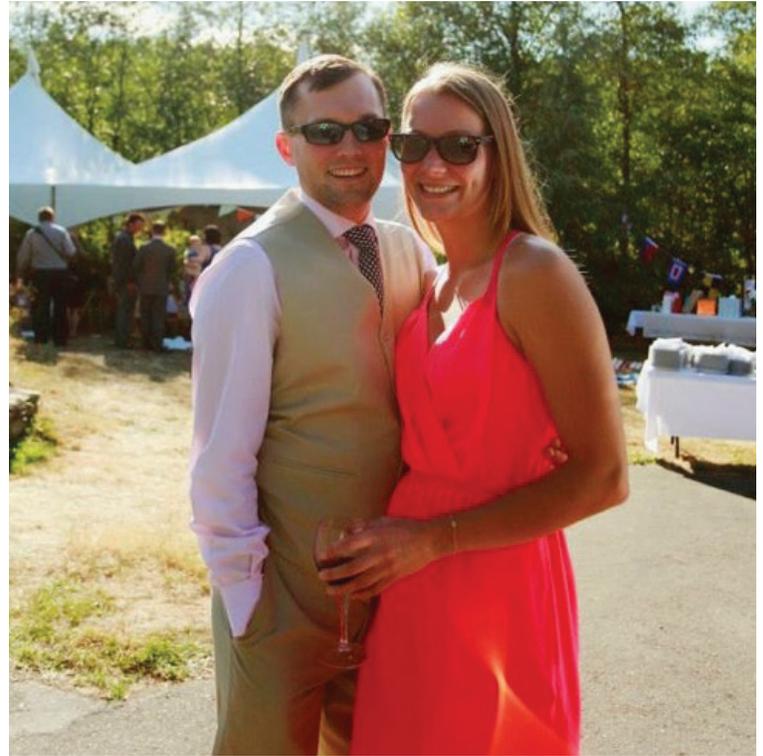


Alumni Reflections

BANBURY CROSSROADS SCHOOL



One might not think that attending a free-learning school like Banbury could prepare a person for military service; one would think wrong. Yes, at first glance, there's an apparent conflict in ideology; self-discipline vs. external discipline, heterarchy vs. hierarchy, suggestions vs. orders but these apparent contradictions mask the real truth of the matter.

The military –as I'm sure you can imagine- has rules for everything. Sometimes this makes life difficult, but it has its advantages; All the examples I give below are drawn verbatim from a document called 'Leadership in the Canadian Forces': Published under the auspices of the Chief of Defence Staff, it is a guiding document for Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and anyone else in a position of leadership within the Profession of Arms in Canada.

Without further ado, here's how leaders in the Canadian Forces are directed to comport themselves. I think the benefits of an open, creative and spontaneous education will be obvious.

Firstly, we are expected to 'Achieve professional competence and pursue self-improvement' we are directed to do so 'through self-study, experiential learning, formal training, and education.'

You never stop learning in the Navy, and after basic training, you will not have your hand held. Self-Motivation in learning is one of the most valuable traits a Leader in the CF can possess, and Banbury prepares its students to excel at it.

We are also Directed to 'Solve problems; make timely decisions' and '...where time and circumstances allow...involve others who possess relevant experience or a have stake in the decision, and consider the advantages and risks of each option before making a decision.'

Leadership in the Military goes far deeper than Orders and Obedience. We have a tradition of encouraging consultative decision making, and Banbury taught me how to work as part of a group and how to elicit advice from others.

We must also 'Keep subordinates informed; explain events and decisions' because '...Candidly explaining events and decisions often reduces tensions created by uncertainty, and is critical to maintaining the trust relationship between leaders and led.'

The philosophy Banbury employs encourages Teachers to explain the benefits of learning and achieve buy-in from students towards their education. We trusted our teachers and believed in the goal of self-education. We employ that same strategy with our subordinates; they need to believe in the mission and I need to act as my teachers did and explain why we do what we do to form an effective team.

