



ISC Views and Voices

“Education is not a preparation for life; education is life itself.” - John Dewey

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Amanda Garrison—ISC’s First Graduate!

by Nicolette Groeneveld

On June 2nd, ISC’s first ever diploma candidate, Amanda Garrison, held her thesis defense; it was an amazing experience for everyone involved! Amanda had written her thesis and it had been sent to the students, parents and staff of ISC, and June 2nd was Amanda’s night to defend that thesis and prove that she has indeed taken responsibility for preparing herself to be a respectful, responsible, reasonable adult in the larger community.

At the hour-long Thesis Defense, the questions asked of Amanda by the members of the audience were tough! She answered them all eloquently and with strength, never wavering from her personal truths. The audience was wowed by Amanda’s obvious readiness to step into full adulthood, away from ISC.

At the end of the question period, one parent said the questioning Amanda had been through was a greater test than anything the parent had ever had to go through to get her high school diploma; many other parents agreed.

It is very difficult to do the Thesis Defense justice here. It’s one of those things where you “had to be there”. However, you can get a sense of how impressive of an adult Amanda has become through the following, her written thesis:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, “Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, or fabulous?” Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does

not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. You are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within you. It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we

subconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fears, our presence automatically liberates others.

-From a speech by Nelson Mandela



know where I’ll be 10 years from now or know what I’ll be doing. However, I do know what I want to have accomplished and **who** I want to be. So finally I concluded that it’s not about what I do, it’s about **how** I do it. A wise man once said to me, “I would much rather die than not really live”. So my thesis is not going to be about finding out what your ideas of success are and planning my life around them but rather about how I plan to really live.

Before I get into how I plan to live, here are some examples of how I live ISC’s 3 R’s since the purpose of this thesis is to prove that I will be a reasonable, responsible, respectful, peaceful adult.

I am reasonable in regards to laws not because I am told I **have** to obey them or because I’m afraid of the consequences of not obeying them, but because I understand **why** they were made. I have no desire to break society’s laws in any way because I find them reasonable as well. However, if I did have a problem with them, I would do something about getting them changed.

I am respectful because I know that when I treat others with respect, they will in turn treat me with respect. And if they don’t, I would deal with it reasonably, responsibly, respectfully and peacefully, most likely by talking to them and letting them know that it is not okay to treat me with disrespect.

I am responsible because I want to be. I have taken on a lot of responsibilities at school because I am learning from them. For example, I check the chores every day that I am at school and able to. I do it, not because the school says I have to, but because I chose to run for the position at the beginning of the year and committed to it, knowing it would be a job to do every day for the whole year. I enjoy Continued next page...

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When I started preparing for this graduation process, I thought I needed to plan out my entire life and present something you’d all approve of. I freaked out! I pondered for weeks, but I couldn’t seem to make a plan I was happy with. It took me a while to figure out why, but then I realized it was because I don’t want to live a predictable life. I don’t want to

doing it, and even on the days that I don't want to, I check them because that is my responsibility. It's something I have decided I have to do.

I am peaceful because it feels right. I don't see any reason to fight or to hurt other people or myself. And by being reasonable, responsible, and respectful, I am just naturally peaceful.

Another topic this thesis is meant to cover is how I have prepared myself for adulthood. I found this question hard to answer because I believe everything I have encountered my entire life has been preparing me for adulthood and everything I will face for the rest of my life. I have adult friends and have had adult friends since I was 15 and attended my first Peak Potentials training course, the Enlightened Warrior Training Camp. I feel my adult friends have shown me what responsibilities are involved in being an adult and have guided me, telling me honestly what their mistakes were and helping me to avoid making them. I have also been to many life training courses designed for adults: Enlightened Warrior Training camp, Wizard Training Camp, Millionaire Mind Intensive Weekend, Life Directions and Sex, Passion and Enlightenment, which each focused on a different aspect of adult life and how to live the way I want to. I have no fear of walking into this new phase of my life because I do feel prepared.

In the near future, I plan to audit classes at the U of A and Marvel College. By auditing them I won't have credit for having taken them, but for me it's about the learning, knowing what they're teaching without the marks or tests or stress, but with the constant choice of what I want to learn. And if I decide at some point that I want credit for having taken the classes, I can actually take them, and it will be easier for me having already learned the material. I don't think getting credentials will be an issue for me since I am a creative person who will end up in creative professions.

