


The background of the entire page is a photograph of several people's silhouettes against a bright sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong orange and yellow glow that fills the lower half of the image. The sky transitions to a clear blue at the top. The silhouettes of the people are in the foreground, with their arms raised and hands clasped together in a gesture of unity or celebration. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image, centered horizontally.

SelfDesign Learning Foundation Community Report 2021

A photograph of a park with trees, benches, and a large orange ribbon installation. The ribbons are hanging from a wire, creating a canopy effect. The background shows a paved area with benches and a building with a mural.

It is with gratitude that the SelfDesign community respectfully acknowledges the many traditional, ancestral, unceded and treaty territories that we learn and grow on throughout this diverse continent.

We honour and thank the many Nations whose voices and footsteps have marked this territory for millenia in recognition of their continued stewardship of the land. We also look forward to many collaborations and meaningful exchanges to create a shared vision for the future.



Message

Amber Papou, President & CEO
SelfDesign Learning Foundation

*“Don’t educate your children to be rich.
Educate them to be happy. So when they grow up they
will know the value of things and not the price.”*

– Steve Jobs

This quote made by the late Steve Jobs resonates with me, especially as I reflect on our past year at SelfDesign Learning Foundation.

I have spent much of the last year reflecting on the importance of relationships. Relationships are, in my opinion, what make life worth living and what ultimately define our happiness.

The philosophy of SelfDesign is based on relationships. Our philosophy focuses us on nurturing heart-centred, co-inspirational relationships based on acceptance, respect and support of one another – and with ourselves. It lays the groundwork for supportive, respective collaboration. It motivates us to fulfill our responsibilities to each other, to our community, to society and to ourselves. It allows us to view change as an opportunity for curiosity. It encourages and brings out the best of us as individuals and as an organization. It is this philosophy that our school is based on, and thus, in a sense, we educate ourselves and our learners on how to be ‘happy’.

Out of this, SelfDesign has produced another exciting educational program that aligns with and furthers our philosophy and approach to learning. HomeLearners Network was conceived in 2020 and designed and developed in 2021 in time to launch in November. It was initiated to complement our existing educational programs, SelfDesign Learning Community and SelfDesign Home Learning, as well as to invite learners from outside of our community to discover new interests and passions. We will integrate HomeLearners Network into SelfDesign Learning Community beginning March 2022, with learners and families having access to the program as part of their enrolment in the school.

Other exciting work done this past year includes the ongoing integration of Indigenous education and First People’s Principles of Learning throughout our programs and our organization. We provided new offerings and continued opportunities to help learners, families, educators and contractors advance the path towards reconciliation. Among these are our Cultural Learning Grants, which support our Indigenous learners in connecting with elders and their language and culture in their own communities.

And further to the subject of relationships, I want to welcome Carlos da Ponte, Frank Heinzelmann and Sherry Elwood to the SelfDesign Learning Foundation Board of Directors, where they join Ken Banister, Devon Girard and Verena Gibbs in providing governance and oversight to our amazing organization. I would also like to thank Devon who, after working tirelessly as Board Chair, has stepped back from that role but continues to offer his expertise and experience as a board member. Thank you, too, to Verena, who has taken on the role of Board Chair to lead this team of talented and passionate SelfDesign supporters as we look ahead to our organization’s next few years and craft the foundation’s new strategic plan.

Finally, thank you! Everyday, this wonderful, engaged and compassionate SelfDesign community helps to remind me of what is important and why I do what I do.

I look forward to continuing to serve the SelfDesign Learning Foundation in 2022.

With gratitude,

Amber



Message

Verena Gibbs, Chair, Board of Directors
SelfDesign Learning Foundation

“I’m deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve as Chair and to collaborate with an outstanding group of directors.”

I’d like to warmly welcome our newest directors – Carlos Da Ponte, Frank Heinzelmann, and Sherry Elwood, whom I’ve enjoyed getting to know over the past few months. (Funny story, I just found out that Sherry and I live on the same street!). I’m thrilled to continue working with directors Devin Girard and Ken Banister, as our conversations are never dull. The board is also grateful for the contributions and service of Enid Elliot who stepped off the board last year. Enid’s experience in early education and the social justice lens through which she views the world was sincerely appreciated. We wish her well and thank her for her years of service.

A board of directors is a group of volunteers who are generally drawn to the position because they feel a passion for or connection to the work of an organization. Perhaps it’s a personal alignment with the core values or mission, or a way to give back to a community or share a particular expertise. Regardless of the motivation, the role of the board remains the same – good governance. So, what does this mean?

In general, organizations require three distinct functions to thrive – governance, management, and operations. While the management and operational parts of an organization are busy eyes to the ground “doing the work”, the board has the responsibility to scan the environment and plan accordingly. As a board we are accountable for protecting an organization, which includes ensuring that there is financial stability, sustainable and supported consultant teams, and that risks have been mitigated and opportunities harnessed – all while reflecting on how we are staying true to our purpose and meeting our goals.

As I reflect on 2021, I hear a phrase that Brent Cameron shared on many occasions during my time with him (2002–2009): “The map is not the territory.” I am embarrassed to admit that the concept never really stuck in my mind. I got it, but I didn’t get it. Until now. Funny how some seeds take years to germinate! The original phrase was coined by Polish–American philosopher and engineer Alfred Korzybski to illustrate that, even though we may have a model for something, it does not necessarily represent that thing.

The “map” we had for our organization (Strategic Plan 2018–2021) did not show us the way to navigate a pandemic. This was new territory so we walked it as best we could, ensuring that the well-being of our consultants, children and families was paramount. As a board, conversations centred on the well-being and resilience of our organization, including the children and families whom we serve. In times of uncertainty, priorities need to shift, and for us, a deeper sensing “how are we doing?” arose. We responded with compassion.

Fast forward to present day as the Board of Directors and leadership team are about to embark on a new strategic plan for 2022 and beyond. Our aim is to craft a document whose words and hopes exist beyond its pages and in the heart and breath of the organization.

While we might plan for the future, the territory of our journey will emerge collectively and in response to our environment. John Homer Schaar sums it up well when he says, “The future is not a place we are going, but one that we are creating. The paths are not found, but made. And the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination”. I look forward to serving you as Board Chair and to collectively building a future together.

Sincerely,

Verena

The SelfDesign Learning Foundation

Education for the 21st century.

At SelfDesign Learning Foundation, we support learners of all ages and abilities in authoring their own lives and designing their own learning.

The SelfDesign Learning Foundation is a registered Canadian charity, incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in the province of British Columbia.

We are your foundation for lifelong learning.

Since 1983, the SelfDesign Learning Foundation has grown to become a global leader in the development of programs and initiatives that foster personalized and life-long learning.

Our model and philosophy set us apart, drive every initiative and fuel our passion as leaders in education. We believe that learning is unlimited, ageless and continuous.

Our Mission

To support learners, families and educators in creating what matters to them in their lives, through effective educational methods in alignment with the principles of SelfDesign.

Our Vision

SelfDesign is the leading model for natural and personalized lifelong learning in North America.



Our values

Curiosity is our lifelong pathway to transformative experiences. We foster engagement in the natural unfolding of interest-based learning through conversation, collaboration and co-creation.

We embrace heart-centred and co-inspirational relationships based on acceptance, respect and support of one another.

We innovate and evolve our learner-centred educational programs and services based on an understanding of cutting-edge research in the fields of pedagogy, human development, neuroscience and technology. We live our shared values of honesty, authenticity, fairness and openness.

We are responsible and responsive to our stakeholders, upholding our agreements to them and to one another. We assume individual self-agency and capacity while remembering we are part of the greater whole organization. We are committed to excellence by providing first-choice educational programs and services that are inclusive, supportive and accessible to those we serve, regardless of income level, personal or spiritual beliefs, or degree of need.



Our values



LIFELONG LEARNING

Curiosity is our lifelong pathway to transformative experiences. We foster engagement in the natural unfolding of interest-based learning through conversation, collaboration and co-creation.



RELATIONSHIPS

We embrace heart-centred and co-inspirational relationships based on acceptance, respect and support of one another.



