
Participant Perspective

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Meet the Board

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President's Message

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HOLIDAY GREETING

"At its best, Christmas is a mirror in which we see reflected the very best life can be. Where we see ourselves moved by generosity, inspired by hope and uplifted by love, not only for ourselves but for the whole evolving universe." ~ Bruce Sanguin

PMAST takes this opportunity to thank you for your support and generosity in helping us to make lives better.

Happy Holiday Season to all!

WINE SURVIVOR RESULTS 2020

5th last ticket drawn - Richard Lee (long-time friend and supporter) - 1 bottle of wine

4th last ticket drawn - Don Schapira (PMAST trainer/mediator) - 2 bottles of wine

3rd last ticket drawn - Helen Aab (long-time supporter and volunteer) - 3 bottles of wine

2nd last ticket drawn - Joan Gibson (long-time friend and supporter) 5 bottles of wine. Joan donated her winnings back to PMAST!

Last Ticket Drawn - Rob Christie (long-time friend and supporter) - 12 bottles of wine

Congratulations to all our winners, and thank you for your support!



WHAT PMAST MEANS TO ME

THE VIEW FROM ONE OF OUR PARTICIPANTS



I was born in the former Soviet Union during communist regime. Everyone was paid equal and that was barely anything which meant we were all equally poor. It was a very hard life for my family, I recall being 5 years old with my grandfather and we were waiting in a long line for 4 hours, so long that it went around the corner outside on the street and all of that for only half a kilogram of sugar. There were no supermarkets, 7/11's or your friendly burger shops, there wasn't a lot of food or things that you could buy as you would in the Western world.

So once the collapse of the Soviet Union occurred, and the wall came down, my family escaped the corruption and violence and immigrated to Israel. In Israel everything was

much better, there were grocery stores, beautiful sights and gorgeous weather. But unfortunately terrorist acts started occurring all over the country.

Suicide bombers would strap bombs to themselves and go into populated areas to blow themselves up. Busses would blow up regularly, my family was living in fear; I was not allowed to use transit or go near bus stops. This was no way to live, so my parents made a very smart move and applied for a Visa to come in as landed immigrants to live in Canada.

I didn't know too much about it except that it had weather close to Russia and a great hockey program. In Canada we selected to

move to Montreal, so me and my parents began learning a little French. It was going to be hard to move again, to lose all my friends and start things all over in a place where I didn't fully know the language or the customs. We finally moved to Canada and I was having a very hard time fitting in.

After 2 years we moved to Calgary which was hard again as I didn't know English, we spoke only Russian at home. With my parents being

in ESL classes, they couldn't work and so we had barely to no money. I didn't have nice clothes or cool Nike shoes which I really wanted. I was a poor Russian immigrant who was poorly dressed and could barely speak English. I was an easy target for bullies. By the time I got to high school, I began fighting back when I was picked on and ended up getting in a few fights which got me in trouble at school. One day my guidance counsellor, who I got along with really well, told me about this organization called PMAST that just began working with our school. They specialized in conflict resolution and she thought this would help me.

I still remember the first day I met Winston Blake, the leader and trainer of PMAST. He seemed so confident, suave, giving off a very "cool vibe" as I called it back then. We hit it off instantly, and I was very intrigued by his demeanor. He was very calm and neutral, but very dynamic and inspiring. Along with a few fellow students and Winston we formed a Mediation Club and things in our entire school took a turn for the better! We were taught mediation skills and techniques, practiced different scenarios and were able to apply them at our very own school with our peers. Students who were involved in any arguments or fights now had a choice, either face the school's punishment and be suspended or attend a mediation, held by the members of the Mediation Club, and avoid suspension if they could reach a resolution. It was a no brainer.



Being involved in this program completely changed my high school experience. I was now a leader, someone people could confide in when they had a personal/school conflict. It also allowed me to use mediation skills in my own personal life. I was able to make friends more easily and resolve any conflicts by identifying the core issues and breaking down communication barriers with my peers and teachers.

The most rewarding moment was when I had a friend call me one evening, he has come out being openly gay to his friends but not his family and that evening during dinner he told his mother and they had a huge argument. He called me in tears and we spent 3 hours on the phone that evening discussing different ways to resolve the conflict, this was back in 2003 when things in society were still different. I later found out from our mutual friend that he was planning on committing suicide after the argument that night but talking to me has helped him approach the conflict he had with his mother differently and he felt like he had the support of his friends to help him through his tough times. I don't believe I would have been able to help him the way I did without the skills that PMAST has provided me.

Years later after high school I saw him again at an expo, we hugged, talked, laughed and it made me realize that we all need to have those skills to help everyone in our life.

After graduating high school, I was very keen to continue my education in conflict resolution and become a fully certified Mediator. Unfortunately, because of my family's financial situation, I could not afford the program. That's when PMAST changed my life once again! They provided me with a full scholarship to attend Mount Royal University and study mediation with some of the best instructors in the country. I was the youngest individual to become a certified mediator. I learned skills that have been invaluable in my day to day life, both in my personal and professional life.



PMAST has been a key factor in my life and I want to see other students who are in the same situation as I was, be provided the same tools to effectively resolve conflicts in their lives. This training is life changing. I think it is crucial that we expand our program to be on a Federal level reaching all students across all provinces from the Atlantic to the West. Conflict resolution has provided me the tools to resolve any obstacle I am faced with, it taught me how to properly communicate and be effective with every task I take on, it taught me how to be successful in life!

