penny’s support for many initiatives and institutions in Waterloo Region, including The Conrad Business, Entrepreneurship and Technology Centre (University of Waterloo), The Manfred and Penny Conrad Institute for Music Therapy and Research (Wilfrid Laurier University), and the Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts.

He has helped lead Renison through the development of two new additions to the College during his time as a member of the Board and given sound counsel as Renison dealt with many questions and crucial decisions.

In 2009, Manfred received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Waterloo for his outstanding business and philanthropic community leadership.

RENSION SAYS THANK YOU

A strong, creative, dedicated and passionate leader in the Anglican Church, Bishop Spence applied his many gifts when setting about the task of providing leadership to Renison. A sense of humour larger than life and a personality impossible to miss, he has helped the College build relationships, acted as a stalwart anchor for many, and provided the wisest counsel when it was truly needed.

For all this and more, Dr. Conrad, as his first act as chancellor, conferred upon Bishop Spence the title of Chancellor Emeritus of Renison University College. Bishop Spence is only the third chancellor in the history of Renison to be awarded this distinction.

HONOREES

Dr. Daniel Andreae believes in meaningful learning and values the application of knowledge. His devotion to the Social Work field is evident in his expertise in social issues, his leadership role, and his determination to establish social work as a regulated profession. He received the status of Fellow of Renison University College.

The Very Rev. Andrew Asbil is a leader in Canadian urban ministry and was made a canon of the Cathedral Church of St. James of the Diocese of Toronto in 2009. He is a recognized leader in creating inclusive communities within the church. He is the recipient of Renison’s Distinguished Alumnus award.

Laurie Best’s association with Renison goes back to her student days where she was also a resident. Her devotion came in full force when she helped organize an alumni reunion then assumed the role of Chair of the Development and Alumni Committee and eventually joined the Board of Governors. She received the status of Fellow of Renison University College.

Dr. Keith Hipel has been a major supporter of Renison for over two decades. As a Board member and former Chair, Dr. Hipel has contributed significantly to Renison’s growth. He was a key figure in promoting and developing the East Asian Studies program and the East Asian Festival in addition to his already busy academic career in the Faculty of Engineering. He received the status of Honorary Senior Fellow of Renison University College.
Established in 2015, the Builders Club was created to friendraise and fundraise in support of the development and outreach activities of Renison University College. Renison’s first Builders Club event was a Scotch and wine tasting hosted by Renison’s Chancellor and Builders Club founding member, Manfred Conrad, and his wife Penny who generously opened their home and made the experience very special and memorable.

“All of my guests made a point of telling me how much they enjoyed themselves, and thanked me for inviting them,” remarked The Rev. Dr. Gerry Mueller, retired Chaplain, “not always the response you get when you persuade people to buy a ticket!”

Over 100 guests attended the inaugural event that helped the Builders Club hit its target for initial membership while also raising over $5300 from the silent auction table. Funds raised will help build a new outdoor courtyard created when Renison’s newest building was added to the campus. The Courtyard will entail a functional and fun outdoor space for Renison’s student community and the community at large.
CREATING A NEW OUTDOOR COURTYARD

A **QUIET AREA** with lots of seating to allow for a calm environment where students can just “relax”

A **GAS FIRE PIT** for group activities that increase the sense of community gatherings

An **AMPHITHEATRE SPACE** for lectures, social opportunities, presentations etc.

Lots of **GREEN SPACE** in which one can “just breathe”

An **ACTIVE AREA** where students can be involved in group athletics or take part in an individual workout using eco-friendly equipment (benches / pull up bars etc. made from natural materials)

For more information about the upcoming Renison Courtyard Campaign, visit [uwaterloo.ca/renison/courtyard-campaign](http://uwaterloo.ca/renison/courtyard-campaign) or contact Caroline Tanswell, Director or Institutional Advancement at caroline.tanswell@uwaterloo.ca or 519.884.4404 ext. 28605
Google the word “retirement,” and here is what you will find:  

re•tire•ment, noun 
the action or fact of leaving one’s job and ceasing to work.