INNOVATION

We innovate and evolve our learner-centred educational programs and services based on an understanding of cutting-edge research in the fields of pedagogy, human development, neuroscience and technology.



INTEGRITY

We live our shared values of honesty, authenticity, fairness and openness.



ACCOUNTABILITY

We are responsible and responsive to our stakeholders, upholding our agreements to them and to one another. We assume individual self-agency and capacity while remembering we are part of the greater whole organization.



QUALITY

We are committed to excellence by providing first-choice educational programs and services that are inclusive, supportive and accessible to those we serve, regardless of income level, personal or spiritual beliefs, or degree of need.

Our philosophy


The art and science of lifelong learning

We believe

That every learner, regardless of age, brings a unique contribution to the world. SelfDesign ensures that the learning environment becomes the vehicle rather than the obstacle in making those contributions come to life.

That people learn everywhere and in every moment, and that learning is enriched and amplified through conversations and relationships with others.

In the safety, acceptance and inclusion of all learners in regard to ability, learning style, culture, personal or spiritual beliefs, gender identity and expression.

A photograph of three children of different ethnicities and ages lying on a library floor, looking at an open book together. The child on the left is a girl wearing a beige hijab and a red sweater. The child in the middle is a girl with dark hair in a bun, wearing a purple floral top. The child on the right is a boy in a blue and white plaid shirt. They are all smiling and looking at the book. In the background, there are bookshelves filled with books.

“ Our philosophy focuses us on nurturing heart-centred, co-inspirational relationships based on acceptance, respect and support of one another – and with ourselves. It lays the groundwork for supportive, respective collaboration.

– Amber Papou, President & CEO

Board of Directors

Verena Gibbs, Chair, began her work with SelfDesign's predecessor, Wondertree Learning Centre, in 2002, first as an educator, then as vice principal. Her Masters of Arts in Integrated Studies allowed her to weave teachings from Indigenous knowledge, self-directed learning and living inquiry into her practice. For many years, Verena was a principal with School District 50, on Haida Gwaii. She now lives on Vancouver Island.

Ken Banister has guided the development and review of environmental curricula at Royal Roads and Mount Royal universities and delivered in-class education. He is developing a program for young professionals about how complex dynamic systems relate to the workforce and the tools that can be used to manage the day-to-day complexity of today's work lives. He brings decades of regulatory and overall work experience and a master's degree in Science in Environment and Management from Royal Roads University to his role.

Sherry Elwood has been an educational leader and advocate for online learning and for programs that meet the needs of diverse B.C. learners for decades. Early in her teaching career, she worked in alternative education, Indigenous Education and with older learners at a correctional facility. She recently retired as Superintendent of Schools in B.C.'s Richmond School District and is a former schools superintendent in the Comox Valley.

Devon Girard has a long and varied history with SelfDesign. He is an alumni of the Wondertree and Virtual High programs (predecessors to SelfDesign) and has roots in natural learning principles and practices. Devon has 25 years of experience in software development. He is passionate about the intensifying confluence of knowledge, technology and culture that is opening so many directions in learning.

Frank Heinzelmann is the SelfDesign parent of three children who experienced our kindergarten to grade 12 program. He says, "SelfDesign's approach and vision towards lifelong learning are inspiring, and I believe that it is ever more relevant in our global community." Educated in Germany, South Africa and British Columbia, Frank has worked in environmental consulting and, in recent years, in private banking and investment.

Carlos da Ponte, technology entrepreneur, first experienced self-directed learning as a teenager, when he completed his studies by correspondence while travelling the world by boat. It continued through both his undergraduate degree and his master's degree in Environment & Management from Royal Roads University. Now he is experiencing it as a parent of two children exploring similar flexibility and choice in learning.

Leadership team

Amber Papou, President & CEO, first joined SelfDesign Learning Foundation in January 2017. She is passionate about providing overall leadership and oversight to the organization's programs.

Sandy Steward, Chief Operating Officer, oversees the day-to-day administration and operations of the Foundation. Passionately relentless, she strives to blend vision, culture and efficiency into an environment where people and learners excel.

Nikki Kenyon, Chief Learning Officer, provides support and opportunities for learners to engage in their personalized learning journeys in both SelfDesign Learning Community and SelfDesign Home Learning. She has worked with SelfDesign since 2007 and is the parent of four SelfDesign learners.

Dave Conroy, Chief Information Officer, develops, maintains and oversees the operations of information, IT services and security to ensure the effective, efficient support to all the clients and programs of SelfDesign Learning Foundation. Dave joined SelfDesign in 2016.

Catherine Dinim, Principal, SelfDesign Learning Community, began with SelfDesign in 2004 as a learning consultant and a Support Services learning consultant for learners who had been professionally diagnosed as needing extra learning support. A SelfDesign Learning Community vice principal starting in 2018 and now principal, she also led the creation of the SelfDesign Learning Experiences Library and helped to develop and implement the school's redesigned high school program and coordinate the school's growth.

Debra Farquharson, Director of Finance, joined SelfDesign in 2019. She ensures accurate and timely tracking of all expenditures, grant funding from the Ministry of Education, and compliance with regulatory and filing requirements. She also prepares the organization's financial statements and budgets, and manages its cash and banking arrangements.

River Meyer, Director of Organizational Learning & Culture, holds the vision and philosophy of SelfDesign and shares it with SelfDesign contractors and families through discussions and initiatives that build knowledge and culture within our community. She first joined SelfDesign as part of the leadership team in 2004 and was also a SelfDesign parent.

Debra Sigfusson, Director of Human Relations, came to SelfDesign in 2008 after discovering and being drawn into the learner-centred philosophy of SelfDesign. As the Director of Human Relations, she provides advice and direction regarding all aspects of the contracting process for SelfDesign and handles human relations matters of a confidential and sensitive nature.

Karen Zukas, Director of Communications & Marketing directs and oversees all external and internal communications including communications planning and implementation, internal communications, marketing, social media and website management, and much more. She joined SelfDesign in 2017.

Sustainability

SelfDesign Learning Foundation's mission and vision are charted in our Strategic Plan 2018–2021. That map has guided our growth, providing strength to our purpose and resiliency to our community.

Even though it didn't address how to navigate a pandemic, the plan established the foundation of values and beliefs that allowed us to respond to the uncertainties and pressures of COVID with compassion and generosity and to demonstrate the robustness of our organization and of our community. It also points the way ahead to ensuring our organization remains socially and fiscally sustainable.

The launch of **HomeLearners Network** is an example. We launched this exciting new program in the fall of 2021. Conceived at the start of the pandemic, in part as a response to the need within the greater educational community for affordable, high-quality self-directed learning options, it furthers our philosophy and approach to learning and provides our own community with new learning opportunities.

In 2021, SelfDesign became a **fully virtual organization**, with no physical location. This makes us unique among schools in B.C. and is part of our long-term sustainability plans. Being fully virtual better enables us to respond to change and future challenges and to take advantage of emerging and future opportunities. Another step along that path taken in 2021 is the successful rollout in June of Phase 1 of our technology-transition strategy, when we transitioned to a new email communications system. We also created physical Educational Support Centres in communities across the province to better serve our families and learners.



Sustainability

Further supporting SelfDesign's resiliency and sustainability are the many layers of **built-in and available support** we provide to our learners, families, educators and operations contractors. The support comes via the relationships our approach to learning encourages – between families and learners, between families and educators, between educators and learners and between operations contractors and educators. It is further reinforced by the supports and services provided by, for example, our Family Services, Support Services and Educator Services teams.

Our **Indigenous Education program** strengthens our social sustainability. SelfDesign is committed to advancing the path towards reconciliation by seeking out and supporting meaningful connections with Indigenous leaders, elders and knowledge keepers within and beyond our community.

In addition, **the equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives** we have begun increases both resilience and sustainability. These initiatives include the anti-oppression training we're planning for our educators and contractors and an assessment of the language we use to talk about and present ourselves and each other.

By supporting each other, we become stronger and more resilient individually, as a community and as an organization.



Our partnerships

At SelfDesign Learning Foundation, we seek out partnerships and relationships with people and organizations that align with our values and vision for personalized lifelong learning for all.

