

# The Writer's Block

NOVEMBER 2020, ISSUE 2 | Full House

*"Love that  
editorial jargon..."*

- Mr. Sylvester

## FEATURING

Remembering the  
Lower School

History of BVG's  
Mascots

SEC Profiles: Athletics

The Upper School  
Debate Club

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## Editor's Note: The "All About Me" Essay



In ENG1D, students are tasked with the "I Am" poem assignment. The next year, a large part of ENG2D is dedicated to self-reflection while writing the "This is Me So Far" essay. Senior students breathe collective sighs of relief in ENG3U and ENG4U, where personal writing is minimal. Writing about ourselves is not a bad assignment...but it is difficult.

Our society throws praise at those with hidden achievements, who are humble and rock carefree "I am not trying to impress you" nonchalance. "All About Me" assignments feel like traps designed to catch our pretentious punctuation, poorly concealed boasts, and disingenuous modesty.

At *The Writer's Block's* first meeting, I mentioned the elusive personal piece. "Don't do it," I said. Personal writing is dangerous and, well, *personal*. The student newspaper is for student voices, not opinions about students.

But recently, I've started to re-think my discomfort with the "All About Me" paper. Graduating readers will recognize this well-meaning but plenty overused query: "So, how are applications?" Let me tell you; every single post-secondary application question is an "All About Me" prompt. Boiling anyone down to 250 words is a nightmare, but profiling myself, in multiple unique ways, seems like a half-page punishment.

Within this issue, Christian writes about the positive value of reflection. I regret that I have come to the same conclusion so late; university applications have shown me that alongside the discomfort, there is an acute peace that comes from a detailed assessment of yourself, and discovering your proudest moments, comforting spaces, and ways you have grown. Sometimes, I finish a personal essay with a new concept of who I hope to become.

Writing "All About Me" is challenging and reflectively rewarding; there is a distinct power in taking control of your narrative and acknowledging who you are, in this moment. I encourage you to test your hand at a personal essay; The Writer's Block would be honoured to publish your pieces, if you trust us with their sharing.

Our writing team has been typing around the clock to bring you this issue's full house of articles. Thank you to this brilliant group, as well as our hardworking editors, and supportive staff. The real magic happens because of our talented graphics team, Franky Liu and Maya Freedman. And thank you to our readers, for embracing The Writer's Block with open arms; we are so grateful.

Best of luck to my fellow Grade 12s as application and "All About Me" season rages on.

Hugs,

Emiko Wijeyesundera

Editor-In-Chief

*Want to contribute to The Writer's Block? Write a Letter to the Editor, addressed to [ewijeyesundera@bayviewglen.ca](mailto:ewijeyesundera@bayviewglen.ca), to be included!*

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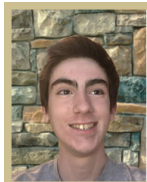
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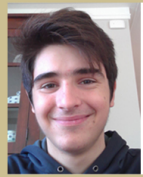
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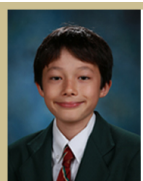
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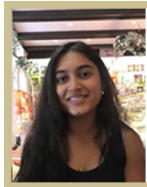
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## The SEC Profiles: The Co-Heads of Athletics with Anavi



### Student Leaders, Unmasked

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## Between the Lines



*Anavi has been writing since she was a child and uses it as an outlet to de-stress. She hopes her last year will go out with a bang.*

Hi everyone! It's Anavi again. I realized the time period for submissions in October was much too short and I apologize. To make up for this, **all students can respond to either the October prompts AND/OR the new November ones.**

The deadline is **December 15, 2020** and all submissions are due to [aparekh@bayviewglen.ca](mailto:aparekh@bayviewglen.ca). Happy writing!

### The November prompt:

Finish the story- A girl walks into a convenience store and sees a man collapse. Try to experiment with different perspectives. One page maximum.

### The October prompt:

Write a one-page murder mystery, complete with a beginning, middle, and end. And please, let's not get *too* gory.

OR

Take an object/idea/place that would not usually be associated with Halloween, and put a spooky spin on it. This should also be one page in length.

Age 2 to University Entrance | Co-educational | Multicultural | Multi-Denominational | IG: [@bayviewglen\\_toronto](https://www.instagram.com/bayviewglen_toronto)

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416.443.1030

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# A Day in the Parallel Lives of Separated Students, with Leela and Julia



November 4th, 2020

*Julia Apitz-Grossman is in Grade 9 (Cohort O) and has been at BVG for 7 years. She has a variety of academic interests that range from learning languages to writing stories. In her free time, you can find her playing video games, listening to 60s music, and watching an unhealthy amount of Friends.*

The alarm goes off at 8:20 a.m. I begrudgingly turn it off, school starts in 10 minutes. I get out of bed, throw on a sweater, and flop down onto my desk chair. I'll eat breakfast later. I rush to open