I intend to travel. I'll be working here only until I have saved enough money to leave. I have decided I would rather live in different countries than be a tourist and just see the sights. I want to know what it means to live there. And then when I feel the need, I'll move on to a new place or come back home.

I aim to be financially free by the age of 30 (passive income greater than expenses) with the help of a few special

people in my life guiding me through the process. I will be starting my nest egg (large sum of money from which all money for investments come), making my first investment this summer.

The reason I believe I am ready to graduate from Indigo Sudbury Campus is that the philosophy of the school is such a part of me. I will be able to leave this school and forever practice the Sudbury philosophy, knowing I'll never really stop being a student. Following what my interests and passions are, I will learn in the same way I did here. Living just as I did as a student here, I will be a reasonable, responsible, respectful, peaceful human being.

I feel my time at Indigo Sudbury Campus has been a gift just as I have always felt my life is a gift. Up until now, I have had the chance to experience so many incredible things, and I don't think that will ever change. I will forever be grateful for the circumstances that have brought me to the understandings that have shaped my views on life. I see my life as a game of learning and growth and because of that I have never been afraid to get messy or make mistakes. Even if I were, I would always choose the exhilaration of conquering the fear, knowing it's just another challenge for me. I strive to live spontaneously, finding and pursuing my passions, while always following my intuition wherever it might lead me. I aim to live with such an open heart that I am always willing to love, even when complications surface, even when love is not returned. I intend to appreciate with all of me how deeply I have the ability to feel and express. I see the value in loving the hard times in my life just as much as the good times, knowing there is a purpose to them. I know everything happens for a reason, and there is a lesson in everything I encounter and every person I meet, and I will unceasingly look for those reasons so I can consciously understand what is happening. I will continue to seek the truth and ask why. Being true to myself at all times will require standing up for what I believe in and never taking a moment for granted. I am forever a student of life. Thriving on change, I am certain I'll be willing to change my life completely if I am unhappy with it, knowing that every day I have the choice to be who I want to be.

For my graduation song I chose "I Believe" by Fantasia Barrino because this

is my life, and I am following my own path and letting my light shine.

I Believe – Fantasia Barrino

*Have you ever reached a rainbow's end
And did you find your pot of gold
Ever catch a shooting star
And tell me how high did you soar
Ever felt like you were dreaming
Just to find that you're awake
And the magic that surrounds you
Can lift you up and guide you on your way*

*I can see it in the stars across the sky
Dreamt a hundred thousand dreams before
Now I finally realize
You see I've waited all my life for this moment to arrive
And finally*

*When you look out in the distance
You see it never was that far
Heaven knows your existence
And leads you to be everything you are
There's a time for every soul to fly
It's in the eyes of every child
It's the hope, the love that saves the world
And oh we should never let it go*

*I believe in the impossible
If I reach deep within my heart
Overcome any obstacle
Won't let this dream fall apart
See I strive to be the very best
Shine my light for all to see
Cause anything is possible
When you believe yeah*

*Love keeps lifting me higher
Lifting me higher
Love keeps lifting me higher
I said love keeps lifting
Love keeps lifting me
I said Love keeps lifting
Love keeps lifting me higher
Said love keeps lifting me higher
I said love keeps lifting me high*



Thesist Clerk, Bretton, announces the vote results: a unanimous "yes"! Amanda is all smiles!



Presentation of the diploma, youngest to oldest!

Students Aren't The Only Ones Being "ISC-ed"!

by Nicolette Groeneveld

It's re-enrollment time! Parents are calling with questions about forms, and as so often happens, the conversations turn to how the school has served students over the year. Ric and I are always delighted to hear about the changes parents have noticed in their children, but it never stops there! "Things have changed at home... and in me!" parents admit!

It's so true. There's no way to send a child to ISC and not end up with changes in the family! As our students go through growth phases, so do our parents!

One challenge in sending a child to ISC is facing all the non-believers. Parents have to explain the school, defend the school and answer all the "what if" questions friends, family and neighbors have. This can be challenging for the most convinced parents, let alone the ones who still harbor their own fears. On the other hand, it can strengthen parents' belief in the school and reinforce their sense of having made the right decision for their child.