We can do the same for every kid in our country. Imagine that. Imagine every kid trained on how to express their feelings and ideas and solve conflict in a constructive way. Now imagine those kids doing the same once they graduate and start working, move into leadership roles, become our new politicians, parents and teachers. Imagine what our world would look like.





MEET THE BOARD

Briana Inlow

Promotions Committee Chair

Briana is a supernova! Her colourful personality and willingness to give a lot more than asked or received never goes unnoticed as she pours her talents into the PMAST community. We could not have a more suitable team member occupying her role in the Promotions Committee. We caught up with her to find out her ticks and clicks. Here's what she had to tell us!

GET READY, WE'RE ABOUT TO ASK SOME SERIOUS QUESTIONS. SO, BRIANA, TELL US...

Who is your hero?

Rosa Parks

What do you like most about your life?

I have no regrets

What are your hobbies?

Being active, spending time with my family, singing, reading, supporting PMAST

How would your friends describe you?

Outgoing, good natured

What is the best gift you have been given?

My husband and two healthy children

If you could choose to do anything for a day, what would it be?

Be a Rockstar

What did you want to be when you were small?

An architect

Do you like or dislike surprises? Why or why not?

I LOVE surprises. I think they keep life interesting and unpredictable.

What is your favourite book to read?

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott

Is your glass half full or half empty?

$\frac{3}{4}$ full

Do you have a "motto"- spoken or unspoken?

"Just be"

What is your proudest accomplishment?

Completing my first race after signing up to a "couch to half marathon" fundraiser.

What's the most daring thing you've ever done for what is right?

I have dedicated my career to helping large corporations be more socially, ethically, and environmentally responsible.

LET'S KEEP GETTING TO KNOW YOU. TELL US...

Why did you join PMAST?

I really resonate with the purpose around coaching young people to manage conflict effectively and promote mental health and well being from an early age.

How has your journey been in this organization?

I started off in the Fundraising Committee but have moved over to get a Promotions Committee going, since we have a lot to do around creating awareness around PMAST.

What is your favourite thing about your work at PMAST?

Working with such a diverse group of people for such a meaningful purpose.

How do you think PMAST could help during this pandemic?

Providing online tools and resources for young people who are struggling with mental health in particular during this isolated time and back at school in a really different environment.

What really makes you motivated with regards to your vision for PMAST?

My own children and their future.

Where do you see PMAST in five years?

In schools and communities across Calgary; ideally, with government funding!

Regarding the importance of the work at PMAST in the community, what really makes you upset?

When kids have to be grown ups when they really should just be able to be kids.

What would you do if you won the lottery?

Pay for as many young people to go to college or whatever further education they want as possible.

What's your favourite holiday and why?

Thanksgiving. It's not about gifts, or religion; it's just about being grateful for what you have.



THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A few thoughts to close out 2020

We celebrated Thanksgiving in this quarter and although it is over I have heard many comments regarding how different and unfulfilling it was compared to how we would normally enjoy that holiday.

I agree it has been very different for all of us, as COVID has resulted in many changes to our lives. At the same time we need to remember that we still have so much for which to be thankful. If you woke up this morning with more health than illness...then you are luckier than the million who will not survive the week...and even luckier because you have a healthcare system which guarantees you will have healthcare in case of illness.

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, of the pangs of starvation... then you are ahead of 500 million people in the world. If you can attend any meeting you want; political, religious, or social...then you are luckier than 3 billion people in the world.

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof over your head, a bed to sleep in...then you are richer than 75% of the world. If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, spare change in a dish...then you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy. If you can read a list like this...then you are luckier than over one billion people who cannot read at all.



None of this negates the fact that it has been a tough year, no matter your personal situation. But at PMAST working with today's youth gives us a forward-looking perspective, that we are so fortunate to have this opportunity to provide the best training we can for today's youth.

They are what keeps our eyes ahead, and make us most grateful this holiday season. Wishing all the best to you and yours, for a fruitful and optimistic New Year.

- Brenda

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SPONSORS!



Calgary Foundation in view of the approval we have just received for over \$10,000 for COVID recovery



Calgary Northmount Kiwanis for continuous support and funding our programs at Our Lady of Assumption and Good Shepherd School in the coming year.



MDRT International for funding our Youth Empowerment Skills Program to the English Language Learners classes at Nelson Mandela High School

MDRT Canada for funding our Youth Empowerment Skills Program at Good Shepherd School in Airdrie



Richard Lee, of Leeland Financial Services, for being our Knight and always supporting PMAST with MDRT (Million Dollar Round Table)



Thumbs Up Foundation for support for the Connected Families program in 2020/21.



Cam Clark Ford for assisting in funding of PMAST's Connected Families program developed in conjunction with Thumbs Up



Community Mediation Calgary Society - Our sister organization who always supports us and is partnering with us to develop and pilot a community based program in Calgary for people who just want to improve their relationships with their neighbours, co-workers, communities and families.



Nelson Mandela High School and Tina Merali, Head of English Language Learner team, for your dedication in ensuring your students have the best programs possible to ease their transition into Canadian society.



Good Shepherd School and Elizabeth Bennett, Principal, a long time supporter of PMAST who never stops promoting our programs and services



Our Lady of Assumption School, Graham McComiskey, Guidance Counsellor, for recognizing the needs of his students and the value of PMAST's YES program

**Anonymous Donor
acknowledgement for ELL
program at Nelson Mandela
High School (NMHS)**

Bob Warren for writing original music for PMAST's use in our videos and programs

**Anonymous donors via
Benevity**

A thank you to Flo Lye, Program Director, and our Board of Directors who work tirelessly to make this all happen. You are awesome!

And another round of thank you to all our other sponsors, partners, and supporters!