*Leela Bhide is a Grade 9 student (Cohort A) with a passion for writing. She loves to write anything, from analytical pieces to something as simple as a recipe for a cookbook! Along with writing, you will most likely find Leela playing volleyball, baking or re-watching The Vampire Diaries.*

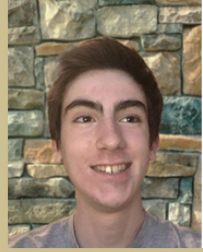
The alarm goes off at 7:00 a.m. I have to leave around 8:10 a.m., so I choose to sleep just a little longer. I hit the snooze button and close my eyes. My alarm goes off again; it's 7:15 a.m. I get out of bed, freshen up, put my uniform

Microsoft Teams; I don't want to be late. I clear my desk of the clutter from the day before and look out the window; the busyness of the outside world makes me feel like a fish in a tank. I hear the shrill ring of the bell through my surface. It's 8:30 a.m. I see impersonable initials on the screen, it must be cohort B's day at home. Our teacher types into the chat: we have a 15 minute break. I walk out of my room to the kitchen, passing the same faces I see every day, just my mom and siblings. Time to go back to my desk. Class is resuming, so I try my best to focus on the screen, once again. An hour feels like an eternity. The bell rings, it's 11:20 a.m. I take a few steps and I'm back in my kitchen, throwing together a quick meal. I finish eating in a snap, but now what to do? I wonder what Leela's doing. I navigate the tabs to log onto my next call. I hear the bell ring; it's 12:20 p.m. A lesson and a break later, I check the clock - it's only 2:00 p.m.? I look down at the screen, and try my best to stay focussed. School is almost over, but it's not like I'm going anywhere. The bell rings for the last time that day; it's 3:10 p.m.

on, eat breakfast and flop down in the seat of the car. I rush to get to my classroom; I don't want to be late. I clean my desk with a wipe and look out the window, seeing the calmness of the world around me. I hear the startling bell ring, waking me up from my day-dream. It's 8:30 a.m. Class has begun and it is time to start the lesson. Our teacher tells us that we have a 15 minute break. I walk out of the school and head to the back deck, passing by all my friends. Time to go back to my desk. Class is resuming, so I try my best to focus on the Sharp BOARD. An hour passes by, quick as a wink. The bell rings, it's 11:20 a.m. I walk with my friends to the turf, opening my lunch bag. I finish eating in a snap, but at least I have my friends to talk to. We should call Julia. I navigate the halls to get to my next class. I hear the bell ring; it's 12:20 p.m. A lesson and a break later, I check the clock- it's already 2:00 p.m.? I look up at the screen and follow the lesson. School is almost over, so it is almost time to pack up and go home. The bell rings for the last time of the day; its 3:10 p.m.

## Newsletters Referencing this Item

# Remembering the Lower School, with Constantine



## Eulogy For a Dead Childhood

*Constantine is a Grade 10 student, and an admirer of the written word. He can be found writing poems or spinning tales no matter the place or time.*

*Do not return, that time is past*

*Things made of gold aren't made to  
last*

It is hopeless to wage war against the future. Believing that the golden temple he built will last against the siege of time is folly of the highest order. Soon, his memories of that perfect era will fade, like colour on a worn banner, and only the brightest splashes will remain. And farther off, in the distant, distant future, this place will be forgotten. The temple will welcome no pilgrims, cobwebs will gather in the farthest corners, and the altar will crumble to dust without anyone noticing.



But for now he stands in the old lobby, with its charcoal slate tiles, the mahogany paneled display case full of LEGO trophies and memorabilia, and the impossibly tall reception desk now seeming impossibly small. His eyes rove the room, passing over the *Whole Child, Whole Life, Whole World* posters and the little tag on the desk that reads *Lina Liscio*.

He didn't spend much time here; this was an in-between place, a stop on the way. He would pass through in a line, one of many legs on a scurrying centipede, going from class to the Atrium for Assembly. The Atrium!

He turns right and floats through the glass doors to the right, passing the only drinking fountain with a tiled back, and into the Atrium. *Good morning Ms. Gill...* The sing-songy greeting bounces around the room, off the spotlights affixed to the panelled ceiling, off the columns with the core values. Here he would sit in rows and then columns, class by class, and watch the assemblies with starry eyes. The wonderment at the Christmas Assembly when "Santa" came to school. The fascination at the Rosh Hashanah assembly when the Shofar was blown. And the resignation when Ms. Baraneski would play the opening chords of Oh Canada and he was forced to sing.

Singing.

He remembers strutting across the stage, looking out over an empty room, practising for his Spring Festival. It was going to be the *piece de resistance*, his magnum opus. He was a mole and Student 11. He didn't sing, no, no way. He mouthed the words because he was too shy. But he couldn't deny the feeling of euphoria for being on the other side of the curtain, on the plastic risers, hand in hand with your fellow L1C-er. He was Student 1, a rat, Narrator 2, Smiley Camper, Billy! He had learned to sing, bouncing uncontrollably on the risers during even the slowest songs. He remembers scampering between the stage and the hallways behind, urgently shoving a pig's snout on his face or throwing open a white blanket. Across the stage, when the lights were doused like the hushed fires of a brazier, he sparked and nearly burst with excitement and nervousness. After, when it was all done, he would run up to his parents and grandparents and throw his arms around them in pride and relief.