Our main offering, SelfDesign Learning Community, is recognized by and receives funding from the BC Ministry of Education as a Group 1 Independent Online School in the province of British Columbia.

We are also proud to be affiliated with the following organizations:



Cognia offers accreditation, certification, assessment, professional services and consulting within a framework of continuous improvement.



The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Foundation aims to build cultural understanding and create a path towards reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. SelfDesign is registered in the foundation's Legacy Schools program, joining a growing community of schools across Canada and linking to funding and educational resources that advance reconciliation.



SOGI 1 2 3 provides resources to help SelfDesign be an inclusive and safe school for learners of all sexual orientations and gender identities.



Open the door to lifelong learning



AUTONOMY

Author your own learning journey



INNOVATION

Innovative education for people of all ages and abilities



CONNECTIONS

Learning through relationships with parents, peers, educators and community



CURIOSITY

Learning is everywhere, curiosity is the beginning



RESPONSIBILITY

Fostering personal, social, and global awareness and responsibility

Learn what you love, love what you learn



Learning is a continuous and accumulating process rather than a product or set of outcomes. From imagining and planning, from enacting and experiencing, from reflecting and assessing to re-imagining – this process lasts a lifetime.



Learners are positioned at the centre of their individualized learning path.



Learning and personal development occur within nurturing, relational environments.



Keeping our community safe

Our continued response to COVID

Throughout 2021, we continued our commitment to safety, support and transparency as our community continued to navigate the pandemic.

Our efforts are guided by the directives of the federal and provincial health authorities, the BC Ministry of Education, BC Ministry of Health and WorkSafeBC. Our **COVID-19 Safety Plan** includes policies, procedures, and protocols to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission within our community. Our **pandemic response plan** outlines our step-by-step approach to returning safely to in-person activities in phases, as it has become appropriate.

We recognize that the pandemic has created challenges for learners, families, educators and operations contractors. To help those affected, we increased resourcing for supports organized and provided by our Operations, Family Services and Education Services teams.

We remain committed to keeping our community safe and to providing them with support and information as it becomes available and as the pandemic changes.



SelfDesign Learning Foundation programs and services



SelfDesign Learning Community

A technology-enabled school
for students from
kindergarten to grade 12



SelfDesign Home Learning

A flexible option for parents who
wish to homeschool their child



HomeLearners Network

At Home Activities (AHAs), designed by
BC-certified educators, to help children
and youth pursue their passions, learn new
things, build relationships and have fun.



Support Services

For learners with
special needs

SelfDesign by the numbers

2057

Kindergarten to grade 12 learners were enrolled in SelfDesign Learning Community from September 2020 to June 2021

913

Learners with special needs received support services

461

Home learners registered with SelfDesign Home Learning in June 2021

183

B.C. certified educator–contractors supported learners

69

Specialized learning consultants supported learners with special needs

3

Learning specialists supported learners with special needs taking the grades 10 to 12 “MySelf” themes

1568

External service provider–contractors supported our learners through Learning Resources Services and Individual Education Plans

88

Contractors supported SelfDesign’s administration and operations

128

Learners and families attended five SelfDesign camps in 2021. All camps took place online this year

116

Learners completed their learning journeys with SelfDesign Learning Community

300

Learners and families attended our online Commencement Ceremony

58

Cultural Learning Grants were dispersed to our Indigenous learners to access Indigenous education opportunities in the community in 2021

95%

Course-completion rate by grade 10 to 12 learners enrolled from 2018–2021; B.C.’s average for independent online schools: 65%





Message

Nikki Kenyon, Chief Learning Officer
SelfDesign Learning Foundation

“ I am proud and grateful to work with all these wonderful, passionate and inspiring people who support and make real the mission, vision and goals of SelfDesign Learning Foundation on a daily basis.”

These past few years have felt like a long, long winter in terms of the state of the world, with everything holding and waiting. Yet, at the time that I write this, there's a sense that we may be at the start of a long-awaited spring. The days are warming, and some buds are poking through to hint at brighter days to come.

What is remarkable to me is that even over these past two years, we still accomplished incredible things in SelfDesign!

In SelfDesign Learning Community, our learners and families continued to amaze us with their energy, creativity and passion. They engaged in extraordinary activities and shared them with their learning consultants and learning specialists. Our educational teams dug deep to support our learners and families in their learning and living.

For each of the past three years, our school has tracked an exceptional completion rate for our grade 10 to 12 courses. Of all the learners in grade 10 to 12 who start one of our courses, 95 per cent successfully complete the course. The provincial average for online courses completed in 2019/2020 was 65 per cent.

Even amidst the uncertainty about the direction of online learning in British Columbia, our learners, families and educators recognize the value of our learning model. Enrolment for SelfDesign Learning Community continued at an all-time high through 2021, with waitlists across all our offerings.

The 116 learners who commenced from SelfDesign Learning Community in 2021 have spread their wings to move out into the world. Seven of these exceptional young people also received BC Ministry of Education School District/Authority scholarships to continue their learning at recognized post-secondary institutions.

Since taking on the role of Chief Learning Officer for SelfDesign Learning Foundation in September, I have been working with other members of the SelfDesign Learning Foundation and SelfDesign Learning Community leadership teams to seek out, develop and implement new educational strategies, opportunities, programs and technologies for the foundation. HomeLearners Network, our newest education program, has been foremost among those.

Launched just last fall, this exciting new program provides meaningful learning activities that help families within and beyond our community make connections to new interests and to each other. Our strategy is to start small, grow sustainably and gain momentum incrementally. I'm so proud of the efforts of the design, development and guide teams and of how their efforts have translated into a quality platform offering quality activities. I love how, even in one hour in an online real-time class centred on making a compass or exploring surrealist artists, learners can feel seen, connect with their friends, family and new acquaintances and be inspired to think about the world in different ways.

HomeLearners Network is one of the ways we are working to build more resilience and offer more choice across our learning programs and to further our mission to offer learners of all ages and regions access to the best of personalized education.

And as I focus on my new role, I welcome Catherine Dinim, long-time SelfDesign educator and Vice Principal, into the principalship of SelfDesign Learning Community. She is joined by Vice Principal Vanessa Kuran and new Vice Principal Clarissa Tufts, who previously led our Family Services team.

I am proud and grateful to work with these and all the other wonderful, passionate and inspiring people who support and make real the mission, vision and goals of SelfDesign Learning Foundation on a daily basis. I feel so honoured to be part of this amazing SelfDesign community.

I look forward to working and sharing with all of you through 2022.

Nikki



SelfDesign Learning Community

An innovative and personalized approach to learning

We go above and beyond the walls of a classroom

We offer a unique, personalized and inclusive approach to education for approximately 2,000 learners from kindergarten to grade 12 each year.

- ✓ We follow the **BC Ministry of Education curriculum**.
- ✓ Our BC certified educators provide **personalized one-to-one learning**.
- ✓ **Learners can graduate** with a BC Certificate of Graduation, Adult Graduation Diploma or School Completion Certificate. They have the same opportunity to apply for university or college as a child in a brick-and-mortar school.
- ✓ Our **inclusive education program** provides equal access to learning opportunities for all learners, by providing personalized support services to learners with special needs.
- ✓ We receive **funding from the BC Ministry of Education** and are a Group 1 Independent School in the province of British Columbia.
- ✓ The **Ministry of Education inspects our program annually** to ensure our programs and processes meet our obligations as a BC Group 1 Independent School. Our Indigenous Education offerings, our course completion rate, and our use of data to improve our offerings received particularly high praise from inspectors.

With SelfDesign Learning Community, learners and families experience a supportive learning experience in their home, online and in their community:

- ✓ **Each learner takes the lead in their own learning** in their own home environment and within their local and online communities, guided by one of approximately 180 BC certified educators.
- ✓ **We engage professional service providers** to support learners in areas such as music, art, speech and occupational therapy, physical education classes, and more.
- ✓ **Families are an expert in knowing their child** and are a valued part of the circle of relationships that include parent, learner and educator.





