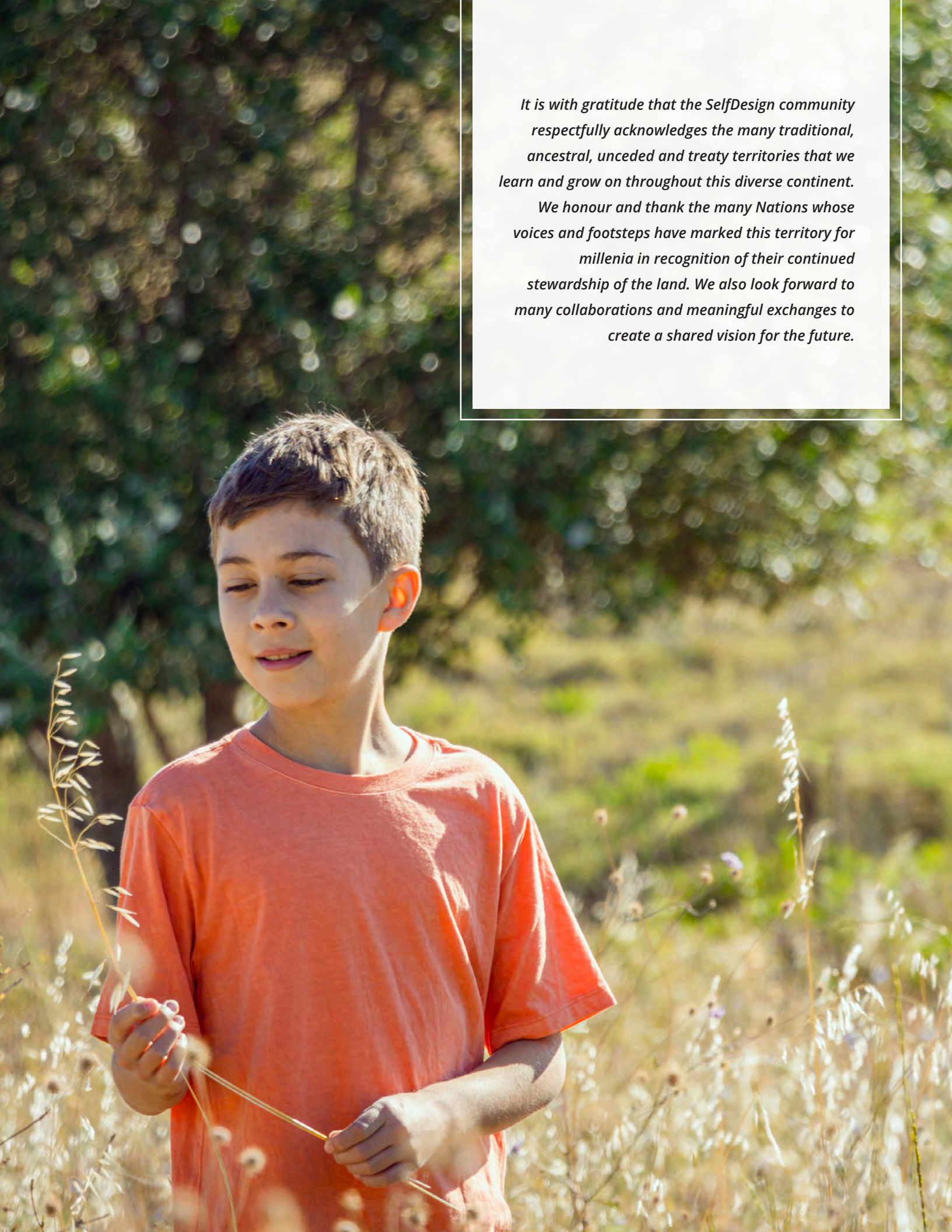




SelfDesign Learning Foundation Community Report 2022

A young boy with short brown hair, wearing an orange t-shirt, stands in a field of tall, dry grass and small purple flowers. He is holding a thin plant stem with both hands and looking down at it. The background is a soft-focus landscape with green trees and bushes under bright sunlight.

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

If organizational years had themes, then the theme for SelfDesign Learning Foundation in 2022 was 'change.'