Gliding slowly down the hall to the old Grade 1 area, he runs his hand along the flimsy bone-coloured drywall. He remembers the Art Shows, with all the neat displays, individual finger-paintings and Ms. Elliot-guided class

drawings. The Holiday and Spring Market Bazaars, where tables ran around the room, their tops smothered in gaudy, cheap trinkets and scarves. A gift for Dad, a gift for Mom. *Oooh, something shiny for me!* The ladies asking who he's buying for, the mad rush of the event.

Snap out of it.

He reaches the end of the hall. There are the Grade 1 classrooms, and in the enclave, white cubbies standing in rows along the wall, stalwart soldiers guarding their owners' possessions for the day.

Brushing the dust off the "Bee yourself" sign on the tall green door, he steps inside.

This. This was L1C, where he began. He surveys the desks all arow down the length of the class, the fuzzy blue carpet and the Smartboard still in the same place he left them. There are posters of animals and flowers on the wall, a class contract with the ultimate rule of "Have fun!" at the very bottom, signed in his crooked handwriting.

It was here that he would sit on the carpet each morning, in a sea of green hoodies and sweatpants, head straining to catch some of the golden mist that seemed to float in the air back then, when everything was so incomprehensible, yet so simple.

The French teacher would come with her cart of posters and boombox and CDs, and they would all watch the videos with gestures. They would all go out to the playground on the side, running around on the red and daring the monkey bars, or playing tag down in the valley, all shoving each other to get on the running log and pouting for the fact that the climbing chains had been removed. Back inside the class, he would write his Journal, pouring his wondrous thoughts and observations into the paper-bound green cahier. He remembers drawing his weekends, all the girls triangles and all the boys rectangles. He remembers playing with jacks and sticks on the carpet and just milling about for a good time, doing nothing. He remembers Mrs. Smallbridge's aura, her comfort that she could instill just by smiling at you. You could feel the happiness in that bright room, that bright room with the golden light. And the luminescence still sparkles in that room, shafts radiating from the windows, broken by the crooked branches of the pine tree. But that light shines not for him, not anymore.

Out he goes, floating back through the lobby up the carpeted risers of the main staircase, passing the old class paintings, and out onto the second floor.

Meeting him is the door to the computer lab. It used to be a portal to another, mystical realm, one that was always dark and shrouded in mystery, where the hum of machinery was a constant background chorus. It was here where his eyes were opened to a whole new, intangible world. He had started small, molding polygons to make a tessellation. Designing his own neighborhood map. Pressing keys with unsure, grub-like fingers, slowly gaining more finesse until his fingers were acrobats, dancers of the highest art. Fingertips streaked through the air, with an unnatural grace and fluidity. He was the fastest typer of his class, the best dancer. Forty-five words per minute: he had broken the sound barrier, he had thought.

*Mr. Chuter... Rhymes with computer...*

*Double click, that's the trick...*

*Marvelous bacon...*

The air is heavy with ghosts, tiny ephemeral bodies all clamoring for his attention. They claw at him with insubstantial hands, shimmering eyes pleading for just one more minute, one more hour, one more day.

He has to get out, can't survive the choking weight of the memories in that dark room one minute longer. He barrels out the door, swings left, and is greeted by the Grade 2 common hall. The impossibly tall green lockers line the walls; the red fire bell remains affixed above the lintel of the L2A door.

Here was where the Unremarkable Year passed. Inside the longest classroom he had ever seen, he only remembered that outside the line of windows that wrapped around the class was a pattering or a deluge of rain, a grey carpet unfurling across the sky at all times. Inside L2A, he had always felt safe from nature's fury and gloom.

In this dreary cocoon that sheltered him from anything troublesome, nothing profound had taken place. No life-changing moments in this room. But he was okay with that, because the next year would have more than enough action for a lifetime.

The world around him shifts and he is in the Grade 3 hallway. L3C beckons. As if it's welcoming him back. He steps into the room, and the laughter slams into him. He remembers laughing at the Mad Libs during break, laughing at the Witches during Language class, laughing at the jokes of Mrs. Yau, laughing at everything. Here he pored over pictures of the sunken Titanic, here he inserted his popsicle stick into the *Out* bag when he went to the restroom. Over here, he laboured over his lines in the French Play, struggling over *arbre* and *magnifique*. Here he worked his hardest, laughed the most, and played the most. And despite the earth-shattering, incomprehensibly frustrating complexities of long-division and the screaming of the drills above him, he had had the most fun in his entire life, in this wonderful class of L3C.

Outside, a bell rings. A clear and sonorous sound, emanating from beyond. Drawn by the pull of this golden tone, he floats out on a string, letting himself be pulled to the destination.