Message

Catherine Dinim, Principal
SelfDesign Learning Foundation

“SelfDesign believes in nurturing heart-centred, co-inspirational relationships based on acceptance, respect and support of one another.”

SelfDesign believes in nurturing heart-centred, co-inspirational relationships based on acceptance, respect and support of one another. At SelfDesign Learning Community, holding that value close has allowed us to continue supporting learners, families, educators and each other and respond to challenges with grace, generosity and compassion throughout the last year.

In 2021, we put additional supports in place and increased counselling services for learners and families. We also drew deeply on our own relational values to support one another and pull together as a team.

Our model and approach to learning proved to be another key to our community's resilience this year. Our learners used our offerings as a way to connect with each other when fewer opportunities were available in their home communities. We piloted three new online camps, and our new Open Spaces offering provides another opportunity for learners in grades 10 to 12 to find like-minded peers to connect and engage with informally every week. Our Gender Sexual Orientation Alliance (GSA) continues to grow and strengthen, and learners engaged through our Minecraft group, our monthly Genius Hours, Zoom field trips and other offerings. And they engaged deeply.

That is one of the commendations we received during our very successful BC Ministry inspection for the current learning year. Over the last few years, 95 per cent of learners who began our grade 10 to 12 courses successfully completed those courses. In contrast, the provincial average for online courses in 2019/2020 was about 65 per cent. We build many circles of relationship and support to allow that to happen, and it is wonderful to see how that has contributed to our learners' – and our – success.

Another commendation is our ongoing and deepening commitment to reconciliation. We continue to actively seek out connections to our Indigenous education program, led by our Indigenous Education team, Patricia Collins and Amber Santos, from January until July, and then by Amber. We are engaging more deeply with our learners to support relationships with elders and traditional knowledge keepers in the learners' home communities, with many new offerings resulting and opportunities resulting.

The inspectors also commended us on our use of data and metrics to plan strategically and to improve our programs and offerings. We are always looking for opportunities to learn and improve our offerings.

I would be remiss if I did not thank our educators. Throughout the year, they continued to dig deep and show up in really positive, supportive ways for our learners, families and each other. They've shown flexibility, resilience and compassion. I'm grateful to them, I'm proud of them, and I am inspired continually by their passion and ongoing engagement.

All this, I believe, adds to our strength as a community, and it bodes well for the future. We can be confident that we can stand and work together through challenges and still remain true to the relational, nurturing values that we hold close and that hold us together.

With warmth and gratitude,

Catherine



A SELFDESIGN STORY |

CALL OF THE BIG TOP:

This learner juggled school and full-time training to prepare for the world's premiere circus school

As an acrobat enrolled in full-time circus school in Langley, British Columbia, in addition to high school, SelfDesign learner Téa was used to juggling a busy schedule and balancing multiple commitments.

Téa obtained her Dogwood Diploma (BC Certificate of Graduation) from **SelfDesign Learning Community** in June. Just weeks later, she started training at the **École Nationale de Cirque in Montreal**, possibly the best circus school in the world.

Téa first started with SelfDesign in grade 1, her schedule was that of any six-year-old. She homeschooled after that, but when she was in grade 9, she returned to SelfDesign Learning Community.

An online school was the only option with her training schedule. She chose to return to SelfDesign Learning Community specifically, she says, because it both offers the required flexibility to fit around her training and allowed her to work towards graduating with a high school diploma. Unlike homeschool programs such as SelfDesign Home Learning, SelfDesign Learning Community provides its learners with the same opportunities to apply for university or college as learners who are enrolled in brick-and-mortar schools.

"I had just one goal with SelfDesign,"

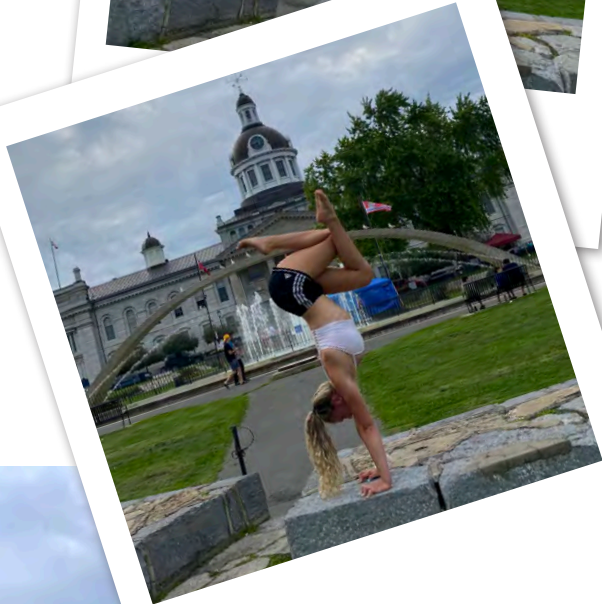
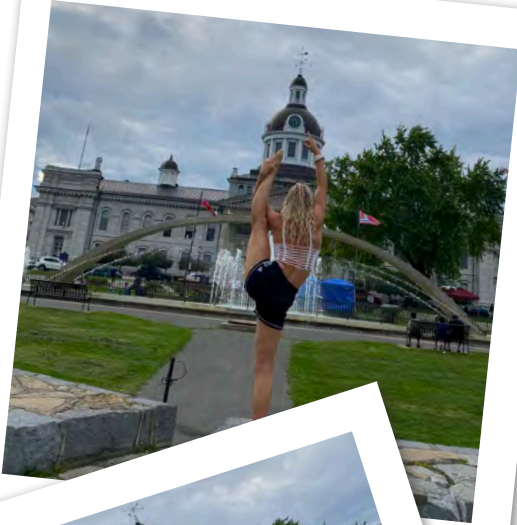
Téa says,

"and that was to graduate.

And I did it."



Her training schedule made it challenging – especially in grade 12. By then, Téa was enrolled in the Langley-based Circus Lab's three-year artist preparatory program, a full-time professional program for acrobats, dancers, and gymnasts training to audition for professional careers as circus performers or as stunt performers for film or television. Every weekday included two to three hours of warmup and conditioning training and up to six hours of intense training in flexibility and different acrobatic skills – trapeze, trampoline, rings and aerial silks, for example. On weekends, Téa would practise on her own, work on specific acts or put together her audition tapes.



"I had to make sure I was planning enough time to get my schoolwork done but keep the time I needed for training," she says. "I found I was doing my SelfDesign schoolwork on the weekends."

The experience helped to further hone her time management and organizational skills.

"It was good practice for multitasking and having the capacity to realize that I will be able to organize myself in such a way even when I am that busy," she says.

"No matter how many things I've got going on, the past three years have shown me there's a way to manage myself and get it all done."



What sets us apart



Learning happens everywhere



Prepared for success



Personalized learning



A supportive approach



B.C. Ministry of Education approved



Indigenous Learning



SelfDesign Learning Experiences Library



Inclusive education

Our approach to learning

- ✓ **Our model and philosophy**, which focus on personalized and lifelong learning, sets us apart from other technology-enabled schools and brick-and-mortar schools.
- ✓ **We follow the BC Ministry of Education curriculum** in a way that puts children at the centre of their learning journey. We acknowledge that learning is a process, not a product, and that it is centred on relationships and conversation.
- ✓ **We guide learners**, with the support of a B.C. certified educator, to develop a personalized learning plan for each child to help them achieve the path to completion that best suits them – BC Certificate of Graduation, Adult Graduation Diploma or School Completion Certificate.





How it works

- ✓ We place learners at the centre of their learning journeys
- ✓ Learning takes place at home, in the local community and online
- ✓ SelfDesign uses online technology to facilitate learning
- ✓ We assess our learners based on competencies
- ✓ How SelfDesign Learning Community differs from SelfDesign Home Learning



We place learners at the centre of their learning journeys

We recognize that not all children learn in the same way, at the same pace, in the same learning environment. Personalized learning at SelfDesign Learning Community means each child takes the lead in their own learning. It is a 21st-century approach to education that puts the needs of each child first, because they are a unique individual with their own learning style, interests and goals.

