

GCABC Board of Directors Candidates

GCABC AGM, September 2018

The following individuals have put their name forward to serve a one-year term on the Board of Directors of the Gifted Children's Association of British Columbia. The outgoing Directors have accepted their application based on the set of skills and experience they bring to the organization in response to the emerging strategic plan and recommend their appointment to the Board.

Assignment to specific board positions will be determined at the first meeting of the new Board.

Lucila Saito

Lucila Saito joined the GCABC board in June 2016 and has served as the President for the past year. She has two gifted children who attended gifted programs (MACC) in Surrey and currently go to a regular public high school, with the oldest pursuing an International Baccalaureate diploma. Lucila has been closely involved with both children's schooling and finds it important to raise awareness about the need of special programs to keep gifted children academically and socially engaged. Lucila holds a BSc in Chemical Engineering from University of São Paulo, Brazil and an MSc in Engineering Management from Stanford University, and works part-time as a tutor since 2016.

Malvina Pradana

Malvina Pradana is a Chartered Professional Accountant with seventeen years of in depth experience in corporate accounting and reporting in both private and publicly listed companies. She and her husband have two young children – 10 and 6. Both have been assessed as gifted, with the eldest currently attending a Catholic school in Burnaby and the youngest attending an independent school in Vancouver. She hopes to create more awareness and support for gifted children in the Burnaby and Greater Vancouver communities. She has been a member of the GCABC's board since 2015 and a Treasurer since 2016.

Lena Normén-Younger

Lena Normén-Younger has a PhD in clinical nutrition from Göteborg University in Sweden. Since 2005, she is the Business Manager at the Younger Facial Surgery Centre in Vancouver.

With two sons who do not fit the mold, Lena has had to educate herself about the many different types of giftedness and how parents in BC can navigate the education system in a constructive way, collaborating with teachers and other parents.

Lena also leads and promotes an international online interest group for expat Swedes interested in multilingualism. The latter is called Swedish as a Mother Tongue Abroad and has forums on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with close to 8,800 followers worldwide, an e-zine and a distance education program with 90 students worldwide.

Maureen McDermid

Maureen has served as the Secretary for the GCABC from 2015 to 2017. Her career in education has spanned elementary, secondary and post-secondary teaching. She holds a Bachelor's degree in education and a Masters of Curriculum. While with SD38, Richmond, she also worked on District Staff in support of gifted learners and was closely involved with the GCA chapter in Richmond. She currently works as an education consultant focusing on curriculum designed for critical thinking, makes presentations and provides in-service on programming for gifted learners, curriculum planning, literacy, social studies and critical thinking. Maureen and her husband Gary successfully parented gifted twin boys and now have 5 grandchildren, 3 of whom have been assessed as gifted. The experience gained viewing giftedness through the 2 lenses, parent and educator, has helped her support parents and build understanding with teachers about the challenges and rewards of working with gifted individuals.

Carolyn Cowe

Carolyn is the proud Mother of a 14-year-old gifted daughter who is in grade 9. Carolyn and her husband struggled through their daughter's early elementary years of school and decided to switch to private school and it was there where they suggested that testing for gifted should be done. Carolyn would like the opportunity to educate the public, parents and teachers on ways to support gifted children. Carolyn feels there is a lack of knowledge and understanding about giftedness and looks forward to working in her community and with the GCA board of directors to achieve this. Carolyn is an award-winning Realtor for 18 years and has a background of sales and marketing through BCIT and UBC Sauder School of Business. In her spare time, she enjoys volunteering with the Shelter Foundation, helping at her daughter's school, travel and marathon running. Carolyn strongly believes that she can make a difference in helping to make the challenges that the public, parents and teachers face on this issue easier and more accessible for all.

Kristina Sachs-Barrable

Kristina Sachs-Barrable has a strong interest in helping children (and their families) who have widely diverging learning styles and are outside the box thinkers (i.e. gifted, dyslexic). Kristina, like many parents, was faced with an uphill battle without clear strategies when her son was struggling in his public school. It all changed with the gifted designation and the change of schools. Kristina and her husband Bill were fortunate to have come across a unique school and environment that supports the learning and social needs like her son's: Choice School for Gifted Children in Richmond BC.

Kristina holds a PhD in Biochemistry/Biophysics and a Master's of Science, both from Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany. After her postdoctoral fellowship at the University of California, Berkeley she moved to Vancouver to pursue her career at UBC, where for more than 12 years she conducted research at the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at UBC.

Her strong passion for bridging the gaps between scientific evidence and the implementation of research findings into better health outcomes made her start her own consulting business. As a mother and a scientist/educator, Kristina has a special interest in giftedness and girls.

Toireasa Jespersen

Toireasa was called to the Bar of British Columbia in 2003 and is a non-practising lawyer. She is committed to ongoing professional development related to independent school governance and the education of gifted children and has completed the Non Profit Governance Essentials program offered by the Institute of Corporate Directors. As well, Toireasa maintains memberships in Imagine Canada, the Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD), Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) and the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP).

Toireasa is currently serving as Vice Chair/Secretary for the Madrona School Society Board of Directors and Past Chair of the Madrona Parent Association.

Vladimir Martinak

Vladimir Martinak is an actuary with 16 years of experience in travel insurance. After finishing MSc in Actuarial Science and Statistics in Slovakia, he moved to Vancouver in 2002. He has since joined the Society of Actuaries and Canadian Institute of Actuaries, and volunteered for both organizations through education-related committees. He has two kids (8 and 6 years old, currently attending Choice School), and started to focus on gifted education and 2e-kids' challenges since his son (later assessed as highly gifted) started Kindergarten in 2015. Observing and coping with the lack of knowledge in the public school system, he is hoping to improve the awareness of this topic, so the gifted kids and their families receive the support they need.

Annie Cheng

Annie is the proud mother of two young daughters. One of them currently enrolls in the MACC program in Coquitlam. Before MACC, Annie and her husband Peter homeschooled their gifted daughter for three years with the Encompass program in Coquitlam, during which the family travelled around the world for two years and incorporated gifted education with languages learning, cultural encounters and social explorations. Annie holds a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science and Master's Degree in Computer Engineering. She's a Project Management Professional (PMP) and has worked in the IT industry for over 15 years. In her spare time, Annie enjoys learning and helping others learn. She has led S.T.E.M (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) volunteer programs for K-12 students in the Lower Mainland for 5 years and serves as VP Education at her local Toastmasters club. Annie is passionate about providing children with what they need to prosper and supporting families with different programs.

Rosa A. Palacios

Rosa A. Palacios lives in Vancouver with her husband and their two children. Trained in Social Work at UBC, she is passionate about building strong diverse communities that provide support and an enriching environment to its members. Parenting a gifted child has required an open heart, a curious mind, and endless energy; which she hopes to contribute to the GCABC Board of Directors this year.