



SEVEN OAKS  
EDUCATION FOUNDATION INC.

# Foundation

NEWS

Summer 2015

## The Foundations of the Seven Oaks Education Foundation 3

Previous Seven Oaks Education Foundation newsletters have introduced (or re-introduced) members of the Foundation's volunteer board. Now it's time to hear from the remaining members and find out why they give their time to help give Seven Oaks students opportunities to further their education.

### **Theresa Hass-Speirs**

Born and raised in the Seven Oaks community, Theresa's connection to the Seven Oaks School Division started with her attending school there. But it didn't end there.

Theresa has been employed by the Division since she graduated from the University of Winnipeg. She began

as a classroom teacher and, more recently, became Student Services Coordinator. Of course, she's also a Board member with the Seven Oaks Education Foundation.

"Seven Oaks has been my home and now it's time to give back," she said when asked why she volunteers for the Board.



While the work the Foundation does inspires Theresa to volunteer, she also draws inspiration from her fellow Board members, saying, “I enjoy the collegiality of being a part of a Board whose goal is to provide opportunities for students living in our community.”

When she’s not at work in the Division, Theresa might be at her year-round cottage or working out at the Reh-Fit Centre.

“My goal is to remain healthy and strong in anticipation of retirement in the next few years.”

Until it’s time to retire, Theresa will be doing her part to enhance education in the Division and beyond.

“My goal for the Foundation is always bigger and better, “ says Theresa. “The more scholarships we can offer, the greater the impact we have on the futures of our students.”

### **Heather Janczyszyn**

You may know Heather as a neighbor and parent in Riverbend whose sons attended Seven Oaks schools before graduating from West Kildonan Collegiate in 2010 and 2012, respectively.

If you’re a customer at the Main and Semple Branch of the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), you might also recognize Heather from her work as a Financial Advisor. Oddly enough, it was her work at the bank that led her to volunteer for the SOEF Board.

“The branch managers at RBC Main and Semple have been Board members for several years, and I have attended the Bud Spuds in the past, so I was aware of the great work the Board does to raise money for scholarships,” explains Heather. “When my manager asked me to attend a meeting on her behalf, I was happy to go, and ultimately volunteered to take the position when the opportunity arose.”

“One of my sons received a scholarship

from West Kildonan Collegiate, so I want to ensure that this Board is successful in continuing to provide scholarships for high school children.”

Ultimately, it’s Heather’s belief in the Foundation’s work that keeps her involved. “I believe in the purpose of the Board, which is to raise funds for scholarships for post secondary education,” said Heather. “I went to university and got my Bachelor of Commerce degree, so I know that education is important, and we have instilled that in our children.” Because she works nearby, finding time to attend the Board meetings isn’t too difficult for Heather. She even finds time to attend Manitoba Theatre Centre plays and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. What she wants to find more time for is community involvement with the Seven Oaks Education Foundation.

“I have only been on the Board for a short time, but I would like to see greater involvement from the Community – perhaps with a presence at some of the high school events, maybe with a booth to show people what the Foundation is and does.”

### **Brent Olynyk**

If you live in either Winnipeg or the RM of West St. Paul, you definitely know Brent. He was project manager on several special projects for the City of Winnipeg, including the \$6.5 million Central Park rebuild and the transition of Assiniboine Park to the public sector. Today, he’s the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of the Rural Municipality of West St. Paul.

His roots in the Seven Oaks community run deep.

“My mother, Mabel Dobrinsky was born on Hartford Ave in 1926. She along with eight brothers and sisters attended school in the Seven Oaks School Division. Since then, there have been well over 60 descendants of this family who went through the same school division, including my cousin Randy Bachman,” says Brent.

“In the early days, most students did not receive the encouragement or have the finances to go beyond high school. Financial help or even a pat on the back from a teacher can spur a student to go further in school. I never had that and wanted to change it.”

Brent’s own educational journey was challenging. He began working in 1977 at the age of 17. He attended university at night for over 35 years, achieving a Masters in Public Administration, as well as other diplomas and degrees. “All my family was very proud,” he recalls.

“I want everyone in Seven Oaks School Division to have the opportunity for a post secondary education and for the community to be proud of us all.”

His current role as the CAO of the RM of West St Paul keeps him busy, as does his work not only with the Seven Oaks Education Foundation but with the Platinum Jets Fundraising Group, the Seven Oaks General Hospital Foundation and the Robert Coffey Memorial Scholarship Foundation (of which he is currently President).

Busy as he is, Brent still puts his family first. He, his wife, Kim, and daughter, Jade, always make time to head out to their cottage at Grand Beach to enjoy summer with neighbours and friends.

His dedication to education – and the Seven Oaks Education Foundation – never flags. He credits part of that to the energy and enthusiasm his fellow Board members bring to the table.

“The other Board members are extremely dedicated, especially the members who currently or previously taught or worked at Seven Oaks School Division, “ says Brent. “The Board works very hard to provide opportunities to a diverse group of students. There is a lot of passion within this organization.”