We put the learner at the centre of their own learning experience and allow them to determine the pathway they will take towards meeting the required BC Ministry of Education competencies. A family with a learner enrolled in SelfDesign Learning Community is supported along that pathway by a B.C. certified educator. The educator works with the family and learner to develop a personalized learning plan tailored to the learner's own interests and passions. The educator then helps to guide the learner and family throughout the year through reflective observations of learning as it occurs and suggestions for learning and opportunities that can be explored at home, in the local community and online.

This is very different than classroom-based personalized learning. Classroom-based personalized learning involves customized educational lessons to support learners' needs, but the lessons occur within a fixed curriculum and learning schedule.



Learning takes place at home, in the local community and online

Learning at SelfDesign means that learning happens everywhere – at home, in the community and online – and we use technology to support and facilitate the unique opportunities that presents. SelfDesign educators, learners and families also tap into technology to find the resources they need to pursue learning in the way that best suits them.

SelfDesign uses online technology to facilitate learning

Our educators, learners and families use technology to create supportive, relationship-based spaces online where connection and learning happen. Communication, sharing and connection at SelfDesign can happen in many different ways online, including in online discussion rooms, in collaborative working spaces and in virtual meeting and sharing spaces. Technology allows our educators to communicate and interact with parents and learners, and it allows our learners to communicate and interact with each other.

We also use technology to create unique and innovative learning opportunities of our own. Our Learning Experiences Library offers learners and families a diverse and extensive collection of high-quality learning experiences tailored specifically to our learners' own interests, passions and needs. The appropriate and ad-free resources are specially curated to link learners' personalized learning paths to the BC curriculum in a holistic and unique way.

Online learning meets provincial standards and is directed and supervised by a B.C. certified educator, with the responsibility for the program resting on SelfDesign Learning Community.



We assess our learners based on competencies

Because our kindergarten to grade 12 program is based on competency, we assess learning not through reporting, but through a process we call Observing for Learning. Our B.C. certified educators participate in ongoing weekly conversations with family members and their child.



How SelfDesign Learning Community differs from SelfDesign Home Learning

In both SelfDesign Learning Community and SelfDesign Home Learning, learning takes place in the home environment. However, the two programs are markedly different. SelfDesign Learning Community offers online learning, whereas SelfDesign Home Learning is a home schooling program.



SelfDesign Learning Community

- 1 Learners and families work with a B.C. certified educator
- 2 Learners and families are supported through their learning experience and have access to a wide array of resources, including our camps and gatherings and our unique Learning Experiences Library.
- 3 We assess learning through a process called Observing for Learning. Our B.C. certified educators map the learning that is observed to competencies within the B.C. curriculum.
- 4 Learners in SelfDesign Learning Community earn credit for courses in grades 10 to 12, and can graduate with a BC Certificate of Graduation, Adult Graduation Diploma or School Completion Certificate. Learners leave SelfDesign Learning Community after grade 12 with the same opportunities to apply for university or college as a child in a brick-and-mortar school does.



SelfDesign Home Learning

- 1 Parents take full responsibility for their child's learning program and do not report to the school. This makes SelfDesign Home Learning the most flexible educational program that we offer.
- 2 Learners and families have access to a number of subscriptions to high-quality learning resources, and receive newsletters with information about resources, opportunities open to home learners, and supports for learning at home.
- 3 Parents take responsibility for the learning program and do not report to the school. Learners' work is not assessed.
- 4 Learners do not earn credit for courses in grades 10 to 12, nor do they graduate and earn a high school diploma.



A SELFDESIGN STORY |

Congratulations!

Seven SelfDesign learners receive provincial scholarships in 2021

We were delighted to congratulate seven learners from our **Class of 2021** who were awarded **School District/Authority scholarships** from the Province of British Columbia. These young people are among more than 400 learners from B.C.'s independent school authorities and among 5,500 students across the province who were each recognized with the \$1250 scholarships in 2021.

Makayla and Mariah received their scholarships for Fine Arts – Studio Arts. In recent years, the Victoria-based twins have artworks selected by jury to be showcased in the Youth Art Gallery at the annual **Sooke Fine Arts Show**, Vancouver Island's premier adjudicated art show.

At the University of Victoria, where the sisters both also received full entrance scholarships, the sisters are now studying theatre.

"We're super excited about the scholarships," Makayla says. "We really do like the arts, and throughout our time with SelfDesign, we explored all kinds of the different types of arts, and through that we found a real big love for theatre."

Hannah's volunteering contributions led to her scholarship in the Community Service category. She used the funds to help pay for the **chef training and operations program** at B.C.'s North Island College.

The scholarship, she says, is "a huge help, as the cost of this program is higher than many other degree programs. This is because of additional costs like knives and uniforms."



In two years, she plans to transfer to the **culinary arts program in Tralee**, Ireland.

Izabel received her scholarship for her achievements in ballet. The teen has performed with Vancouver's **Coastal City Ballet Company**, spent last summer studying with the **English National Ballet School** in the U.K, and danced with Coastal City Ballet through the fall and winter.

With five years in which to use her District/Authority scholarship, she has plenty of time to consider her options.

"We're looking at a few of the post-secondary ballet programs where you dance with a company and also work towards a degree," she says.

The other three learners who were awarded District/Authority scholarships this year received them for excellence in Music and Community Service.

As our Chief Learning Officer, Nikki Kenyon, says, "We are so incredibly proud of our scholarship recipients. The success of these youth shows that SelfDesign's approach to learning creates as many opportunities for learners to pursue post-secondary studies and the careers of their choice as those attending bricks-and-mortar schools do."

SelfDesign Family Services

At SelfDesign, the Family Services team works to support and contribute to a school culture of safety, acceptance, respect and encouragement for all members of the SelfDesign community in **regards to ability, learning style, culture, race, personal or spiritual beliefs, and gender identity and expression.**

Several goals inform our day-to-day work. Of these, the foundational goal is that learners and families have the support they need to be successful in their participation in SelfDesign. We are guided by the **SelfDesign Wisdom Strategy**, a systematic approach to addressing questions, working through problems or resolving conflicts.

We strive to ensure learners, parents and caregivers understand SelfDesign's program requirements and are aware of the help and resources available to them to meet agreements, participate meaningfully, and plan confidently for their future educational goals, including how to complete grades 10 to 12.

We also aim to ensure educators have **access to clear and meaningful information** they need to support their learners and families' participation according to program agreements, school policy and procedure, and ministerial guidelines.

In addition to learner program participation support and planning, the Family Services team works to increase awareness of policies, procedures and resources in the realms of **safety, inclusion and diversity.** We work with our colleagues across SelfDesign to integrate information and resources on these important topics into SelfDesign's educational curriculum, offerings and programming, and to provide opportunities for personal and professional development to educators and contractors.



SelfDesign Family Services

For example, in 2021, the Family Services team hosted a guest speaker and workshop on **anti-oppression** for members of SelfDesign's Support teams. From this, we developed extension activities to help us continue learning about this topic. We also began developing a workshop for other teams to grow their knowledge and understanding of inclusion and diversity, which we plan to deploy in 2022.

In addition, we created a resource for using **inclusive language** in the SelfDesign Community. The resource encourages the use of inclusive language in communication, offers suggestions for how and why we use inclusive language, and is available in different formats.

Other services we offer include **Guidance counselling, provincial assessment planning, clinical counselling, program participation support, mediation** for educators and families when they experience communication challenges, emergency response, anti-bullying and abuse support, and online safety support.

We support the **online Gender Sexual Orientation Alliance (GSA)**. Our online Rainbow Hub and GSA offerings provide educators, parents and caregivers, and learners in kindergarten to grade 12 access to resources based on SelfDesign's SOGI principles (sexual orientation and gender identity).

The SelfDesign community can access resources in our online **Family Resource Centre's Virtual Brochure Rack** and Guidance centre. We continue to collaborate with the SelfDesign Learning Experiences librarian to develop resources for learners, families and educators.

If you are a member of the SelfDesign community and would like to learn more about what we do at Family Services, see **our articles** on the SelfDesign blog. We also encourage you to get in touch if you have any questions about our services and supports.