While change is an inevitable part of an organization's life cycle, how it responds to change is a good measure of its culture and its people's willingness to learn and to grow — and learn and grow, we did. I attribute much of this willingness to accept change and be able to respond to it in a strategic and methodical manner to our continued understanding of our systems and processes and to the focus we have placed over the past five years on the well-being of the organization. This combined focus led SelfDesign Learning Foundation to what I believe can be described as a very successful year.

Due to COVID-19 interruptions, we continued to use our 2018–2021 Strategic Plan as our operational guide through 2022. This plan placed a high degree of importance on increasing efficiencies in operational systems and on increasing our mechanisms for achieving organization well-being. By increasing efficiencies that included further documentation of our technology and business architecture, we created proactive strategies to deal with change, including change resulting from external forces.

Among the externally driven changes our community successfully navigated in 2022, a key one involved SelfDesign Learning Community's submission to become an independent provincial online learning school under the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care guidelines for online education. In September, the Ministry accepted our proposal and invited us to continue the process. Thanks to the efforts of Chief Learning Officer Nikki Kenyon, Principals team members Catherine Dinim, Clarissa Tufts and Vanessa Kuran, as well as many others in SelfDesign Learning Foundation, we have been working with the Province to move this process along. We look forward to continuing to offer our excellent, unique educational offerings to learners and families in kindergarten to grade 12 across B.C. for years to come.

Another major change was SelfDesign Learning Community's shift to a new learning management system — an effort that drew on our collective past experience, our community's expertise, and our educators', contractors', learners' and families' dedication. It is due to their support that the transition went as smoothly as it did. The new platform also sets the school up for its coming role as a provincial online learning school. When we begin operating under the new provincial model in 2023, our community will already be familiar with the learning platform.

As in past years, my leadership has been concentrated on the overall well-being of the organization, our contractors, and our learners and their families. We continue to nurture and live by the SelfDesign philosophy of being curious learners, building on our knowledge and remaining open to new ideas in a way that continues to strengthen the culture of the organization. One more change I would like to acknowledge is the departure of long-time community members and the arrival of new people. This fall, we welcomed a record 22 new learning consultants to SelfDesign Learning Community. HomeLearners Network Project Manager Kate Newstead, who led that program's successful development, launch and first year, left us to pursue

other opportunities, and we recently welcomed Mara Hawkins to lead the program's growth, offerings and reach to learners of all ages everywhere.

We also said goodbye to Nikki Kenyon in her role as Chief Learning Officer. Nikki has been with SelfDesign since beginning as a learning consultant in 2007, and she took on the role of SelfDesign Learning Community principal in 2017. She has had immense influence on SelfDesign, and I, for one, enjoyed benefitting from her wisdom, insights and enthusiasm for the SelfDesign philosophy, approach and culture as we worked together to support this wonderful community and its goals. Nikki will continue to offer her services to SelfDesign in new ways, and we are excited to continue our work with her.

I feel privileged to be part of SelfDesign, working alongside these and the many other dedicated, skilled and passionate individuals that make up this community. Collectively, we are focused on the future in a way that is now supported by a better understanding of how the organization works and what is required to make it grow and thrive.

I look forward to working with you in 2023 and beyond.

With gratitude and passion,

Amber

**"IF YOU WANT TO TRULY
UNDERSTAND SOMETHING,
TRY TO CHANGE IT."**

—KURT LEWIN



Message

Verena Gibbs, Chair, Board of Directors
SelfDesign Learning Foundation

The role of a board of directors of a not-for-profit organization is to have “eyes out and up.”

This means being responsible for scanning the environment and planning accordingly. As a board, we are accountable for protecting the organization, which includes ensuring the integrity of our philosophy is alive and well, that there is financial stability, that risks have been mitigated and opportunities harnessed — all while staying true to our purpose and our overarching goals. In terms of organizational structure, the board is responsible for hiring and supporting the President & CEO, which is accomplished through ongoing dialogue, discussion and collaboration.

And although there is always much in the environment that cannot be controlled — a pandemic, for example — as a board, we can provide the strategic oversight that allows the organization to successfully navigate into an ever-renewing future. The work we do is both inspiring and important.

As in previous years, SelfDesign Learning Foundation’s Board of Directors has held those responsibilities close in 2022. If one shared lesson was learned from the pandemic, it was coined long ago by the Greek philosopher, Socrates, who said, “The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new.”