There it was: the music room. Here he stood timidly on the risers and learned how to find his voice. He remembers, in this room with the slanted floor, watching the Nutcracker on the Smartboard, chanting the chorus to some new pop song and shrinking into himself while the teacher's eyes roved over the choir, searching for a solo.

And that is all the memory he has left in this lopsided room, so it spits him back out into the hall, and he tumbles into the library.

The smell of worn paperbacks and scuffed-up carpet still suffuses the large room, blanketing him in its loving embrace. Up ahead is the umber desk, with its round accent platforms for new books, and the proclamation *Jean Hart Resource Centre* bolted on the wall behind. There on the right, the choke point ended and the room bloomed open into a cavern, with the long tables in one column, the bookshelves wrapping around the walls like a boa constrictor, and the computers neatly arranged at the far side. Here, on the burnt-olive, iron-speckled carpet, he sat and listened to the librarian weave an imaginary world around him with nothing but ink and her voice. The magic of words was abundant in the air, in the books that marked this place as the library, and in the time he spent curled up against the wall, hunched over a gripping page. This place was one that pulled him in with its sweet, languid song and made him never want to leave.

But he has to leave this place behind, like all the other ones before him. So, unpeeling himself from the striped bench between two shelves, he floats out the door, and up into the Crystal Staircase, where the heat and cold always warred with bitter animosity because the hvac system couldn't be bothered to work here.

Up at the top, he arrives in the hall where he would wait in line for playground in Grade 5. But he hasn't got there yet; this odyssey is chronological.

So he wavers and rematerializes in the Grade 4 hallway. This was his favourite place, his favourite year. L4A was the class to be in.

Too many memories clamor for his attention, none pushing their way to the forefront.

He remembers building a pan-flute out of plastic straws while Mr. Denison blasted *I Have Built a Treehouse* on his plastic desk speakers. He remembers when Mr. Denison leaped across the room, jumping on three different desks and breaking the class pencil sharpener to demonstrate equilateral triangles. There was a time when they had a Friday discussion on the topic of whether unicorns existed, and he vehemently insisted that *yes, they do, in our imagination*. He thought he was clever.

In L4A he learned about the landform regions for the first time, and gave a choreographed, scripted presentation on the Appalachian Region. On that carpet in front of the class, he presented himself, his favourite song, his favourite 5 artworks, his favourite places, leaning heavily on GIFs to spice up the slides. Sometimes, they would wheel the Surface Cart into the room, and they would collaborate on a class-wide presentation about the dying honeybees.

In geometry, they couldn't find a Denison Doo-Hickey to measure an angle because it had fallen into the vents. He remembers standing by the blackboard, showing off his cowbell he had made for the pulley project. Here, he could not remember any unpleasant moments, any misery in the best out of the three Grade 4 classes. And even though more memories tug at him as he explores, he knows he has to go before he unravels completely.

He floats down the hall, passing the cool water fountain with the sensor-activated bottle filler, and finds himself in his final year: L5B.

The tall door stands ajar, a hushed “*Come in*”.

He pushes the door open so slightly, and enters. Inside, a heavy finality floats in the air, overshadowing any joy that had taken place in that space. And that is a shame, because a lot had.

He had groaned over Night Writing with his friends at this row of desks; he had sculpted the intestinal system out of clay in that corner. He had sat here and listened to Ms. Canary and Ms. Jessup recount the heartbreaking, inspirational tale of Kensuke’s Kingdom—which everybody had unanimously and instinctively renamed Kensuke’s Teriyaki Chicken.

He remembers when for April Fool’s Day, they had snuck a banana into the teacher’s coffee but blew it when they kept pushing her to drink. He remembers when *somebody* had changed the background of a serious presentation slide into a picture of a baby drinking 7-Up, and even the teacher had laughed. Whenever the class came up from lunch before the teacher, which it always did, they would snatch Ms. Canary’s phone and snap a million selfies while shrieking at the thrill of unsanctioned activity.

As the ghosts of his classmates lined up at the door, and the teacher counted them all (“15, 16, 17—” “38!”), he stood, enraptured by the congeniality and fellowship of the whole class. All the students stood in a row, laughing with each other and chatting, talking about their parents’ first choices of names and which house should have won Spirit Day (never Macdonald). He lifts a hand to them, drawing closer, but they pay him no heed. At the sound of the teacher’s voice, they quiet, and start spilling out into the hall. As each ghostly body passes the threshold, it dissolves and fans out like drops of blood into water until they fade away entirely.

His eyes widen. No! The spirits continue to flow out the door, dissipating like ashes in the wind, until, finally, he is left alone in the dark classroom.

He looks around slowly. Nobody is hiding in the dark corners, nobody waiting behind the door. Everybody has gone, dismissed for the day, and he knows that the next morning bell will never toll.

So, alone in a temple forgotten by all but him, he floats heavily out the room, down the quiet staircase, past Adam’s Fort where he never got the chance to explore and now never will, and out into the old art hall. Down left is the cafeteria, right is the way to Parent Bench. Which way should he go? Does it

matter? He picks right on a solemn whim, and glides down the hall. When he reaches the end, he slumps down, defeated, lost, alone. For how long he stays there, he doesn't know. It could have been hours, days, years, but what does it matter, when he lives in a dreamland?