“Family Services offers integrated, holistic support to learners and their families. We provide support for anything that affects learner participation in their education program and anything that has to do with engaging in the school environment.
– Todd Butler, Family Services team lead

Expanding and integrating Indigenous learning opportunities at SelfDesign

SelfDesign continues its work to advance the **journey towards reconciliation** by connecting to Indigenous ways of being, seeing and knowing throughout our educational programs and offerings.

Our efforts are driven by the recommendations put forward in 2017 by SelfDesign's Indigenous education task force, comprised of an elder and Indigenous SelfDesign parent, learner, and educators.

How we support our learners

- ✓ **We integrate the First Peoples Principles of Learning** into our work, programs and learning opportunities.
- ✓ **We carefully curate authentic resources to help non-Indigenous learners** explore and understand Indigenous ways of being, seeing and knowing and to support Indigenous learners to see their rich cultures and knowledge systems reflected in their learning materials
- ✓ **We provide grants for Indigenous learners** to connect with and deepen their learning about cultural practices and languages and connect with elders and knowledge keepers in their communities
- ✓ **We offer learners opportunities to connect with Indigenous Elders**, traditional knowledge keepers, Indigenous educators and each other.

As part of **our commitment** to furthering reconciliation and intercultural understanding and respect, SelfDesign Learning Community became a member of the **Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Foundation's Legacy School** network in 2019, joining a growing community of legacy schools across Canada and linking to funding, educational resources and opportunities that advance reconciliation.

“Today's learners are tomorrow's leaders, and they will be the ones to carry reconciliation through and see it made part of everyday thought and action.

— Nikki Kenyon, Chief Learning Officer



Expanding and integrating Indigenous learning opportunities at SelfDesign

Here is some of the Indigenous Education work we advanced in 2021

- ✓ **We launched our Indigenous Education webpage.** By sharing this information online, we publicly confirm our commitment to advancing reconciliation. The webpage shows how we're working towards reconciliation by connecting to Indigenous ways of being, seeing and knowing throughout our educational programs and offerings. It also provides a central, one-stop resource for information about Indigenous education at SelfDesign, including the opportunities we offer Indigenous learners and families to further connect with and explore their own cultures and ways of seeing.
- ✓ **We continued to offer Indigenous Education Connect,** a dynamic, online classroom space that provides resources and information to support all members of the SelfDesign Learning Community on the path to reconciliation.
- ✓ **We began a Lunch and Learn series,** a series of professional development opportunities during the learning year, to support our educators and contractors to deepen their understanding about reconciliation, Indigenous worldviews and perspectives, and **First People's Principles of Learning.**
- ✓ **We hosted activities, speakers and discussions,** in June in honour of National Indigenous History Month and in September in honour of Truth and Reconciliation Week. We highlighted learning opportunities and opportunities to take action for reconciliation for Secret Path Week (organized by the Downie Wenjack Foundation).
- ✓ **Our Cultural Learning Grants supported 58 of our Indigenous learners** connect more deeply with and learn more about their traditional cultures and languages.
- ✓ **We supported learners and families as they navigated grades 10 to 12** and prepared for life after grade 12. This work included providing information about post-secondary opportunities and funding specific to Indigenous learners.
- ✓ **Our seasonal Indigenous family and guardian discussion forum** continued to provide a safe space for families to share their insights, experiences, commentary and questions with each other and with our Indigenous Education team. We also hosted informal spaces for families to connect and share, where we discussed films and books and hosted online experiences and sharing circles for Indigenous families and learners.





A SELFDESIGN STORY |

Great designs!

Learner-designed Orange Shirt Day t-shirts commemorate the need for reconciliation

Two SelfDesign learners who took part in a healing circle hosted by the Footholds Learning Centre in Nanaimo, British Columbia, in June to mourn the children lost and harmed at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School and other residential schools across Canada wore their orange shirts with quiet pride while they were grieving.

Jessica (then in grade 9) and Lacey (then in grade 8) wore orange t-shirts they had each designed for SelfDesign's Orange Shirt Day T-Shirt Design Contest last fall.

"I believe that ALL children, families and cultures matter," says Jessica, a member of the Skyway (Shxwha:y) Village who began her learning journey with SelfDesign Learning Community and **Footholds Learning Center** in 2015.

Orange Shirt Day grew out of a residential school commemoration and reunion that took place in 2013 in Williams Lake, B.C. Every September 30 since then, Orange Shirt Day has provided an opportunity for all youth to join their voices to those of other Canadians to remember the residential school experience, to witness and honour the healing journey of residential school survivors and their families, and to commit to the ongoing process of reconciliation.

The SelfDesign Orange Shirt Day T-Shirt Design Contest was one of many Orange Shirt Day activities offered by SelfDesign last September. For the contest, learners were invited to submit designs for an Orange Shirt Day t-shirt. All SelfDesign learners were then invited to vote on the designs.



Jessica's and Lacey's designs tied for first place.

Thanks to the talents of these two learners, two beautiful styles of t-shirts are now available for purchase on SelfDesign's new online store. Distributions from the proceeds of t-shirt sales will be guided by the SelfDesign Indigenous Education team and used to further reconciliation efforts.

We support...



INCLUSIVE LEARNING

We provide learners with Indigenous learning opportunities so they can understand the world and its relations through a framework of Indigenous wisdom and philosophy.



SUPPORTIVE LEARNING

The safety, acceptance and inclusion of all learners in regard to ability, learning style, culture, personal and spiritual beliefs, and gender identity.