This year, the SelfDesign Learning Foundation Board of Directors and Leadership team focused on laying the groundwork for building the new.

Why does SelfDesign Learning Foundation exist? Who do we serve? How can we grow into a future with integrity, resilience and grace? We continue to explore these questions and more as we prepare to craft a new strategic vision. The new vision and accompanying plan will provide the high-level, overarching direction that will help SelfDesign chart its course through the coming years.

I’m excited about the future and the possibilities it holds for this amazing organization.

As Board Chairperson, I want to acknowledge that this work would not have been nearly so enjoyable if it were not for the people I work with on the board. It is my opinion that successful boards are built with people who share different experiences, knowledge and world views, and that through dialogue and critical questioning, we aspire to both protect the organization we serve and to orient it into a prosperous future.

My fellow board members, Devon Girard, Ken Banister, Sherry Elwood, Carlos Da Ponte and Frank Heinzelmann, have done all that and more. I thank them for their dedication, passion, humour and generosity in sharing their expertise and vision this year. Over the course of the past year, these excellent people have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to sup-

porting this very special and unique community that is called SelfDesign.

It is also with great appreciation that we say farewell to Ken Banister. Ken has served on the board since 2020 and has brought considerable knowledge, warmth and wit to our discussions. We wish him all the best on his well-earned year of travelling with his wife and our deepest gratitude for his years of service.

I look forward to continuing our inspiring and important work with my board colleagues and with SelfDesign leadership in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Yerena

**"THE SECRET OF CHANGE
IS TO FOCUS ALL OF
YOUR ENERGY NOT ON
FIGHTING THE OLD, BUT
ON BUILDING THE NEW."**

—SOCRATES

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.

The SelfDesign Learning Foundation is 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



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.

“ 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



Who we are

Board of Directors



Verena Gibbs



Ken Banister



Sherry Elwood



Devon Girard



Frank Heinzelmann



Carlos da Ponte

Leadership team



Amber Papou
President & CEO



Sandy Steward
Chief Operating Officer



Nikki Kenyon
Chief Learning
Officer



Dave Conroy
Chief Information
Officer



Catherine Dinim
Principal, SelfDesign
Learning Community



Debra Farquharson
Director of Finance



River Meyer
Director of
Organizational
Learning & Culture



Debra Sigfusson
Director of
Human Relations



Karen Zukas
Director of
Communications
& Marketing

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 and Child Care 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.



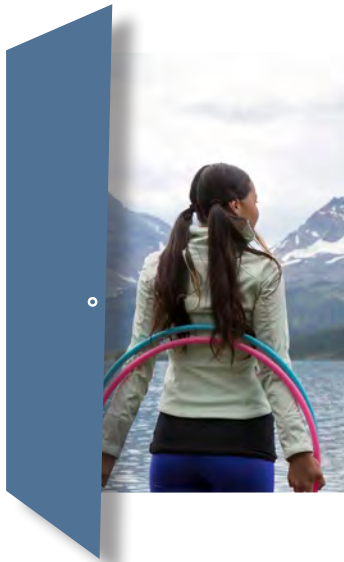
The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Foundation aims to build cultural understanding and create a path towards reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. SelfDesign is registered in the foundation's Legacy Schools program, joining a growing community of schools across Canada and linking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