When I recently met with Renison’s former Director of the School of Social Work, Dr. Ellen Sue Mesbur, who “retired” in 2013 from Renison University College, I discovered the definition is not always accurate!

During her ten years at Renison, Ellen Sue grew the School of Social Work from a department of 31 full time Bachelor of Social Work students to a school with 62 full-time and 50+ part-time BSW students, adding an innovative online Master of Social Work degree, which now has 27 full-time, 25 part-time students, and 23 part-time continuing students from all over the country. She developed new courses, presented at conferences around the world, and kept everyone amazed with her energy.

This ability to be a leader, to be involved and energized, certainly didn’t vanish when Ellen Sue retired. She speaks with passion and conviction about her current involvements. It begs the question “How do you find the time?” Now that she is retired, some of her activities include:

UNITY

Since March 2012, Ellen Sue has been working as a group work consultant to UNITY Charity, which appreciates that many of the concerns that arise in working with youth relate to complex mental health issues. UNITY focuses on developing skills for success through various community and school-based programs. Its Mission engages and empowers youth to be role models and leaders in their communities. In her work with UNITY, Ellen Sue, with colleague Lynne Mitchell, developed workshops for senior artist/facilitators on group facilitation, Train the Trainer, and Code of Conduct. They completed several training manuals, including an Express you Stress Activities manual, and supported a number of grant applications to various funding organizations.

Ontario Association of Social Workers (OASW)

Ellen Sue has continued her involvement with the Ontario Association of Social Workers (OASW), completing her second term as Vice-President Social and Professional Advocacy in May 2017.
She has accepted many leadership roles in OASW, most recently as the Chair, 2016 OASW Provincial Conference (November 11-12, 2016) appropriately titled Social Work for the 22nd Century: Accelerators and Innovators, to be held in Toronto; and the Program Director, OASW/OTN 2016 Advanced Social Work Practice with Older Adults (an online course). Ellen Sue is delighted that Renison’s Dr. Colleen McMillan was a subject matter expert for two of the course’s modules.

By 2024, one in five Canadians will be 65 and older, and 93% of them will be living in the community. The six-module online course offers social workers theoretical understanding and practical insight, into current and future needs of older adults and caregivers.

Jewish Family and Child Services

In September 2013, Ellen Sue began a monthly consultation group with social workers who are working with groups at Jewish Family and Child Services. All of the participants are experienced social workers, and the consultations are very lively and stimulating.

Toronto Region Groupworkers Network (TRGN)

When she returned to Toronto, Dr. Mesbur became a member of the Executive Committee of the Toronto Region Groupworkers’ Network (TRGN), the longest running chapter of the International Association for Social Work With Groups. Each year TRGN sponsors two workshops for social workers and others who work with groups. In February 2016, a Group Work Camp Day was held. Along with

Since March 2012, Dr. Ellen Sue Mesbur has been working as a group work consultant to UNITY Charity, which through youth-to-youth dialogue, engages students using urban arts, including break dancing, spoken word poetry, graffiti art and beat boxing.

Dr. Ellen Sue Mesbur
Director, School of Social Work 2002-2013

Stephanie Baird (a Renison BA grad, now a PhD student at the Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto) and Anna Nosko, Ellen Sue presented the opening plenary workshop: Beginnings and Endings: Bookends to Groupwork: A Camp Approach. More Renison connections, Dr. Alice Schmidt Hanbidge (School of Social Work, Renison University College) and Cheri Bilitz (Renison BSW grad, PhD student, and Associate Director, Counselling Services, University of Waterloo) also presented a workshop: Using Experiential Family Sculpting with Families and Groups.

After reading about her activities, you know just how Ellen Sue is changing the perception of retirement! We’re proud of all her contributions as she continues her work helping others.
After welcoming guest speaker and Renison alumna, Jessica del Rosso, at the spring meeting of the Renison Town & Gown Society, Town & Gown members unanimously voted to support the newly-created Crown Ward Residence Fund at Renison.