Another challenge parents face is getting used to children who are more vocal, as in willing to express their needs, concerns and opinions. At ISC, everyone is expected to be respectful, responsible and reasonable, and students are encouraged to speak up when anyone—including adults—doesn't respect that. When parents are faced for the first time with their child saying, "Mom/Dad, that's really not reasonable!", it can make for an interesting moment! One of our dads was corrected at the dinner table by his daughter when he continued a discussion Mom had asked him to suspend till after dinner; the visiting grandmother and aunt were quite taken aback!

The biggest challenge parents face is surrendering to trust and truly letting go. One parent had her child continue a math program outside of school, "just in case..." This continued until the day her child flatly refused to do any more of the program. At that point, though it wasn't easy, the mother realized, "I can't partly trust. Either I do or I don't."

Other parents are seriously challenged when their children spend virtually *all* their time in front of computers. Is it passion or addiction? Will the con-



stant exposure to electronic physically harm the children? Will they become extremely violent as a result of all the games they play? Will they eventually b a l a n c e computer time with other pursuits, or is this a lifetime "obsession"? Will their true creative potential be realized when there's always a new video game to beat, or are they already somehow expressing their creativity in the computer activities they're doing?

When our computer-loving students grow up and have children, it's likely they won't even blink when their kids live at their computer desks; our current generation of parents, however, has all these questions to grapple with.

Letting go of society's firm belief in keeping up with curriculum is another thing that can seriously test a parent. Watching a child go through a whole year without opening a single book can throw a parent into fear over and over again. We have one parent who said she needs her monthly Talkabout "fix" as it reminds her of how well ISC does work and why it *is* a great choice for her child. Talkabouts dispel her fears—and then they start to build again until, phew, it's time for another Talkabout!

Our parents' growth isn't all the result of fear, however. A few parents have expressed their incredible relief at not having to fight with their children over homework anymore. So much stress is gone from the household that parents and children actually have room now to have harmonious, peaceful relationships.

Our 5:00 pick-up time has created shifts in family dynamics too. One mother told me that having to pick up her children by 5:00 has forced her to leave the office and actually be home more! This means more home-cooked meals and

more time spent as a family!

Another of our families has introduced the democratic process in their household and is experiencing the value of including their children in decision-making.

Finally, another mother expressed how her son has become her role model as he lives a life she aspires to for her whole family. She says that since coming to ISC, her son has a natural rhythm and pace to his life that leaves him relaxed and enjoying all the different parts of his days. Where mother's life is hectic and so full of activities that even her hobbies have become "things-I-must-do", her son has the space and time to fit into his days all the things he values. Even his relaxed attitude around going to bed late invites his parents to be relaxed about it. Some people might think he is living a frivolously unrealistic life, but mother knows that in actual fact, it's life the way life is naturally meant to be.

At the end of the day, when all the different angles have been examined, the fact is that generally parents have a much harder time getting used to the Sudbury system than students. Students come on in and make themselves at home in an environment where they are free to do pretty much as they choose, while parents are left at home to deal with this new reality. Not having grown up this way, parents stretch themselves as far as their consciousness allows, until fear comes and snaps them back. They pick themselves up again, look at all the amazing changes they're witnessing in their children, and open to the willingness to stretch themselves yet again.

See how wonderful you are, Parents?! We glowingly celebrate you who have the courage to do this, knowing you are paving the way for future ISC parents who, one day, will be in your shoes. At that time, *you* will be the ones telling them: "Trust fully... You think in holding on the best outcome will happen, but it's actually in fully letting go that everyone will win."

Hats off to you, Parents! You are the brave trail blazers!

Argh, Scallywag!

by Nicolette Groeneveld



According to statistics from the University of Chicago, 94% of what we learn in traditional school is never used in later life. Maybe it's because of that proverb that says something about forgetting what we hear, minimally remembering what we see and thoroughly remembering what we participate in? So does it take a highly participatory private school like ISC to "teach" youth things they'll actually use in later life? I checked in with the students who participated in ISC's Pirate Day. Imagine! Such a crazy event, yet they learned

people prepared to see a project through and help clean up.

Mars learned that there are people who play and people who work, and she decided that people who aren't going to get involved in a fun event shouldn't come at all.

Amanda learned all about planning and organizing an event; this included tracking down the person at West Edmonton Mall responsible for activities on the Santa Maria replica and convincing him to allow our students on the boat on Pirate Day! Amanda was also responsible for contacting the media, a job she effectively delegated to Ric! Amanda also learned about costume design and how to help a



next Halloween; he was also set to wear the costume to his brother's graduation, until his mother informed him that he wouldn't stand out as most of the grads were already quite strangely dressed!