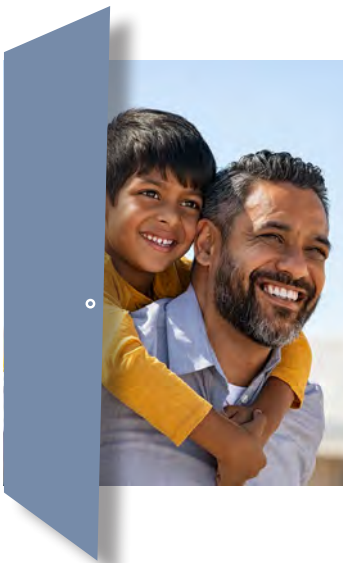
Autonomy

Author your own learning journey



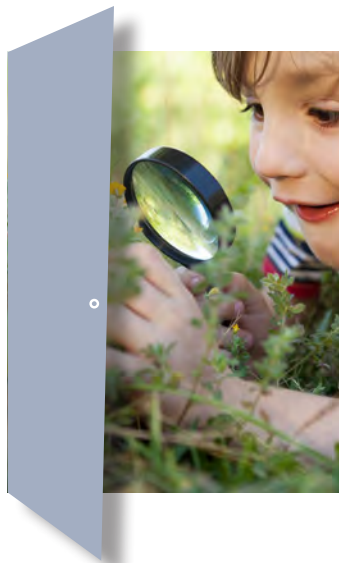
Innovation

Innovative education for people of all ages and abilities



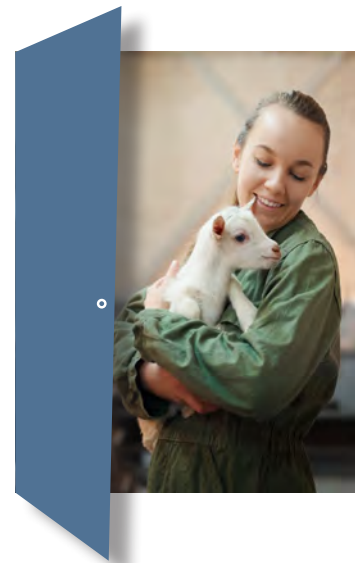
Connections

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.



SelfDesign Learning Foundation programs and services



SelfDesign Learning Community

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



SelfDesign Home Learning

A flexible option for parents who wish to homeschool their child



HomeLearners Network

At Home and Real-time activities designed by B.C. 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



Message

Nikki Kenyon, Chief Learning Officer
SelfDesign Learning Foundation

**If I've learned anything over the past few years,
it's that change is a part of life!**

Here at SelfDesign, 2022 introduced a number of significant changes to our educational programs. We took the approach of preparing for the changes, doing what we could to direct them, and as best we could, actively managing their effects on our programs and community.

I feel we are beginning to reap the benefits of that proactive approach.

Foremost among the past year's big changes at SelfDesign is the implementation of our new learning management system. I acknowledge the flexibility and patience of our educators, contractors, learners and families as we undertook this transition and essentially overhauled how we do almost everything in our learning program. It was a gigantic effort, requiring almost a year of planning and preparation, and with a tightened timeline as we awaited the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care's decisions before implementation. And it is thanks to their ongoing support and engagement in our core values that it went so smoothly and successfully.

Another major change we've spent much of the last year preparing for is the BC Ministry's coming implementation of its new provincial online learning model. Starting in the 2023–2024 learning year, new online education guidelines will require that schools providing services to learners across B.C. must be a designated provincial online learning school. Without that designation, online schools will be restricted to working only with learners from within set geographical areas.

In early September, the Ministry invited SelfDesign to continue the process of becoming a provincial online learning school. This means SelfDesign Learning Community will be able to continue to support learners and families across B.C. with the high-quality program we're known for. I want to thank our Board, the Leadership and Principals teams and all the SelfDesign educators and other contractors who delved into the data and contributed to the submission we put together for this initiative.

With both initiatives, all the wonderful learners and families we serve, the educators and other contractors we work with, and collaborators who believe passionately in our philosophy and approach to learning repeatedly inspired us to advocate hard for SelfDesign. It took a lot of work and effort, but it was also so very rewarding to go to bat for this community of people who make such a difference in the lives of so many B.C. families.

Our newest program, HomeLearners Network, also saw considerable growth and change. We increased our offerings, added multi-session activities, and extended its reach and engagement. We have begun to integrate HomeLearners Network with SelfDesign Learning Community by offering families with children enrolled in our kindergarten to grade 12 program unlimited access to HomeLearners Network offerings. We look forward to adding more activities, recruiting more guides, engaging more members of our community, and introducing more people beyond our community to our fantastic learning opportunities and unique approach.

I'm also delighted we were able to gather in person for the first time in three years to celebrate the 110 learners who completed their learning journeys with SelfDesign Learning Community this year. I am especially pleased that a few learners who had commenced in 2020 and 2021 joined us this June to celebrate their siblings' commencement. We were thrilled to honour them, as well.