As a leader, you have centuries of collective experience to draw from amongst your subordinates and must "Learn from experience and those who have experience...leaders must constantly review performance... and ask if there isn't a better way. Learning from... the experience of others is critical to ensuring high reliability, performance, and maintaining a competitive edge.

Learning in a consultative environment helped me learn to respect my teachers as people, not just authority figures. I learned how to approach my superiors as mentors and engage them on human terms. I also learned to treat my subordinates with respect and to engage them in the decision making process.

As you've probably noticed, there are some common threads through these statements; Self-Motivation, flexibility, and independent thinking. Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen are not machines; we are encouraged to think critically, act independently and achieve results without direct supervision. You cannot lead people like this with a one-way conversation. Banbury encourages these traits in its graduates and at the same time teaches them to respect and nurture these traits in others.

Jain Richardson

Alumni Reflections

BANBURY CROSSROADS SCHOOL



My Canadian journey began back in 1998. I was a young teenager and had just moved to Calgary from Germany. I joined Banbury Crossroads School while in grade 11 and truly enjoyed my time at the school. My very positive experience and all the support from Diane, her teachers and my friends at the school gave me the courage to pursue my Canadian dream and venture on to finish high school and enroll at the University of Calgary. Banbury Crossroads School enabled me to make lifelong friends and I am proud to say that my friends in high school are still some of my best friends today. Some of these friendships even blossomed into very successful business relationships. Dedication, trust and respect are some of the cornerstones of Diane's and Banbury Crossroads School's philosophy and that element certainly contributed to my growth and development in my personal and professional life.

The self-directed learning approach that is applied at Banbury Crossroads School taught me that hard work and persistence will lead to success eventually. The learning method also taught me that I am the master of my own success. Overall, it taught me I can excel at anything I put my mind to and that certainly has helped me throughout my academic and professional career. In addition, a focus on small class sizes and independent learning allowed me to become very proactive. I would like to think of myself as a person who seeks and pursues opportunities. It has served me well so far and I hope the good fortune will continue.

After finishing my university degrees, I decided to pursue my professional accounting designation. I will complete my CPA designation in the fall of 2016. My professional career started in 2006. I decided to start my own consulting business and was able to successfully grow and manage the company for numerous years. I received a lucrative offer to become the CFO of an oil and gas exploration company, which I accepted in early 2014. I am still part of that team and we are looking forward to another successful year.

On a personal note, I got married to my beautiful wife Stephanie in March 2014. We purchased our first house in 2013 and have been happily living there for the past 2 years. We are enjoying life to the fullest and I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for the school and all the wonderful people who helped me along the way.

Thomas Kaune

Alumni Reflections

BANBURY CROSSROADS SCHOOL



I WOULD NEVER GO BACK TO SCHOOL.

The number of times that I have heard that in the last few weeks, I can't even count. But here I am, back at school 20 years after my first run through university, and 35 years after starting the journey down the road of life-long learning.

35 years ago, I remember walking into a small dark apartment building into someone's home and being told this was school. Those years were crazy, and in retrospect something that not many people in their right mind would have done... but it was Diane and she was on a mission.

That mission imbued me with curiosity, freedom, and the ability to think for myself... some things that no one would have pegged as the skills that people in the work force of today need more and more. It has also made me fearless in the face of school, and learning. We live in a world where people cannot stop learning. We are bombarded by the new every day and from every direction. We live in a world that has fewer and fewer stabilities. Today we can count on our own two feet and the stuff we have between our ears; beyond that, *qui sera?*

So in all the endeavours that I have undertaken in the whirlwind that has been my life (my financial advisor used to call us "the tornado family"), I have never had any doubt about my ability to learn what needs to be learned, figured out or understood.

I have been an hotelier, a logistics and storage owner, a real estate manager, a cofounder of a company that makes mobile apps, a strategic planning consultant and now a university student bound for a second degree.

Diane asked me to talk about my professional accomplishments, but really, who cares what I did? The real question is: what will you do? What will being a person that knows they can do it, can go out and learn what needs learning, can say YES to life... what will that kind of person add to life and the world that we live in?