Outside, something stirs. He looks through the window. There, an excavator stands like a white heron poised over a pond, ready to strike and devour its prey. He quietly stands up, stroking the ugly drywall he always hated. He pushes open the dirty glass doors for the last time and steps out onto the concrete pad, but no snaking line of cars wait for him here. No bustling circus of children and teachers.

Just nothing, just nobody.

Turning back, he sees Fate staring down impartially at his temple, and with that, he knows he has lost.

The crane peers at him openly, telling him to *move on* and *leave*. He doesn't want to, but why shouldn't he? Everybody else has.

And thus, his childhood falls. He tears himself away from it and starts wobbling—on his own legs—down the stretch of road, towards the unknown future that has won. The cold, cruel future that has taken so much, but should give so much more.

So he walks away, the sky an endless grey dome above him and his hair a pennant in the quiet wind. As he soldiers on, he gets the feeling that this solitary march towards the future is a funeral procession.

Because maybe it is.

## Newsletters Referencing this Item

- The Writer's Block | Issue #2 (12/01/2020)

**Bayview Glen Independent School** 275 Duncan Mill Road Toronto, Ontario M3B 3H9 416.443.1030

# A Review of the Upper School Debate Club, with Alan



## Debate Club 101

*Alan likes physics, and argui-sorry, debating. He also enjoys reading and doodling. That's pretty much it.*

Clubs are a great way to have fun, learn, exercise, and most importantly, step out of your comfort zone. Some clubs prepare you for competitions like DECA or Model UN or teach you new stuff about software like Unity. While others teach you how to burn someone's argument to the ground with no mercy.

That club is Debate Club.

In 3 adjectives, Debate Club is informative, entertaining, and light-hearted, in that order. From my experience, Debate Club is unique because it both teaches and entertains you, at the same time and all at once.

We meet every Wednesday to scree- I mean, *debate* various controversial issues. While the details are boring and the motions mediocre at times, *don't judge this book by its cover*. The real fun of Debate Club shines through in the discussion, where you take to the floor (or Microsoft Teams) and slowly



spend 4-5 minutes making the person on the other side of the aisle question why they didn't think of that, before spending the next five minutes being shown why you should have thought of what they said.

I suppose an anecdote would be useful here. I personally remember one of the first-ever debates I ever did in the Debate Club. I cannot recall the exact names of the motion, but I do believe that it included the topic that is often discussed: our rights. Regardless, I remember that it ended up in a discussion of cannibals who made chairs out of human skin. Yes, it is morbid and inhumane. But also, fascinating...

Clearly, Debate Club is both enjoyable and informative; It teaches you valuable lessons about argumentation and rhetoric, while still managing to entertain you for that precious 1 hour after school.

# Debate Club

**JOIN US**  
**WEDNESDAY AFTER SCHOOL**  
**ON TEAMS**



to join email  
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or  
[tpentek@bayviewglen.ca](mailto:tpentek@bayviewglen.ca)  
or  
[cstott@bayviewglen.ca](mailto:cstott@bayviewglen.ca)

## Newsletters Referencing this Item

- The Writer's Block | Issue #2 (12/01/2020)

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## Reflecting on Reflection: An Interview with Christian



### Reflection: A Seed for our Personal Growth

*Christian is a Grade 12 student who is looking to have a great final year! He adores writing, specifically creative writing.*

Life is fast. So fast that sometimes we get dragged along by the heel rather than keeping up with its pace. In a year where we have so much to worry about, time seems to slip by. Within the last year or so, I have come to realize that one of the most important things that students need to make time for is reflection. Reflection, not as in having a few brief thoughts regarding the past, but rather a personalized train of thought that allows for meaning. We are all navigating the waters to adolescence and preparing for adulthood, meaning we have quite a lot on our plate. We need to take a look at our past so that we can adjust ourselves and prepare for greater things in the future. I recently spoke with one of my peers, Shahrayar, and he shared his opinions on the act of reflection.

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**Do you feel stressed due to the speed in which your academics and co-curriculars are moving?**

A little bit, yeah, but I am able to manage the speed for the time being with the courses that I have right now. Maybe in the second semester it will get more busy because I have two sciences. But for the time being, with the courses I have right now, it's fine.

**Do you feel like you have enough breathing room to relax on a regular day?**

Yes, I think that I have enough time.

**What are your opinions on personal reflection? Do you think that it is something that should be done often, or do you think it is more of a "once in a while" task?**

I guess it depends on the type of person you are. Depending on the person, like if you have a bad reputation from others and what not, and you think you need to better yourself, I think that you might need to think about yourself a little bit more. You might have to self-assess more often.

**Do you think it is more important to do it now during COVID?**

Yeah, I think so, since you now have the time to do it.