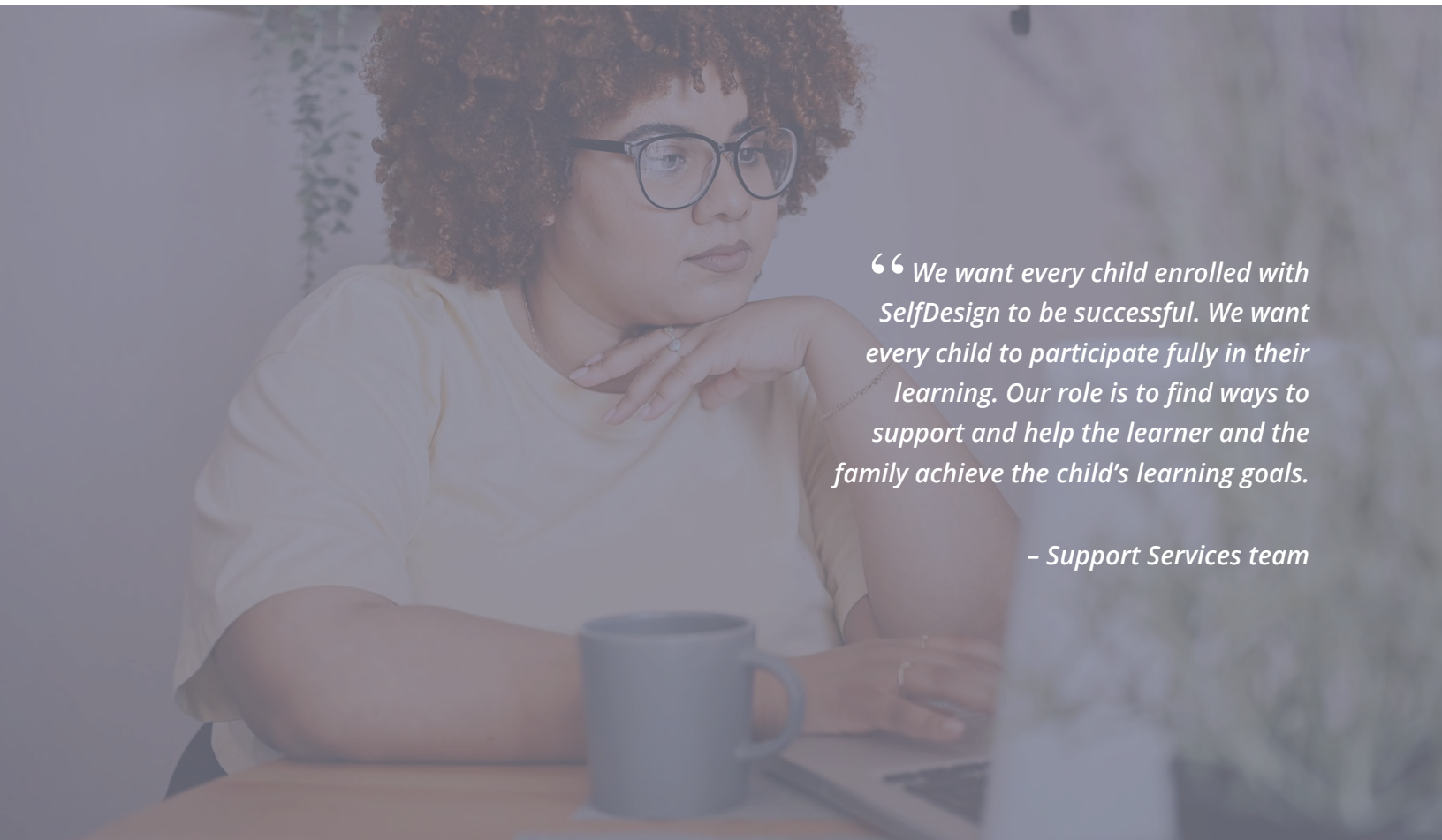
INDEPENDENT LEARNING

The development of traits such as autonomy, collaboration and a sense of social and global responsibility, which can position learners to be successful in post-secondary programs and careers.



Supporting learners with special needs

- ✓ **Our inclusive kindergarten to grade 12** program provides equal access to opportunities for all learners, including specific services to support learners of all ages with special needs.
- ✓ **Learners are unique so we adapt our programming** to them. Every learner has a unique voice, and our inclusive kindergarten to grade 12 program is committed to listening to each and every child – however they are able to communicate.
- ✓ **Families know their child better** than anyone and, while opinions of professional experts are highly regarded, their insights are equally valued.
- ✓ SelfDesign's **support services creates Individual Education Plans** for children that go above and beyond a regular learning plan. Each plan is learner-centred and created through collaboration between families, their child, and a B.C. certified educator (specialized learning consultant) to identify and support their child's individual needs. Learners have access to specialists who can provide a wide array of services, including speech pathology, psychology, etc.
- ✓ **We provide services for all learners needing additional support** to maximize their learning opportunities. We offer support services to learners who have been, in accordance with BC Ministry of Education guidelines, professionally diagnosed with low incidence needs or who may or may not have been diagnosed with high incidence needs.



“ We want every child enrolled with SelfDesign to be successful. We want every child to participate fully in their learning. Our role is to find ways to support and help the learner and the family achieve the child's learning goals.

– Support Services team





A SELFDESIGN STORY |

An amazing organization!

Where learners are encouraged to dream and wonder

“SelfDesign has been a wonderful experience for me, and a place where I’ve learned how to dream and how to wonder,” says Matt.

The learner enrolled with SelfDesign in 2011 because he wanted to learn and explore at his own pace – something that wasn’t encouraged at the brick-and-mortar school he had attended in grades one and two.

Matt, who has autism, spent his nine years with **SelfDesign Learning Community** following his curiosity and exploring his interests. He also received the support and guidance he needed to engage fully and successfully with his learning on his own terms.

This past June, he **commenced** with a BC Certificate of Graduation. His long-term goal is to become an end sequence technician – the person who creates the credit sequences at the end of film – or a stage or voice actor. He is also considering going back to school to study history, another of his interests.

Matt credits the support he received as a learner for making his learning journey so successful. At SelfDesign, more than a dozen people worked with him to support him, encourage him, help him navigate his learning, and show him how to nurture and celebrate his own curiosity.

As he says, “It’s the people that make the difference at Self Design.”



He benefitted from being able to grow at a pace dictated by his own learning needs and style, something made possible by our **learner-centred approach to learning**. And when Matt needed additional support for his learning at SelfDesign, he received it. Sometimes that support led him to ask new questions, follow new lines of curiosity, and find new passions.

For example, to help him manage his learning challenges, SelfDesign connected Matt to an occupational therapist. During therapy, Matt learned about movement, balance and coordination – skills that enabled him to audition for, be cast in and perform in a production of Les Misérables.



That experience, in turn, ignited Matt's passion for stage and voice acting. And it helped him find his own community – a place in the world where he feels accepted for who he is and where he feels he belongs.

It also sparked an interest in the work and influence of Temple Grandin and of Mickey Rowe. Grandin is a U.S. professor who lectures around the world on autism and humane animal handling. Rowe is the first actor on the autism spectrum to play an autistic character on stage (the role of Christopher Boone, in the award-winning play, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*) and is the founding director of the Seattle, Washington theatre company, Arts on the Waterfront.

"I probably would never have stepped on stage to do theatre or made the film if SelfDesign had not provided so many learning options for me," he says, "As a SelfDesign learner, I am not afraid to go outside the box if it opens up new doors to other opportunities."



SelfDesign Home Learning

Pursuing learning independently.

As schools across British Columbia implement new provincial requirements put in place to keep learners and educators safe, many families with school-aged children are seeking alternatives to traditional, brick-and-mortar schools.

SelfDesign Home Learning provides an alternative for families across BC who wish to have their children learn independently at home. As a homeschooling program, it is the most flexible learning program we offer at SelfDesign Learning Foundation. It would best suit families where the parents wish to take on the responsibility for their child's education and are not concerned with BC Ministry of Education requirements.

SelfDesign Home Learning differs from our regular kindergarten to grade 12 program in the following ways:

- ✓ **Families do not work with an educator.**
- ✓ **Parents take responsibility** for the learning program and do not report to the school. Learners' work is not assessed.
- ✓ **Learners do not earn credit for courses in grades 10 to 12**, nor graduate and earn a high school diploma.

To enrich the at-home learning experience, we provide learners and families with access to a suite of subscriptions to high-quality online learning opportunities, such as BrainPop, Go Zen, and Enchanted Learning. We also share information about key resources and supports for learning at home – including Indigenous Education resources, information on SelfDesign camps and gatherings that are open to Home Learning families, and information about free online learning resources.

The SelfDesign Home Learning program has been serving learners since 1989. By the end of 2021, about 460 home learners from 298 families were registered with SelfDesign.





A SELFDESIGN STORY |

An incredible family!

This family explored interests, pursued passions, and grew up together

When SelfDesign learner Graydan completed his home-schooling with SelfDesign, his family finished a journey with SelfDesign that had begun almost 20 years – and four siblings – earlier.

Back in the early 2000s, Graydan's mom, Natalie, was homeschooling her eldest child on their farm 100 km west of Kamloops, British Columbia, and was considering homeschooling for her younger children too. Hearing SelfDesign founder Brent Cameron and one of SelfDesign's learning consultants at the time, Michael Maser, speak about our philosophy and approach to learning at a conference one weekend confirmed her choice of home learning for her children.

She, her spouse Scott and their five children enrolled with SelfDesign Learning Community, our kindergarten to grade 12 program, and worked with BC certified educators who supported the family as the children learned.

"We had fabulous learning consultants," Natalie says. Two of them became and remain family friends. "Funnily enough, they have both told me that they learned a lot from me.... Both were amazing mentors for our daughter, and I feel extremely lucky that they have been a part of our lives."

Then the family moved to SelfDesign's homeschooling program, now called SelfDesign Home Learning, seeking less structure, less reporting, and even more freedom to shape their day-to-day learning.



The children followed their passions and learned at their own rates. They lived in nature for most of their childhoods, free to explore the world around them, free to watch and help care for the pigs, goats, sheep, cows, chickens, ducks, dogs, horse and cat on the family's five-hectare hobby farm, and free to find joy in discovery.

And as the children learned and grew, Natalie and Scott also learned and grew.

"We learned to look at our lives as a learning journey, to enjoy the journey and each other," she says. "We all had the freedom to grow and learn together instead of growing apart."

Today, their SelfDesign journey over, the family remains close. They regularly spend time together, dropping in on each other and helping out when needed.

HomeLearners Network



HomeLearners
Network

SelfDesign Learning Foundation launched its newest program, HomeLearners Network, in November 2021. This exciting new program combines our 20 years of experience in providing home learning and resources to tens of thousands of kids with fun, innovative and creative activities.