I think that is the real question... and I think that the answer is the best. Banbury will make people who can lead, who can follow, who can contribute to the things that the world needs today. We need YOU. We need Banbury Crossroad's graduates everywhere. We need people who love, and who will get things done. So if you feel as I do that that is what you want for yourself or for your children, then make Banbury Crossroads a destination... a destination that will show you new roads to take.

Thank you

Aaron Patella

Alumni Reflections

BANBURY CROSSROADS SCHOOL



At Banbury I found my second family, and a major pillar of support when I needed it the most. I attended Banbury during my high school years. Throughout that time, I was the sole caregiver for my mother, a single mom, who was diagnosed with terminal cancer shortly after we had moved to Calgary.

Banbury provided me with the flexibility to arrange my studies around my mother's care, while allowing me to work at my own pace. Despite not always being able to attend school, the teachers were always there to answer questions I had. They went the extra mile to ensure I fully understood the materials & what was being asked of me.

Looking back, I greatly enjoyed our classroom debates on a wide array of subjects. They were exceptional, as there was an emphasis on facts & mutual respect of differing views.

As adults, we easily forget the challenges of growing up. Banbury's philosophy nurtures personal growth &

development of the student as a whole. While the support is always at hand, students are given the opportunity to build their self-confidence by self driven love of learning in their subjects of choice & set their own personal goals. Students are given the chance to challenge themselves, and learn from their mistakes without judgement.

Today, I am an entrepreneur, with business interests in antiques and photography. I am the founder and operator of a successful property management company, specializing in the preservation and restoration of historic character homes. Banbury provided me with positive guidance, caring mentors and life skills to succeed. The school & its people became a crucial anchor for my life at a time of major personal crisis. I shall always look back to that time with great fondness and gratitude.

Sarah Jorba

Alumni Reflections

BANBURY CROSSROADS SCHOOL



I was six years old when I joined Banbury Crossroads School, then in its first full year of operation with but a handful of children, whose parents had the foresight and courage to break the norm, as Diane created this school long before the concept of independent schooling became mainstream. Against the odds, she offered an alternative...one that my parents, among others, were searching for. A place where, and perhaps more accurately, a person to whom, they could entrust the care taking of their children's education.

And now, with Banbury in its 35th year, I am proud to stand here as an alumna... but also found myself being flummoxed by the preparation for this talk. It was challenging to tease out how my Banbury experience influenced my life when I feel it was so central to my development that it permeates my character at the cellular level...it's like being asked how I feel about breathing or my senses...And even with making that statement, I feel a wash of gratitude for even being given such an educational experience, some of which I can relate to you this evening, and the latitude to have been so affected by it at a formative level, that as an adult I can take it for granted...almost, but for these precious moments of reflection.

Most notably, but perhaps a trite statement with this audience, is that as a student at Banbury Crossroads, I was given the freedom to direct my own learning. There were no set schedules, no mass-distributed assignments, no cold classrooms filled with rows of desks. We were provided with a diversity of unique materials, workbooks, textbooks, toys, games and welcoming physical environments, from which my classmates and I could choose activities and learning pursuits. I remember now with amusement how laborious it was for me to answer the seemingly innocuous question of, "What grade are you in?" My age would have pigeon-holed me to a rough grade, but the nature of the school had me listing off a litany of grades across subjects...because I really would be working on a Grade 7 science workbook at the same point that I was doing Grade 5 math, and reading a Grade 6 novel. There was also very little competition. I had no report cards...most of the time I didn't even have grades to compare with other classmates who may or may not have been in the same grade as me for any given subject. The focus was always on the learning, not how I measured up in comparison to my peers... (although, of note, when my classmates and I did write standardized exams mandated by the province, we always did very well...a further testament to the quality of the education.)

My classmates and I, of course, learned the expected subjects - math, language arts, science, etc. (often at more advanced levels than typical for our ages), but also history, phonics, grammar, public speaking, creative writing, art, logical reasoning, critical thinking, writing organization, and typing...and, for example, not just how to type...we would be exposed to the total experience of any given subject...so, for typing we also be involved in going to the store to buy the typewriter ribbons, and pick out the stationery that we wanted to use for our stories or reports.

