

## Head's Report to the QMS Society – AGM November 7, 2009

2008-2009 was another wonderful year of growth and progress for our school. Our target enrolment for 2008-09 was 321 students and we enrolled 319, maintaining our almost 50% enrolment increase since 2004. As important, 100 % of our eligible students moved from grade 7 to grade 8. We also maintained an enrolment of 19 students in the Train to Compete Program, with a total ridership of 91 riders in the Equestrian Program and averaged 42 horses stabled at QMS throughout the year. Last year the Equestrian Program generated the highest revenue in the history of the program \$35,892 and for those of you who attended Speech Day, you know the equestrian program demonstrated the best competitive performance year in the program's history.

On the financial front we ended the year with another significant operating surplus - \$321,235. This surplus was used to enhance improvements to our Residence, complete Phase 1 of the renovations to Spurgin Hall and equip our new Science & Technology Centre, Rowantree Hall. A portion of this surplus was also set out as a cash reserve and used for this year's budget.

Our first ever Capital Campaign reached \$767,002 (received and pledged) by the end of the 2008-09 school year (it is now \$810,000 thanks to the generosity of Terry Squire). Contributions came from across our community, including the O.O.M.A., our Alumnae Association, the Parent Association through their annual fundraising events including the Bazaar and GALA, and most generously, individual families who named classrooms in our Primary and Science & Technology Building.

Our campus renewal plan has been a success with the completion of the Science and Technology building, the Equestrian facility opening and Phase 1 Spurgin renovations which opened in the current year. I think the opening ceremonies expressed not only our community's excitement about our new buildings, but also spoke to the sense of community and connection that is so apparent among our students, staff and families.

And there is more. . .

Of our 35, 2009 graduates, our largest grad class ever, 32 proceeded directly to post-secondary studies; most had multiple acceptances from universities in Canada and the United States: 95% of our graduating students were able to attend their first choice of university.

Scholarship offers for this group of graduates totaled \$65,000 less than the preceding year to some extent due to reduced earnings from university endowment fund investments in this current economic climate. One of our graduates, an Equestrian student, was invited to train with an Olympic coach as evidence of her talent in the field.

Programming in the Senior School continues to strengthen, particularly in Service Learning, Technology and Leadership. This past year saw the first annual overseas service opportunity, a life-altering experience for students and accompanying faculty. Our Leadership Program which runs from Grade 8 through Grade 12 has garnered considerable North American interest especially the curriculum developed by Shelly McClure, a former parent. We were invited to present at two North American conferences: the National Coalition of Girls Schools and the North American Single Sex Public Educators in Atlanta and there is growing interest in our programming in this area. This current year our Grade 7 Junior School students established a parallel leadership camp to the Grade 12s, one that has produced a legacy project proposal from the class—a new Japanese garden that will be forever a part of our QMS landscape. Applied Technology opportunities for our students have been greatly enhanced with the use of the new Media Arts Lab.

As always, I would like to end my report with some thank yous for important contributions to the continuing positive changes that have occurred at Queen Margaret's School.

First, I always want to acknowledge and thank our Board, especially the committee chairs for their commitment of significant time and energy on behalf of the school. The support of the Board for the Head of School continues to be critical to our school's steady progress and I want to particularly acknowledge Derek Thomas for all his work chairing our Finance committee. Secondly, I particularly would like to thank Mike DeBeck for his strong leadership as chair of our board, for his constancy in his support for the well being of the school and for building a great partnership with myself as Head of School as we have worked through many years of change and educational improvement.

Given that this is my last AGM, I also want to acknowledge the board's support through a much more challenging 2009-10 year, one in which their decisions and their support have been and continue to be critical. Personally, I cannot thank each of you enough for your support and recognition in naming our new Science and Technology building in my name. I was very moved by this unexpected acknowledgement and feel very honoured since I am a relatively short termer compared to so many others whose names grace our buildings.

Alumnae relations are critical to the success of an independent school and I am very pleased to acknowledge the change in this relationship since 2004 and extend my thanks to all of you who put your trust in me and the new directions for the school. I want specifically to thank the OOMA, Elise Shorting, last year's President and this year's President as of May 2009, Dola Boas, who is building on the positive relationship between QMS alum and the school. She has increased the openness and commitment to work together for the continuing benefit of Queen Margaret's School.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work, commitment and contribution of the many fine colleagues I work with as part of the administrative leadership team: our now departed Chad Holtum, Stuart Hall, Sharon Klein, Julie Scurr, Jessie Fraser, Celina Mason, and our operational leaders, Bruce McPherson, and Chris Compton and especially, Dar Howes. Thank you to all of you for your skills, talents and leadership that made 2008-09 another successful year for our school and a warm welcome to Courtney Gillan who returns from her first QMS overseas trip later this week. I think she will be a great asset to our Leadership Team.

Finally, I would like to thank the QMS staff. We have a remarkable staff at QMS and that was evident this year as staff pulled together so that the school can weather a year with lower enrolment. They have kept morale high and there is absolutely no shortage of great things happening for our students. Thank you to our great QMS staff.

As always, the last thank you goes to all our families who connect, bond and build the community we call Queen Margaret's School.

Thanks to all of you for a great year.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Rowantree, Head of School