The Crown Ward Residence Fund is the only one of its kind in a Canadian university. Created to offer residence opportunities to Crown Wards entering university, Renison donors and alumni have rallied behind the fund and donated three residence spots in the 2016/17 academic year.

The Renison Town & Gown Society, established in 1994, first created an endowed award to assist students in the SDS and Social Work programs who were entering university as mature students, as single-parents, or from other non-traditional entry points.

The award established in 1994 has grown to be the largest endowed award at Renison and is now supporting three full-time and two part-time awards each year.

With the success of this award, the Town & Gown Society began looking at other ways to support Renison. Over the years, they have named two rooms at Renison and became a member of the Circle of 50 (a fund created to support Renison’s grounds and buildings).

Once they heard Jessica’s story about growing up, her struggles, and who, as a 15 year-old, found herself a Crown Ward and living in foster care, they were inspired to help other Crown Wards complete their university degrees.

Beginning in 2016, the Renison Town & Gown Society voted to re-direct their annual donation to support the Crown Ward Residence Fund.

To read Jessica’s story, visit uwaterloo.ca/renison/alumni/support-renison
ALUMNI AT WORK
MARK ZANE, BA SDS (2015)

BY MARK ZANE

It seems like many years ago that my search for education brought me to the Kitchener-Waterloo area. After exploring many options, I found my way to Renison University College in the SDS program. I was finally studying in the area of my passion and skill. I quickly realized that I had so much more to learn and that the combination of education and work was going to lead me down that path. I found employment with a local youth justice organization and spent approximately 15 years working up from a youth care worker to a program director. I always remembered the classes where we talked about what kind of people we would meet and how to work effectively with them. I was grateful for the knowledge and skills that the SDS program instilled in me. The program and the professors opened my eyes to the need to be the best at what I did – the youth deserved it.

Some deeply personal events in my life afforded me the opportunity to find different employment, including some entrepreneurial endeavours, as well as working for a faith based organization that supported the marginalized and the poor. My education taught me that I had more to offer. I began looking for other ways to connect with the community. It was then that I was introduced to Community Justice Initiatives. Community Justice Initiatives (CJI) is a non-profit organization known worldwide for starting the first modern restorative justice program. Restorative justice is a way of addressing conflict and crime that engages the person who caused the harm, people who were affected by the harm, and the community. CJI’s mission is to inspire safe, healthy and peaceful communities, one resolution at a time.

During CJI’s 40+ year history, it has continuously responded to community needs by creatively and innovatively applying restorative justice principles to new problems. CJI provides conflict resolution services, support for people impacted by sexual trauma, assistance for families involved with child protection, and reintegration support for women, men and youth returning to the community from prison custody or treatment facilities. I am privileged to be developing a new program (based on an existing program called Stride) that will work to support men coming out of local halfway houses and drug treatment facilities in their reintegration into the community. With a trained group of volunteers, we go into the facility to interact and build trust through recreational and social activities. We do sports, games nights, informational sessions, indigenous sessions, and activities that the men enjoy and are interested in. As time goes on, and release dates are scheduled, the men ask to be part of a “Circle” where volunteers support the individual in the community. That support is driven by the individual, and will be tailored to his needs as he looks to reconnect and become a valued member of the community. If any of this sounds interesting, we are always looking for volunteers. Please see our web site at www.cjiwr.com, or email markz@cjiwr.com. You could also call me at 519-744-6579, ext 105.

This is exciting work that we are doing, and I look forward to seeing men supported and active in their community and families again. A big thanks to Renison for lighting that spark in me.
Even before co-creating, writing, directing, and performing on The Red Green Show, Canada’s longest running comedy series, Rick Green knew how to get a laugh. Looking back on his time spent in residence at Renison University College, Green recalls one of his favourite pranks.