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There are numerous ways to reflect upon yourself during a busy time. Personally, I like to go on walks in my neighborhood to clear my mind. Especially when I have just attended classes online, it feels nice to get outside. But I have to stress the importance of reflecting on your own. You may come to realize things about yourself when among a group of friends, as socializing is a large part of figuring out who we are, but true reflection only ever occurs when there are no distractions. I have done more personal reflecting within the last year. Again, life is moving at such a fast pace, it is important to find ways to slow it down. Frankly, the mediums that can be used for reflection are endless. Music in particular is a fantastic help when it comes to personal reflection, especially when you have an emotional connection with a specific song or artist. I know for a fact that many of my

peers find their workload and university applications stressful. Not only this, but at the same time, we are struggling to live in a different world, one coping with a pandemic. I have come to understand that personal reflection and self-assessment are important skills that we should use every now and then.

Every day, we move one inch closer to adulthood, to maturity. The path to that maturity is not a clear one; it is filled with haze and confusion. When aspects of our lives become too overwhelming, the answer is simple; slow down and take the time to reflect.

## Newsletters Referencing this Item

- The Writer's Block | Issue #2 (12/01/2020)

**Bayview Glen Independent School** 275 Duncan Mill Road Toronto, Ontario M3B  
3H9 416.443.1030



# Examining COVID-19's effects on Kindergarten

## Distance in the Playground

Kindergarten was a special time, when we were too small to understand the concept of friendship yet made friends to last us the rest of our lives. In that little time before grade school, we decided to stick with each other forever; we would graduate together, work together, and retire together. We had the rest of our lives planned out. All of us had the privilege to walk across the stage hand in hand for our kindergarten graduation, knowing that we'd stick with our friends as long as we could.

But how are children nowadays finding their best friends forever, during a pandemic?

Distancing is a requirement at every school. Although little kids typically do not enjoy keeping their masks on and staying six feet apart, it is a stipulation which must be followed. With this rule in place, it has been harder for children to socialize with their new classmates and to play with people whom they could become good friends with. Seeing that kindergarteners in 2020 must remain socially distanced on the playground equipment and refrain from playing certain games in their school yard, the circumstances are much more difficult for them to make new friends at this time.

I interviewed my cousin in kindergarten on what he thought about not being able to make new friends during the pandemic and his view on the virus. He told me that he misses seeing his friends at school and that it is' much harder to play because they must distance. He explained that he felt safer at home than at school. This is an understandable statement; not only is he a four-year-old living through a pandemic, but the world is a very big, scary place, which the virus only makes scarier.

People all over the globe are being impacted by the virus in different ways. In some areas people are only allowed to leave their houses if it is completely necessary, whereas in other areas people have the freedom to go wherever they please as long as they follow basic safety measures. The impact on kindergarteners, though, is a much bigger deal than we may think. In our early childhood, we make friends which can very well last us through grade school and further, if we decide to keep in contact with them. Today's children are not allowed to go too close to other children; they must keep six meters apart. This places restrictions on games they could participate in together, in the amount of group work they could do and could heavily impact their ability and will to socialize and make new friends. Socializing is an important part of a youth's life, stabilizing future mental health. Studies have shown that socializing is key for youth to understand their peers' feelings and help them interact politely with their friends and classmates. Socializing with others improves mental health through security and confidence. This is why being social is so important during the pandemic.

It is pivotal for kids to have interactions with others, no matter if distanced in person or online. Socializing has an incredible impact on their mental health and allows them to understand and relate to their classmates. The pandemic is putting a strain on children's abilities to become physically and mentally close with new people, but this doesn't mean it is impossible for them to broaden their horizons and make new friends. We can remain social while keeping distanced on the playground.

## Newsletters Referencing this Item

- The Writer's Block | Issue #2 (12/01/2020)

# Exploring the History of Bayview Glen's Mascots, with Christopher



## The History of Bayview Glen's Mascots

*Christopher Cha has been going to Bayview Glen for 12 years. He enjoys history, stories, poetry, and Les Miserables. He is very approachable.*

What does the gryphon mean to you? For many, it is just our mascot. But there is so much more to the gryphon than meets the eye. Many people don't know much about the gryphon; in the lower school no one even knew who was inside the gryphon. (Although there was a rumour that it was the then Athletics Department Head, Mr. Slovenski.)





## The Age of the Raccoon

It may surprise you to learn that Bayview Glen's first mascot was not the gryphon. Back when BVG was down in the valley, the first mascot was in fact a raccoon named BeeGee. The mascot had been inspired by Ms. Doreen Hopkin's (the founder) young raccoons she kept around the school at the time. Beginning in 1980 and ending in 2000 the raccoon was much beloved by the students.

BeeGee was rather chubby and had a goofy face on a head too big for his body. His expression was a happy smile with his eyes looking down. He would always wear a shirt that said BVG on the front and had a yellow stripe with the Bayview Glen crest on the back. There had once been a fan inside the suit to cool it down, but towards the end of BeeGee's reign, it stopped working. On occasion, he would wear accessories. He wore sunglasses for summer camp and even skis when the school went skiing.