“I want this Board to be the model for all other school divisions that are trying

to move forward with scholarships. We want to pave the way for every child in the Seven Oaks School Division to have hope and achieve their dreams. And one day, I believe they will come back, tell us their success stories and then help the next generation to become even better.”

### **Edie Wilde**

If you’ve spent any time in the Seven Oaks School Division in the last 40 years, you will almost certainly know the name Edie Wilde.

In 1975, Edie began her Seven Oaks School Division career as a teacher at Collicutt School. She went on to work at A.E. Wright, O.V. Jewitt, Margaret Park School, and Elwick Community School. to name just a few. She’s also been an administrator and assistant superintendent, so it’s no surprise that she became a member of the Seven Oaks Education Foundation Board.

“When the Board approached me to become a Board member, I could not say no,” says Edie. “I have a deep connection to the School Division and I care deeply about the students in this community.”

Edie recently retired, and is spending her time with family and friends, travelling, cooking, studying art history, doing home renovations and – of course – volunteering, an interest that naturally includes the Seven Oaks Education Foundation Board.

“The Board commitment is a small investment of time,” says Edie. “And being on the Board is a way to stay connected and to give back to a community that has been an integral part of my life.”

“I have not been able to attend every event or meeting, but when I do, my contributions are always welcomed. The people around the Board table want to make a difference in the lives of students as they transition into post-secondary education, and I am proud to be associated with this dedicated

group of community members.”

Edie’s years with the Division have provided her with a particular appreciation for the Foundation’s work and its increasing importance to the community.

“The costs of post-secondary education keep rising,” notes Edie. “I believe that the Board needs to continue to fundraise in order to expand scholarship opportunities.”

### **Mario Coquete**

For Mario, the Seven Oaks Education Foundation isn’t just a worthwhile organization; it’s a valued client.

Mario is both a Branch Manager and Mutual Fund Representative with the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) at the 1795 Henderson Highway location. Because the Seven Oaks Education Foundation is among RBC’s clients, Mario knows first-hand how seriously the Board takes its fiscal responsibilities.

Add the fact that he has two children attending Edmund Partridge School in the Division, and it’s not all surprising that he’s on the Board.

“I had been a Board member for a while before but left for a period,” explains Mario. “When the new President, Kraig Hillis – a good friend of mine – asked me to return, I felt the time was right. And I was more than happy to because I think it’s important for us to do whatever we can do to help students get an education.”

Like his fellow Board Members, Mario makes time for the Foundation amidst a busy schedule. He balances his Board duties with the bank, his role as Chairperson of the Financial Committee at his church, his involvement with the Manitoba Movement Centre and – of course – his family.

Two things inspire him to schedule time for the Seven Oaks Education Foundation. The first is his belief in what the Foundation is doing for students. The second is his fellow

Board members.

“These are people dedicated to making a difference,” says Mario of his fellow Board members. “Many of them work or have worked in schools, so they know first-hand what children need for their education. And they make the decisions that, in turn, help the Foundation meet those needs.”

“My own children are fortunate in that they don’t need the financial help. But there are many who do, and that’s what makes the Foundation so important.”

As for the future of the Foundation, Mario would like to look at taking some new directions.

“I’d like to see further expansion into scholarships for our Aboriginal community,” says Mario. “It’s a rapidly growing community in the Seven Oaks School Division and I think we need to find ways to support those students.”

“I’d like to take a look at how we can better distribute funds overall. There’s limited funds, so the more we can explore ways to use those funds better, the better it is for all students in the Division.”

Mario would also like to expand the partnerships between the Foundation and the Seven Oaks community.

“We have great community partners – individuals, businesses, all committed to helping students through the Foundation,” says Mario. “I’d like to see us adding even more community partners. Because the more we get involved in education, the more we are able to move forward and improve the opportunities for students.”


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Visit [7oakseducation.org](http://7oakseducation.org) for more information on how to donate or to make an online contribution.

The Foundation provides tax receipts for donations of \$10 or more.



SEVEN OAKS  
EDUCATION FOUNDATION



# Join the Graduation Celebration!

Graduation is a culmination of hard work and dedication. It's the recognition of promise realized and potential yet to be explored. It's about taking time to enjoy a sense of personal accomplishment and pride – and of sharing that moment with the people who have been there to provide support and guidance along the way.

We invite you to join family, friends and other well-wishers in saying congratulations to this year's Seven Oaks School Division graduates at their ceremonies:

## 2015

- **The Seven Oaks Graduation Powwow**  
Thursday, June 4, 2015 - 7pm  
West Kildonan Collegiate Gymnasium
- **The MET School Graduation**  
Wednesday, June 17, 2015 - 1pm  
Garden City Collegiate Gymnasium
- **Garden City Collegiate Graduation**  
Monday, June 22, 2015 - 7pm  
Centennial Concert Hall
- **Maples Collegiate Graduation**  
Thursday, June 25, 2015 - 7pm  
Centennial Concert Hall
- **West Kildonan Collegiate Graduation**  
Friday, June 26, 2015 - 7pm  
Centennial Concert Hall
- **Adult Education Graduation**  
Monday, June 29, 2015 - 7pm  
Maples Collegiate, Judy Silver Commons