“We took a roll of carpeting – it had this 12-foot cardboard tube – and we created the upper half of a person, like a scarecrow with a balaclava.” Combining his talents with those of his engineering peers, they ran wires through the tube and attached moveable arms to their scarecrow. “At eleven or twelve at night, out we went, over to the second storey windows, and BANG. This thing would be waving, and you’d hear screaming,” he laughs, as he remembers hoisting their contraption up to the windows on the second floor. “You could hear the girls yelling, ‘Who’s out there?’”

Green earned his Bachelor of Science from the University of Waterloo in 1975, majoring in physics. He spent his first year and a half living in Renison’s residence. While he was at Waterloo, he took many arts courses on the side and eventually realized that creativity and storytelling are vital skills necessary to help change the world.

“I know people who are fascinated by all of the vehicles and spaceships in Star Wars, but on some level those are just the props for what is truly an epic myth, a classic myth,” says Green. “There are some of us who can get really excited about the possibilities of nuclear fusion, and I certainly can do that myself, but for most people, the arts are what move us.”

Fresh out of university, Green mixed his science and arts background, spending four years as a presenter at the Ontario Science Centre before moving full-time into the

**ALUMNI AT WORK**

**RICK GREEN, BSc (1975)**

*BY KARI PASICK STEWART*
entertainment industry in 1989, where he has earned numerous awards and recognitions.

Today, Green’s focus has turned to raising awareness about attention deficit disorder (ADD), which he was diagnosed with at the age of 47. “Despite having 700 episodes of radio and television and who knows how many thousands of performances, I always felt like I was underachieving...because I couldn’t finish my taxes. I couldn’t do simple things,” Green says of his struggles prior to diagnosis.

Looking back, he can now see signs of his ADD as early as his second year of university, while he was still living at Renison. He reflects on the small community at Renison, and how it helped him succeed at school. “It’s so good to have that support,” he says. “We are very social creatures, and having that community really forced me to get outside of my own head. That was helpful, really very helpful.”

Since his diagnosis, he has written and directed two documentaries (ADD & Loving it?! and ADD & Mastering It!), co-written a book called ADD Stole My Car Keys, and presently runs the website totallyADD.com. He works tirelessly to increase awareness about ADD. He speaks to groups across the country, produces informative (and sometimes humorous) videos for his website, and continues to look for tools to help people manage the disorder. His ADD advocacy earned him an induction into the Order of Ontario which took place at a ceremony in January 2016.

He says that hearing the stories of people he has helped is what makes it worthwhile for him. He recalls the story of a mother who got treatment for her child after he was diagnosed with ADD. “She said for the first time in her life, she could hug her eight-year-old, and he wasn’t squirming. And for the first time, they could have a conversation, and she found that little boy she knew was in there.”

For Green, one bit of guidance has always resonated. “I did get some sage advice from my mom at one point, who said ‘Do what you love, and you’ll never work a day in your life.’ That has stuck with me.”

For more information, visit http://totallyadd.com/the-team/
We ask our alumni to update the Renison community on what they have been doing since graduation. Thanks to everyone for staying in touch with your Renison family.

1966

Roderic Ferguson, BA (Political Science)
Residence: Founders Building
rgfqc@csolve.net
I am on the cusp of retirement from legal career. I am mediating part-time.

1971

Ann Coates, BA (History)
eacoates@sympatico.ca
North bay Ontario Classroom Teacher; President Nipissing Elementary Unit Retired 2005; Ontario Library Party, Volunteer of the Year; President Nipissing Riding 2016; Library Party of Canada, Volunteer of the Year; Vice President 2016

1977

Robin Yule, BSc (1969), MSc (Chemistry)
robinfoxpause@yahoo.ca
Retired again after an unexpected 2 years in the UAE. Now outside Huntsville in the summer and south of Kissimmee in the winter.

Curtis Smith, BA (History)
I resided at Renison from 1973 until 1977 and for one year served as the treasurer on the Renison Student Council. How I managed that I don’t know since I was an honours History/Asian Studies student knowing nothing about such matters as book keeping and living among some of the most advanced math and accounting minds on the continent.