I was taught and inspired to sing, play musical instruments, write and direct plays, cook international cuisine, bake, knit, weave, dye cloth using batik methods, write poetry, garden, make yogurt, create linocut prints, draw, plan events, care for pets, read maps, play games of strategy, skate, learn languages, conduct science experiments, canoe, take photographs, quilt, snowshoe, grow plants, sew clothing from a pattern, ...it goes on...

And, although Diane was the only full-time teacher during the early years of the school, we were ensured a balanced education through the input of other teachers in art, French, sports, computers, gymnastics, social dance...and field trips to every conceivable place one might learn. What better way to learn about blowing glass, than in a glass factory? Baking bread?...we'd go to a bakery. Photo developing? Off to the self-serve photo lab we went. I feel like we must have seen every National Film Board offering...while learning how to load the reels into the projector!

Learning was an immersion in life.

Continued on reverse

Delaney Boyd

Alumni Reflections

BANBURY CROSSROADS SCHOOL



The school environment was also infused with positive values – kindness, trust, and respectful communication. Violence, bullying, and discrimination were virtually non-existent. Diane instilled confidence in her students by empowering them to take ownership of their actions and their education. We were also encouraged to engage with our world, including simple, yet character-building activities, such as speaking for ourselves with adults. I learned to communicate with trust, empathy, and honesty, solve problems in a win-win fashion, and develop accountability and autonomy. As well, we all had a caretaking function within the school community. We performed chores such as vacuuming and tidying common spaces, instilling respect for our shared space and for Diane, especially when the school resided in her home in the earlier years.

And with all this said, I find myself reflecting on a favourite quotation of mine:

Nothing is so potent as the silent influence of a good example. (James Kent)

One of the most profound impacts of my Banbury experience was the permeating influence of positive role models...most certainly in Diane as a trailblazer and extraordinary educator who enveloped her students in a nurturing, supportive, and enriching environment, but also the numerous other teachers and mentors that she brought into the Banbury fold...some of whom maintained other full time jobs but still dedicated themselves to our learning...such as teaching us French on their lunch hours.

It was a truly balanced, rich, and inspirational education, which encouraged me to push the boundaries, pursue my dreams, and speak out with respect, logic and emotional intelligence on issues of concern (such as at 12 years old when I wrote a letter to several major world leaders regarding nuclear disarmament – and I even received replies!)

My time at Banbury also planted the seed of my current career. From a young age I have had a strong affinity for our natural world and the environment. When I was 12 years old, Diane introduced me to an organization called The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (or IUCN), and she gave me a copy of the World Conservation Strategy to read. I remember telling her after that point that when I grew up I would be an environmental designer. I may not have known fully what that meant at the time, but I knew I was passionate about nature, and our collective need to conserve and live sustainably within our environment.

Since that time, I have received a Bachelor's Degree in Ecology, and a Master's Degree in Environmental Science, for which I was awarded the Gold Medal in Environmental Design from the University of Calgary. For my thesis, I produced a Conservation Status Survey for Bison in North America that was later published by the IUCN. Now, I am in the last year of my PhD in Environmental Design focused on sustainable land management. I have been able to apply my education over the last ten years as a biologist and environmental planner for the Department of National Defence (DND), working to balance land use with environmental sustainability. Most recently, I was selected by the Harvard affiliated think tank, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, as one of five delegates from around the world to present last November at the IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney, Australia. I know that these accomplishments are rooted in the inspiration and encouragement I enjoyed at Banbury Crossroads.

In Banbury Crossroads, a vision manifested through the certainty of resolve of initially Diane, and then those who have supported and joined her, that there is a better way to educate our children and inspire them to be well developed, contributing, respectful, confident, and nurturing members of society. This was my experience, and I can see from the assemblage of people and stories here tonight that Banbury Crossroads continues to grow and succeed in influencing a better world. Thank you.

Delaney Boyd