Sarah expanded her vocabulary through Internet research, and students in general learned sailing terms via Kylen, like "heads" for the bathroom, "the hold" for the living room and "the galley" for the kitchen.

Kylen learned that parents don't always appreciate strangers giving their children chocolate, especially when



some valuable things!

Alyassa learned that wigs are itchy and that it's actually possible to find recipes for Pirate food on the Internet! She also learned to research costumes by watching period movies. She learned it's stressful when construction projects are left to the last minute, but she also learned to round up devoted helpers—

friend put together a great costume for very little money. Finally, Amanda now knows that if she's going to organize a treasure hunt, it's safest for her if she actually has a treasure at the end instead of making people go to great lengths only to find a note saying, "Mua ha ha! We stole the treasure!"

Josh learned that it's not about winning, it's about having fun; yet when he did win a Boston Pizza gift certificate for "Best costume", he decided to give it to a poor person since he felt his family could afford to pay for a meal if they went out to eat.

Ric learned that when left to their own initiative, students come up with very valuable marketing ideas! Sarah and her friends decided to attach school business cards to chocolate gold coins and hand them to people at the Mall!

Kris learned about stretching his dollars as he plans to wear his pirate costume



they're dressed as pirates!

Finally, most students learned woodworking skills as self-made swords were the standard of the day!

So, was Pirate Day a valuable learning experience? I'd say! Not to mention that it was tons of fun! Hats off to all the students who dressed up, and cheers to the parents who got into the Pirate spirit!



Quotable Quotes:

In the car on the way to school, Kris, Gaian, Sebastian and I were having a discussion about religion. At one point, Gaian said, "When you go to court, they make you put your hand on a bible and do that "I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth" thing. But what if you're not a Christian? They'd be better off giving me a comic book!" "Yeah, a video game for me!" said Sebastian.

Sarah: "Are you Sagittarius?"
Sebastian: "Uh, is that a disease?"
(He was kidding!)

Gaian, in response to some comment I missed: "Oooh, that's Sickening, with a capital R!"

Gaian came to me carrying Josh on his back. "I give piggy backs to this family!" he grunted. "First Mars, now Josh... Pretty soon Tim will be asking too!"

Mars came up to the counter where I was making my lunch and where there were cake leftovers. "I guess I have to do my chore, huh?" "Yeah, huh," I replied. Mars cut herself a piece of cake. "But first I must have a piece of cake for good luck and responsibility!"

Dakota gave Liam a cheese stick. As Logan Schwartz walked by, Liam said, "Your brother gave me a cheesecake!" Logan answered, "That's a cheese stick, not cheesecake!" Then Logan turned to me and said, "I teach him so much!"

Liam and Mei-fah were playing Marbles against Kris and Alyassa. Liam said, "It's the little kids against the big kids!" Kris said in a childish voice, "I'm not a big kid!" "No," said Liam, "You're a huge kid!"

"Watching a child go through our (public) educational system is like watching reverse metamorphosis – in flies a beautiful butterfly, out crawls a clumsy caterpillar." From *If You Want to Be Rich and Happy, Don't Go To School* by Robert T. Kiyosaki (author of *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*)

The general belief that you have to do well in school to get a good job and be financially secure in life is losing ground. According to Robert T. Kiyosaki, "It only takes a second-grade education to become financially successful." Cut loose grade 2 graduates!



New building update

Last year around this time, we had a joyous article in our newsletter about the new building we had secured. It's been a magnificent place to be this year, however, unfortunately, the house we're in is only marginally appropriate as a school and, based on the cost of renovations, it's impractical to go that route. So... we're building a new building!