HomeLearners Network offers At Home Activities (AHAs) for children and youth in kindergarten to grade 1212 to help them pursue their passions, learn new things, build relationships and have fun. At HomeLearners Network, our world-class certified instructors and educators offer a tonne of hands-on creativity both on and off the screen.

We help children and youth discover all sorts of great things like critical thinking, physics and social justice while developing meaningful qualities like empathy, self-expression and collaboration.

All of our activities are designed by passionate B.C. certified educators, and based on best educational practices. HomeLearners Network is a place where kids and teens can explore and discover new passions and ideas in collaboration with family and friends.

With numerous Realtime (live, educator-led) and Anytime (downloadable) At Home Activities to choose from, and new ones being added weekly, there's something perfectly-suited for every child or youth.

The more the merrier! All of our activities can be done solo, together with your family or children can do them with a group of their friends. We're all about building relationships and making connections.

All activities are thoughtfully designed by certified educators and are competency-based so you can trust your child is learning practical skills and having a tonne of fun while they do so.



Learn more at homelearnersnetwork.com

HomeLearners Network

Offerings

Realtime At Home Activities are live, instructor-led learning activities on various topics that your children can participate in and follow along online!

Realtimes happen in a variety of ways. Get creative in a one-time session (Single), dive deep into a fun topic over multiple days in a week (Camp), or take your time with an interesting theme over multiple sessions (Series).



LIVE instructor-led activities

Anytime At Home Activities are self-guided learning activities that you can download and explore on your own time!



**Downloadable PDFs
you can work on anytime!**

What sets HomeLearners Network apart

- ✓ **Focused on relationships and connections**
We truly believe 'the more the merrier', and are all about helping kids and teens build relationships with each other, grownups, as well as with their families, friends and educators. All of our activities can be done solo, together with your family or your kids can do them with a group of their friends.
- ✓ **We use technology as a tool for off-screen, hands-on creativity**
We use technology as a tool to build real connections between fingers and brains, and most importantly between people. Technology is used as a tool for communicating and guiding ideas in a safe and inclusive environment. We transform screen time into quality time.
- ✓ **Led by certified world-class educators**
Parents can rest easy knowing all of our activities are thoughtfully designed by qualified certified educators with real experience working with kids and teens.
- ✓ **Pioneers in home and personalized learning**
SelfDesign Learning Foundation has been a leader in home learning and providing home learning resources for over 20 years.
- ✓ **Supporting educational outcomes**
Our activities support learning objectives. They are based on best educational practices and competencies that can be used for planning and assessment. They help kids and teens gain practical skills while developing traits like empathy, creativity and more.

SelfDesign Learning Foundation

Other Highlights and successes, 2021

The past year offered new opportunities and spurred interest in and demand for our programs and services. SelfDesign was well positioned to respond to the challenges.





A one-stop online resource about Indigenous education at SelfDesign

Launched during Truth and Reconciliation Week in September, our new Indigenous Education webpage provides a central, one-stop resource for information about Indigenous education at SelfDesign.

IndSpiring our educators on the path towards reconciliation

This year, 10 of our educators attended IndSpire, the national gathering for Indigenous education. These educators are now sharing their learnings from the gathering with our other educators and contractors as part of our ongoing Lunch and Learn professional development series.



Connecting our community via Indigenous Ed Connect

Open to all learners and families in kindergarten to grade 12 within our SelfDesign Learning Platform, Indigenous Ed Connect is a rich network of resources, live offering opportunities, online forums, and more – there to support all SelfDesign learners, families, educators and contractors on the path towards reconciliation.



Cultural Learning Grants for Indigenous learners

Our Cultural Learning Grants helped at least 58 of our Indigenous learners connect more deeply with and learn more about their traditional cultures and languages this year.

Furthering our work on inclusion and diversity

A Fundamentals of Anti-Oppression workshop presented by a guest speaker for members of SelfDesign Support teams served as the basis for SelfDesign's Family Services team to develop extension activities to continue learning about this important topic. The team also began developing a workshop on inclusion and diversity for other SelfDesign teams, with planned deployment in 2022.



Family Services' new resource for using **inclusive language** in the SelfDesign Community encourages the use of inclusive language in communication and offers suggestions for how and why we use inclusive language. The resource is now available in different formats.



Rainbow Hub launched

We launched this new offering for learners and families in kindergarten to grade 7 in September. As part of our SOGI 1 2 3 programming, the Rainbow Hub supports learning about issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity in a way that is age and developmentally appropriate. New resources are posted at the beginning of each month.



Provincial scholarships received

Seven learners from our Class of 2021 received School District/Authority scholarships from the BC Ministry of Education. These young people are among more than 400 learners from B.C.'s independent school authorities and among 5,500 students across the province who were awarded the \$1250 scholarships this year. The scholarship recognizes learners for excellence in a range of interest areas such as dance, music, fine arts, technical and trades training, Indigenous languages and cultures, and physical activity.



Peer-led campfire for learners moving from grade 9 to grade 10

Grades 10 to 12 in SelfDesign Learning Community provide a significant change in the SelfDesign learning experience compared to younger grades. For example, learners in the higher grades interact more with their educators and peers, take part in weekly learning challenges, and observe and document their own learning with their learning consultant. In the spring, the school's Learners Council organized and held a friendly and informal event for learners in grade 9 who would be moving into our grade 10 to 12 program the following fall to help ease that transition. Learners Council members shared with their younger peers their own perspectives on how the learning experience changes and on the increased expectations and the opportunities that are available in grades 10 to 12. They also answered questions and provided advice.

Strengthened transition planning for learners and families with Individualized Education Plans

In January 2021, we put new guidelines and processes in place to help our educators and contractors begin planning and providing transition support for learners and families who have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) earlier. We now begin working with learners and families to prepare a learner's transition to grade 10 when the learner is in grade 7, and to prepare a learner's transition to life after grade 12 when the learner is in grade 10. We support the preparation for that transition through the following years so that when the learner reaches the transition, they have the skills, assessments and documentation they need to successfully move into that next stage of their education or life.



A new online, learner co-designed and -directed space

In the spring, we launched Open Spaces, where learners can interact socially in a way that is learner-directed and also less structured. Open Spaces provides safe and informal online spaces for learners in grades 10 to 12 to meet, get to know one another outside of the more formal educator-led real-time online meetings, and share their interests with each other.

It is co-designed by learners every week, allowing them to come together and join their peers in rooms of their interests.



Learner-led Digital Commencement Scrapbook

Learners in grade 12 took the lead on organizing the Digital Commencement Scrapbook, offering their peer, commencing learners an opportunity to further celebrate their achievements upon graduation. Based on the concept of a yearbook, a print keepsake version of the scrapbook could also be ordered by learners and families. Commencing learners were asked to contribute photographs, reflections and inspirations to the project.





Real-time meetings for the SelfDesign Path course spark deep conversations

Parents and educators are connecting with our philosophy and practice and with each other during Path's real-time meetings, offered new in 2021 as an alternative to the course's asynchronous online meetings options.



Three new online camps piloted

In April, learners aged 6 to 14 showcased their diversity and creativity in how they told their stories at our first online Story Camp. This was one of five online camps we offered in 2021 that reached 128 learners and families. We also developed and offered a new Music Camp and a new Movement Camp in 2021.

We love increasing our camps' reach to all corners of B.C. with our online camps, but we look forward to our popular live, in-person camps once COVID-related public health measures allow.



Preparing our technological platforms for the future, Phase 1

As part of our strategy to help ensure the ongoing safety and security of our systems and allow SelfDesign to remain resilient and responsive to emerging changes in B.C.'s online education and technology environments, we transitioned to a new email system in May. This is the first part of our technology transition strategy, with phases 2 and 3 planned for implementation in 2022.



A fully virtual, remote organization

In 2021, SelfDesign Learning Foundation became a fully virtual organization, with no physical location and all operations decentralized. This makes us unique among schools in B.C.

We have now digitized all the records we are required by law to keep and have reconfigured and are monitoring our services and functions.