The secret of who wore the suit was kept very secret to keep up the mystery. The raccoon suit was also hard to wear. To wear it students had to also be

tall because the suit was quite big. As Ms. Elliot, a former-student-now-teacher remarks, "the costume was quite large and heavy. It was also very hot to wear. As well the suit was clumsy." Only 6 students ever got to wear the raccoon outfit and they were not allowed to reveal their identities. BeeGee would always be accompanied by a guard to protect his tail from little kids and act as a translator.



## Fall of the Raccoon

In the 1999/2000 school year, Bayview Glen decided that it was time for a new mascot. There was a huge celebration. The new millennium felt like there needed to be a change and an animal that scavenges through garbage would not fit the school. The vote for the gryphon included people from all over Bayview Glen. Students (who voted for who their house would support), staff, and even parents voted for the new mascot.

To determine this new mascot the school held a competition. Each student had to choose a mascot and research that no other private school had that already as a mascot. The vote came down to three mascots but the two in

closest competition were the Bayview Bears, and the Glen Gryphons. The gryphon had been introduced to the school by Ms. Daunt. The story goes that her son was a runner, who competed against a gryphon at a running meet. Feeling inspired, she researched what the gryphon stood for. What she found was that the gryphon had a heart and body of a lion, and wings of an eagle. She saw in the gryphon the passion for the sport, the courage, commitment, and wings to lift it up.

## Rise of the Gryphon

The competition was very close between the gryphon and bear but in the vote the gryphon won overwhelmingly. The Grade 12s would leave the school disheartened because the raccoon they had grown up with was gone but would be proud knowing its replacement would live up to the name, if not greater.

Years later, the Parent Guild decided it was time to make a gryphon suit. It was first worn at the student graduation by Mr. Slovenski (I knew it). It would be worn from then on by multiple students and staff. There would usually be a group of 3 people who would take turns wearing the gryphon because it was so hot. The suit is currently stored in the athletic uniform storage room.

The gryphon suit by my view is an improvement on the racoon one and is more slim and less clumsy. Its head is a bit smaller than the racoon and its tail more drooping and less fixed. One downside is that the feet are bigger. The gryphon is gold and green and those are two of the school colours.

The gryphon would replace Beegee in school spirit and sports. Now it would go to the turkey trots and graduations. It would represent the integrity, wisdom, and strength; heart and mind together. When participating in sports, the gryphon tells students to not cut corners and to be a good competitor; the gryphon represents good sportsmanship.

## Future of the Gryphon

The raccoon mascot only lasted 20 years, while the gryphon is coming to its 21st year as Bayview Glen's mascot and yet it remains very popular among the students. This was recently shown when the gryphon won the Post City school mascot contest. As Ms. Astrella, the head of the Prep School says "I

think there is a timelessness to this entity which is the gryphon. The gryphon could be anybody and yet it could be all of us at the same time.”

*Special thanks to Ms. Astrella, Ms. Daunt, Ms. Hillis, Ms. Elliot, and Bayview Glen archives.*

## Newsletters Referencing this Item

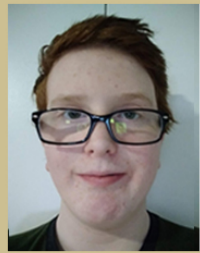
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**Bayview Glen Independent School** 275 Duncan Mill Road Toronto, Ontario M3B  
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INDEPENDENT : SCHOOL

## Crossing the Bridge to High School, amidst a Pandemic, with Callum



### The Transition to Upper School

Change of any kind has a serious impact. It might not be bad, per se, but can affect someone just the same. Anyone, for that matter. Change is necessary for adaptation and growth. We must learn about the world, by experiencing change, so that we can one day take over from generations prior. The impact of change is seen at no better of a time than today. Managing a transition to the Upper School during the middle of a global pandemic; how much more change can you get?

COVID-19 has definitely changed the way we interact within our world. There's been much more of an emphasis on hygiene, cohorting, sick days, and social distancing, and although this is necessary and has positive effects, for most of us, the experience has (for lack of a better term) sucked. Managing the transition to the Upper School while also managing COVID-19 regulations has been tricky. Try to remember back to when you were a Grade 9, navigating the unfamiliar halls of the Upper School. And now add masks, social distancing, and intense sanitation onto that, without forgetting 3 hour class periods and cohorting.

It hasn't been all bad though; the Prep and Upper Schools have a lot of similarities. Getting to classes on your own certainly isn't new. But having more lunch freedom is. Paying for your lunch on a budget is new, but a little bit of financial literacy has never hurt. And choosing what courses you take is always a nice touch. Remember playground? That's an extended lunch now. And who can forget mentor? Feels weird not to have a homeroom teacher, and no AGP, doesn't it?

In an ever-changing world such as this one, you can only ever go one day at a time. Things can change at a moment's notice, so it's hard to plan anything in advance. But that hasn't stopped the school from making a comprehensive plan to help get us back to in-person school. Sure, it's only a hybrid model, but given these unprecedented circumstances, it's the best we'll probably get for a while. Grade 9 has certainly been a bit of a shock, but, just as we have with all previous challenges, we will get through this.