In one year, I organized a Chinese New Year feast at Renison, which was the first one for UW and, I believe, the first one for an Ontario College. My gang of Chinese/ Hong
Kongese friends decorated the dining hall and took over the kitchen for the evening to prepare and serve it. Got lots of complaints from Hong Kong students that it made them homesick!

I’ve been out East for the past 35 years, working chiefly as an editor at such places as the Beijing Review (during the Tiansanmen Crackdown, at Radio Beiging and CCTV) and later worked as a United Nations volunteer in Cambodia during the elections and in Hanoi at an Australian-Vietnamese magazine.

For about 23 years I’ve been working in Taipei where the then-mayor and current president named me an Honorary Citizen for my work in relic preservation, conservation and urban planning. Most of this time I’ve worked as an editor at TAITRA to create promotions for trade shows and events.

1992

Irene Vassalo, BA (SDS)
irene.vassalo@igprivatewealth.com

I am excited to share with you that my team, Vassalo & Associates, has been invited to join Investors Group Private Wealth Management. This is due to the confidence my clients have placed in us to help them and the people they care about, grow and protect their wealth. We are dedicated to providing our clients with exceptional customer service and comprehensive financial planning to help them achieve all their goals.

I will now use new branding which will distinguish my team as established professional advisors, ranked among the best in the industry.

1996

Krista Jonker (nee Wagensveld), BA (SDS)
krista@kristajonker.com

I have remained in Waterloo with my husband (of 21 years!), since graduating from Renison. After working with young offenders for a few years I spent some time at home with my three daughters (now 17, 16, and 13). Just over ten years ago I entered the world of real estate. The SDS program was a phenomenal background for my role as a realtor (c). Many of the skills I learned in my courses (counselling, negotiations, interviewing) have given me an edge.

It seems like only yesterday I was a U of W student. Hard to believe my oldest daughter will be beginning her post-secondary career in September (possibly also at U of W!). Thanks Renison for a great start to my career!

2002

dreama_gal@hotmail.com

I returned to Canada last May from four years in Australia, where I was working. I travelled for several months to reconnect with my
beautiful Canada and with family and friends. I’m now living in my RV and working on Vancouver Island as a Child Specific Adoption Recruiter. My job is to find permanence for difficult-to-place Aboriginal children that are currently in the care of the Ministry. I travel about the island and to the mainland regularly in my RV with my kitty, Nash. Home is really wherever we park! Feel free to follow the adventure at talesfromcanadiannomad.blogspot.ca or to contact me via email.

2005

Colin Phillips, BA SDS 2005, BSW

I convocated in June from Ryerson University with a PhD in Policy Studies. As it was at Renison, my research interests centre around homelessness and housing insecurity. My dissertation critically examined Toronto’s Housing First program. I’m thrilled to be joining Ryerson’s School of Social Work as a Contract Lecturer in September. From there I will begin to look for a tenure-track position in a school or faculty of social work. I’d love to hear from old friends. I can be reached at colin.phillips@ryerson.ca

2006

Matthew Kieswetter, BA (Hons.) Religious Studies 2006

After several enjoyable years managing one of the Kitchener locations of The Beat Goes On (an independent music and movie retail chain), I decided to more intentionally pursue ordained ministry in the Anglican Church -- something that had been percolating within me for a long time. After a couple of years as a part-time student at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, I began studies at Trinity College in the University of Toronto in 2013. I graduated on May 10, 2016, with a Master of Divinity (Hons.), having written a thesis on the Anglican theologian William Stringfellow, a twentieth century figure whose writings are becoming more and more relevant to today’s church and world. I was ordained a transitional deacon at St. Paul’s Cathedral in London on May 31st, 2016, and currently assist the priest-in-charge at The Church of St. John the Evangelist in Kitchener. An exciting project I am a part of at St. John’s is a co-op that aims to support non-profit and small business food producers, as well as offering cooking support groups and educational opportunities.