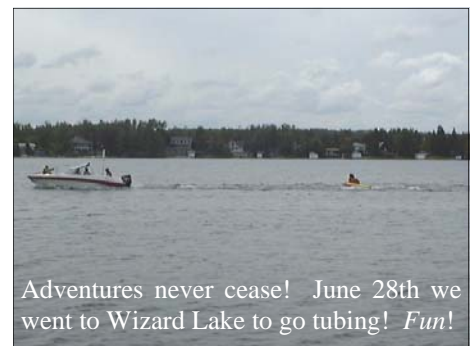
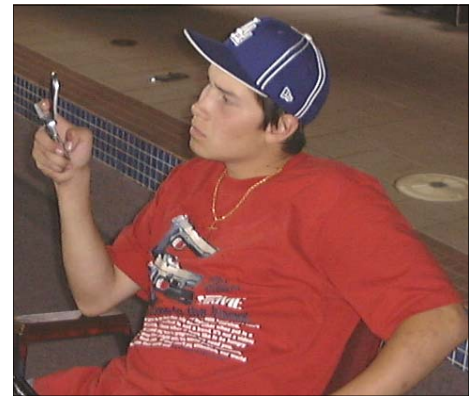
We've been talking and planning for months, and Ric has even made our architect's job easier by doing a full drawing of what he envisions for our new school. So what's it going to be? Well, have you ever heard of geodesic domes? We're going to the next level and are building *monolithic* domes. We will have three, connected 88-foot in diameter domes with a fourth dome in the centre, on top of the other domes. The domes will be a reflection of our one rule, as we'll have a respect dome, a responsibility dome, a reasonable dome and the peace dome connecting the three.

If you are unfamiliar with monolithic domes, they are basically a one-piece structure made of a waterproof shell that is blown up from the inside like a balloon, sprayed with a foam insulator, lined with rebar and then sprayed with concrete (shotcrete). This shell forms a basically indestructible building that is fire-proof, hurricane-proof etc. It is also extremely energy efficient, costing 75% less to heat and cool than standard buildings—depending on how many windows are put in. We're also exploring geothermal heating, solar power and wind power for alternative, environmentally friendly utility sources.

We hope to start building as soon as possible and will offer periodic updates as construction progresses!



Getting a little help at staff elections



Adventures never cease! June 28th we went to Wizard Lake to go tubing! Fun!

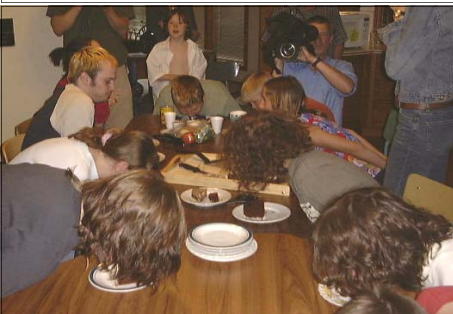
That's Kris and Liam on the tube... see them?!

Ahhhhhhhh...

by Nicolette Groeneveld



ISC, said CFRN TV, is a school where eating cake without utensils is allowed!



So often, I sit and watch our students doing all the wonderful things they do here at the school... I watch them playing, laughing uncontrollably, running, dancing with complete abandon in the rain, squealing with delight, inventing new games, trying out the newly-made bikes, touching the sky on the trampoline, hugging the dogs, cats and bunnies, lounging outside in the sun, sitting alone in quiet contemplation, eating cake without utensils, wrestling in total joy, feeling the thrill of building a new computer, celebrating beating the computer in a video game, wrestling couches onto their sides for fort building, sharing lunches, imitating favorite TV shows, complaining that it's almost summer holidays... and deep within me I feel the magic our students are living. Sudbury Valley School published a book whose title, to me, expresses so beautifully what our students experience here: Kingdom of Childhood. I know our students are blessed to be at ISC, but I feel even more blessed to be watching them grow up in this environment. So often when witnessing what our students do, I think, "There can be nothing more beautiful than this!" But then the next moment happens and I'm saying it again!

It has been another amazing year! My heartfelt thanks go to all the parents who have trusted us with their children and to all the students for being such amazing people! I'm also tremendously thankful to Ric for all the great work he does and to Tim for joining us and inspiring so much delightful creativity! Finally, Corinne, who does such essential behind-the-scenes work to keep us going, deserves a world of thanks!

Till September then... Ric and I will be so looking forward to seeing you all again!



Freedom is... playing in the rain!



Ahhhh... Kingdom of childhood!

While discussing the school sleepover at Campus Meeting, staff pointed out that it would be imperative that no one make noise outside, as we don't want to disturb the neighbors. Then someone asked about bringing non-student siblings to the sleepover. Said Kris, "I don't think it's a good idea—no offense—but people who aren't actually students may not be as respectful of being quiet as we need them to be. They just can't fully realize how important the school is to all of us."

Announcements

- Thanks to Denise Moore for coming in as Substitute Staff Member when Ric was away at a conference!
- We will soon have a 2004-2005 Power Point Yearbook on our website! When it's all done, you'll be able to find it on the side bar of our website.

Prepared by Nicolette Groeneveld