And then the cycle starts over again, as we all move up into Grade 10.

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INDEPENDENT : SCHOOL

The SEC Profiles: The Co-Heads of Athletics with Anavi



Anavi has been writing since she was a child and uses it as an outlet to de-stress. She hopes her last year will go out with a bang.



**Katherine Hachmer**  
Number of years at BVG: 8  
Famous Last Words: "Being positive isn't pretending that everything is good - it is seeing the good in everything"



**Jack Simmons**  
Number of years at BVG: 9  
Famous Last Words (or in this case, famous last word): "Ciao."

Interviewing the 2020-21 Student Council...

Hello again! Hopefully you were entertained by the first edition of Student Leaders, Unmasked, because I am back for Round 2. I will be interviewing the Co-Heads of Athletics, Katherine Hachmer and Jack Simmons and, together, we'll discover more about these two. Enjoy!

*What's your secret talent?*

**Katherine:** I have so many secret talents...but they need to be kept secret. I'm really good at baking banana bread and I can *also* spit my gum in the air and catch it in my mouth. I completed a painting of Sid the sloth during quarantine; I was alone a lot.

**Jack:** I can solve a Rubik's cube pretty quickly. I also learned how to play the ukulele during quarantine and I'm quite good now.

*How do you stay active during COVID-19?*

**Katherine:** I go for walks and used to do the Chloe Ting workouts earlier, which are actually insanely hard.

**Jack:** I play basketball once a week and do the Nike walking challenges. But most of the time the only exercise I get is walking from my bed to my kitchen and back.

*What is your favourite aspect of Bayview Glen that still remains despite COVID-19?*

**Katherine:** I'm impressed there are still opportunities for us to do group work and socialize with each other, which is a big thing that COVID-19 has taken from us.

**Jack:** House leagues! I think they're going to be very fun and our council is happy that we could continue that this year.

*What is your favourite word?*

**Jack:** Succulent. And niggly wiggly.

**Katherine:** My favourite word changes frequently— right now I'm between laparoscopic and Sacramento.

*Who is your favourite faculty member?*

**Jack:** Probably Ms. Deeks...or Mr. Cardone. Really any of the Upper School gym teachers.

**Katherine:** Mr. Osborne. He's my mentor (so I'm slightly biased) and last year, he was everywhere. I would see him at school, in clubs, sports, and at the gym where I worked when he would drop his daughter off. I saw him at least six times a week!

*What is your favourite Bayview Glen memory?*

**Katherine:** I really enjoyed the Grade 11 Haliburton trip. Some highlights included dog sledding and petting them after, sleeping in the quinzhees that we built ourselves, and just spending that much time with my friends, unbothered.

**Jack:** In Grade 11, my friends and I made a makeshift toboggan out of the picnic table and slid down the hill at the back of the school. It was so fun, and definitely one of my most cherished moments.

*What is one thing you want to do as the Heads of Athletics?*

Our heads had similar ideas in this regard.

**Both:** We want to promote athleticism at school and incorporate more people from school, especially Cohort O. We also hope to increase school spirit, despite the fact that we cannot all be together.

*How has COVID-19 affected you positively?*

**Jack:** It's brought me closer to a lot of people because I end up talking to them more than I usually would, for some reason.

**Katherine:** Same! I talk to my friends on the phone all the time. Also, I've started making decisions based on what makes me happy rather than what I "have" to do for university or school.

*If all traces of COVID-19 disappeared for one day, what would you do?*

**Katherine:** I would love to just hang out with my friends, like I used to pre-COVID. Maybe even have a sleepover.

**Jack:** I would definitely want to be at a pool party with more friends. Just vibe.

*What is one thing the student body should know about the two of you?*

**Katherine:** You can approach me at any time. I was so scared of the Grade 12's when I was younger, and you should know that I am very open to anything you have to say. Also, if I seem angry or annoyed, I'm not. That's just my face.

**Jack:** I am adventurous, and I like trying new things. Like Katherine, feel free to talk to me whenever and I'd love to hear any ideas you have for our committee.



## Writer's Thoughts

I had a great time interviewing our Heads of Athletics; Jack demonstrated his newly developed ukulele skills and Katherine followed with an amazingly accurate Sid the sloth impression. These two are very outgoing, filled with stories and pleasant to talk to. I'm confident they will keep the spirit of athletics alive in the Upper School and inspire future Heads, providing assurance that they will be able to overcome whatever this world will throw at you.

***This interview has been edited for clarity.***

*Do you have questions you want to ask your SEC? Email [aparekh@bayviewglen.ca](mailto:aparekh@bayviewglen.ca) with queries and suggestions you have for your council*

## Newsletters Referencing this Item

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Bayview Glen Independent School | 275 Duncan Mill Road | Toronto, Ontario M3B 3H9 | 416.443.1030

