



Clare MacMartin

A newsletter for graduates of CSAHS • CSS • FACS • WELL • MAC  
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## Students Apply Learning Outside the Classroom

The College of Social and Applied Human Sciences aims to raise \$10 million by 2014 for the Learning Opportunities Trust to provide more students with experiential learning opportunities. These consist of applied learning outside the classroom as part of students' programs of study. Currently, one quarter of CSAHS students are involved in experiential learning courses.

“The goal is to increase the proportion of students in our college who have at least one form of curriculum-embedded experiential learning as part of their program of study to 50 per cent,” says Clare MacMartin, associate dean (academic) at CSAHS. The college plans to increase that percentage to two-thirds by 2020.

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# Grad Gives the Gift of Experiential Learning



Carolyn Langill

**W**HEN CAROLYN (OKE) Langill was an undergrad at Guelph, Robert Munsch wasn't a renowned children's author yet. He was her child studies professor.

"When I was in second year, he wrote his first book," says Langill, B.A.Sc. '80. Munsch supervised her practicum in the lab school, where students would observe and work with preschool-aged children. "We would sit down on the floor with the preschoolers and he would make up stories," she adds. "I got to know him very well."

After graduating from U of G, Langill attended teacher's college at the University of Western Ontario and taught children with learning disabilities. She credits U of G's child studies program for giving her the opportunity to work with children, which gave her the experience she needed to get into teacher's college. "I really valued the fact

that we were required to work with children as part of the degree. We all graduated already having worked with children, which I thought was a huge bonus of the program."

Experiential learning had such an impact on Langill that she decided to contribute to the Learning Opportunities Trust to give other students a chance to learn outside the classroom. Her own experiential learning didn't stop the day she graduated. Last year, she travelled to Ghana, where she tutored students and helped build an addition to a school.

"If you've learned everything out of a textbook and from listening to someone speak, you haven't experienced it yourself," says Langill. "The best kind of learning is when it's personal. We remember things the most when we can relate them to our everyday life."

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"There's quite a bit of research that suggests that students' most powerful learning experiences in the post-secondary context often happen outside the traditional classroom experience," says MacMartin. Experiential learning also fosters personal and professional growth, she adds.

Instead of memorizing facts and figures from a textbook, students are given the opportunity to apply what they learned. "Experiential learning is certainly one of the ways to deepen student involvement, to make learning active and really promote learner centredness," says MacMartin.

Students can also try out various career paths to find out what type of employment is right for them. This type of work experience could even lead to a job after graduation. Experiential learning opportunities include:

- Co-op work terms
- Geography field course
- Nutrition field experience course
- Third-year practicum and fourth-year field placement in B.A.Sc. programs
- Semester Abroad program to India or Guatemala

Andrew Devlin, a fourth-year student in adult development, families and well-being, completed a third-year practicum at Wyndham House, a residential program for youth.

"This was definitely the most helpful course I have ever taken and really opened my eyes as to what I want to do as a career in the future," he says. "Overall, it was a great experience."

## CSAHS DEANS HONOUR RICHARD BARHAM

Five CSAHS deans gathered June 16 to honour former dean Richard Barham, who was awarded an honorary fellowship at Convocation.

Barham came to the University of Guelph from the University of Otago in New Zealand to become the chair of the Department of Family Studies from 1976 to 1983. He then went on to become dean of the College of Family and Consumer Studies (FACS) from 1983 to 1994. He retired from the Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition in 1999.

During the nearly two decades of his leadership as chair and then dean, he was responsible for dramatic changes in the FACS curriculum and oversaw a significant transition in the college.

In the history of the MacDonald Institute, Barham played a pivotal role in the transformation of FACS. In many ways, he sowed the seeds for the current vision of CSAHS, which now emphasizes interdisciplinary social science research and experiential learning for students.



From left: Kerry Daly, Janet Wardlaw, Richard Barham, Alun Joseph and Michael Nightingale.



Leah Gerber

## Student's Trip to India an Eye-Opening Experience

LEAH GERBER DIDN'T grow up in an orphanage, but she knows what it's like. She spent four months volunteering in two orphanages in India, where she put smiles on the faces of children who don't have much to smile about.

"The biggest joy I found was getting to know the children better and getting to see their individual personalities shine through," says Gerber, a fifth-year student in international development and English. She helped children with their English homework and assisted the orphanage with administrative tasks and web design.

Gerber received a Jean Rich Foundation Travel Grant, which helped cover the cost of her trip to India. The grant is available to full-time CSAHS students who are participating in international travel activities in

developing countries for their course work.

Learning about international development issues in India provided Gerber with a new perspective on her studies at Guelph.

"Sometimes it's hard to see the inequality," she says. "It's hard to watch it and not be able to do anything about it. When I came back, I definitely had been changed."

Gerber's father helped build the first orphanage she visited. Listening to his stories about India inspired her to visit the country herself. She hopes to return to India in the future.

"I spent two months at each orphanage. The kids were my kids, and the people were my people. It was like a second Indian family. I really miss them."

For more information, contact Gerber at [gerberl@uoguelph.ca](mailto:gerberl@uoguelph.ca).

## STUDENT WINS PRESTIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

A UNIVERSITY of Guelph student is among four Canadians to receive a 2011 Mackenzie King Memorial Travel Scholarship.

Yvonne Su, who graduated in June with a degree in international development, will use the \$11,000 award to support her studies at Oxford University.

“I am very honoured to have been selected as an award winner to carry on King’s legacy,” said Su. She will begin a master’s program in refugee and forced migration studies in the fall. She plans to study climate change-induced migration, adaptation and international development.

Earlier this year, Su helped organize “vote mobs” to encourage young people to vote in the federal election.

### CSAHS INSIGHT

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## Caregivers and Families Need a Helping Hand

Christina Pilgrim found her dream job before she even graduated. As a student in gerontology (now part of the adult development major), she began a one-year practicum at St. Joseph’s Health Centre, where she worked with elderly participants in the outreach program.

“When I did my practicum, I thought this is it. This is where I want to work,” says Pilgrim, B.A.Sc. ’04. “Before my practicum was over, I was offered a job.”

She is now a clinical resource worker at the Fergus Day Out program, a satellite of St. Joseph’s Health Centre. The program gives caregivers a break from caring for aging family members, while giving participants a chance to socialize.

“I work mostly with caregivers of the participants at the day program, providing them with support, advocacy and counseling to help with things at home and make sure the participants are accessing the services in the community

that are available to them,” she says.

Many of the participants live in rural areas where they don’t have the opportunity to interact with people their own age. A typical day at the program involves group activities such as making crafts, playing games and chair aerobics.

The program also helps keep the elderly out of long-term care facilities. “Most people want to stay in their own homes, and they need their caregivers to be in optimal health,” says Pilgrim. If caregivers don’t take care of themselves, they can’t take care of others.

Pilgrim says the textbook knowledge she gained in the first three years of her program at U of G came to life during her practicum.

“It was absolutely fascinating that what I was learning was actually applicable to the career I chose. My learning curve just went sky-high in the last year of my university degree because of that placement. I got to apply so much of what I learned in the classroom.”