2008

Amanda Griffith Lal, BSW

I completed my MSW at Laurier in 2009, was married in 2010, then spent two years in the U.S. with my husband as he completed his master’s and worked. We came back to Canada to have our first child, a baby girl and decided to stay. I’m currently on maternity leave with our son. I manage a regional Alternative Dispute Resolution program in the formal central east region of Ontario through Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

2011

Victoria Dears, BA, (SDS) Residence Floors: Down Under, Moose Crossing v4dears@gmail.com

I have so many great memories from the four years I spent as a Renison student. I have been living in Stratford, Ontario for the last few years, and I work as a Patient Coordinator at a physiotherapy centre. I enjoy being able to put my degree to use helping others improve their well-being. Tyler Barton and I started dating shortly before we started at Renison, and this year we will be celebrating our ninth anniversary. He currently works at MVA Stratford as a Lead Hand.

2014

Daanika Kamal, BA (Hons.) (Poli. Sci. & SDS) daanika@gmail.com

After my BA (Hons.) at Renison, I attended Warwick Law School at
the University of Warwick (U.K.) to complete my Master of Laws in International Law and Human Rights. I recently graduated from Warwick with distinction. Over the last year, I have gotten numerous academic articles published internationally, and I am co-editor and author of an e-book titled “Climate Change and Human Rights: The 2015 Paris Conference and the Task of Protecting People on a Warming Planet”, sponsored by Global Policy Journal. I am now working as Program Manager of the Open Democracy Initiative at Jinnah Institute (Islamabad, Pakistan).

Erin Williams, BA (SDS)  
Erin_Williams@can.salvationarmy.org

always had—to live abroad for a year and backpack through Europe. For ten months I lived in Belfast, Northern Ireland working as an Au Pair with 1-year-old twin boys. I had the chance to backpack for six weeks where I trotted to 13 different Western European countries and made friends from all over the world!

After I returned from my European adventure, I decided to put my SDS degree to work and following another passion. I started working for the Salvation Army in the summer of 2015 as a Program Services Worker at a brand new Women’s Shelter located in Newmarket, Ontario. Belinda’s Place is the first shelter in York Region that is designed for single women, and it is an outstanding new service for the entire community. In this role I work one-on-one with women in areas of housing, counselling, life skills, financial literacy, mental health, sexual health, pyscho-social support, referrals, community resources, and much more. I am thankful for all of the skills I gathered through my education at Renison and look back to my time there every single day.

2015

Sanjida Prima, BA (Elec. Eng.)  
Residence Floor: Treetop  
sanjida.prima@gmail.com

Feel free to shoot me a message!

IN MEMORIAM

CAROL ANNE SPENCE

The Renison community sends its condolences to the family of Carol Anne Spence, wife of Renison University College Chancellor Emeritus, The Rt. Rev. Ralph Spence. Carol died peacefully on April 28, 2016 after a short and courageous battle with cancer. Carol was a constant support to Bishop Spence throughout his tenure as Chancellor of Renison and her lovely smile, optimistic attitude and wonderful sense of humour added greatly to Renison events. She stood alongside Bishop Spence in serving the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Niagara for almost 50 years.
UPCOMING EVENTS

DEALING WITH OUR DARKNESS
MILITANCY AND THE THEOLOGICAL EXPLOITATION OF RELIGION FOR VIOLENCE

PRESENTERS: DR. MOHAMMAD FADEL AND CAPTAIN MICHAEL PETERSON

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2016
2:00PM - 5:00PM

RENISON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE - DUNKER FAMILY LOUNGE
240 Westmount Road North
Waterloo, ON N2L 3G4
Canada

Pricing: Open Admission

PRESENTERS: DR. MOHAMMAD FADEL AND CAPTAIN MICHAEL PETERSON

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2016
2:00 PM TO 5:00 PM

RENISON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE - DUNKER FAMILY LOUNGE
240 Westmount Road North
Waterloo, ON N2L 3G4
Canada

Pricing: Open Admission

If you are interested in supporting the work at Renison University College, please contact Caroline Tanswell, Director of Institutional Advancement, at 519.884.4404 ext. 28605 or caroline.tanswell@uwaterloo.ca. You can donate online at bit.ly/SupportRENISON.

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