On a personal note, this will be the last time in the foreseeable future that you hear from me in a SelfDesign Community Report. I am stepping down as SelfDesign Chief Learning Officer and learning consultant this year to devote more time to my health and family endeavours. The 15 years since I first started at SelfDesign have been inspiring and rewarding. I feel incredibly privileged to have had the opportunity to help lead and shape this remarkable organization, to advocate for this community, and to support so many passionate learners, families and educators over the years. I want to thank you for your enthusiasm, friendship and support. My family and I have grown up together in this community, and it gives me great pleasure to know that SelfDesign is in such good hands — yours.

With gratitude,

Nikki

**"THE 15 YEARS SINCE I FIRST
STARTED AT SELFDESIGN
HAVE BEEN INSPIRING AND
REWARDING."**

—NIKKI

Faces of SelfDesign: Grace



Like many members of our Class of 2022, Grace shows that SelfDesign learners have all the same opportunities for careers and post-secondary studies as any young person who graduates from high school in British Columbia. After having been with SelfDesign Learning Community for most of grade school, she is preparing to start her university program of choice ... with a full entrance scholarship.

Grace didn't pay much attention to grades during most of her schooling years, but in grade 10, she surprised herself by doing really well. She found she liked getting good marks.

"I put pressure on myself — I wanted to do well again," Grace says. "I talked with my teachers and told them, 'I need you to tell me what I need to be doing in order to achieve what I want.' They were great and so helpful! And I continued to do well."

Then, halfway through grade 11, Grace found out about the Costume Studies program at Dalhousie University.

"It was perfect for me," she says. "I'd never really thought seriously about what university might look like, and suddenly I was, 'Oh, I want to do this ... but it's so far away, and I've never done school like this before....' It was all a bit scary, but I decided that it was what I wanted to do, and it became another of my goals — to continue to keep my grades up in order to get into university."

"I love sewing and costume design," Grace says. "Those are my biggest interests, especially the history side of it."

Those interests also tie into her love of old movies and inspired her personal learning projects throughout

grades 10 to 12. She made a winter coat, and a 1950s-style dress. In grade 11, she focused on making a 17th-century corset from a pattern that she found printed in a history book about clothing that had been published by a museum in the U.K. She also recorded a video about corsetry to explain the garment's history and debunk the myths surrounding it.

For her grade 12 project, Grace sewed a dress inspired by a Mae West movie costume from the 1930s using an authentic 1939 dress pattern. The fabric is difficult to work with, but she says,

"It was the simplicity and slinkiness of it and the Hollywood vibe that I really liked, and I could see myself wearing it and being comfortable in it. And I learned so much about the 1930s and these kinds of dresses — I was really in my element of learning!"

Grace modelled the dress at our in-person Commencement Ceremony in May, where she met many of her classmates in person for the first time. In September 2023, Grace will leave her home community in the west Kootenays to begin the four-year Bachelor of Arts theatre program at the Fountain School of Performing Arts at Dalhousie in Halifax. There, she'll work towards an Honours degree in historical costume design, the only program of its kind in North America.

SelfDesign by the numbers, 2021/2022

2164

kindergarten to grade 12
learners were enrolled in
SelfDesign Learning Community

957

learners with special needs
received support services. In
2021/2022, SelfDesign Learning
Community supported the most
learners with special needs in
any learning year in the school's
history to date.

2439

external service provider-
contractors supported our
learners through Learning
Resources Services and
Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

448

home learners were registered
with SelfDesign Home Learning

72

contractors supported SelfDesign
administration and operations

180

B.C. certified educator-contractors
supported learners

110

learners completed their
learning journeys with
SelfDesign Learning Community

18

Cultural Learning Grants
helped our Indigenous learners
access Indigenous education
opportunities in the community
this year

7

guides offered 710 HomeLearners
Network activities to 490
learners



Continuous learning; continuous improvement

At SelfDesign, we believe learning is a continuous and cumulative process.

We apply this belief to our own organizational and educational approach. We continually monitor and review our processes, procedures, programs, methodologies, offerings, and so on, to see how they're working. We gather data, track metrics, and collect feedback and other information from our learners, families, educators, support providers and other contractors to get a sense of how they experience SelfDesign. We're constantly seeking new ways to learn more about ourselves as a community and as an organization.

The purpose of all this is to better learn how we're doing. We want to know how we're doing at the day-to-day level, at the month-by-month level and year over year. We try to understand what's going on at fine resolution and also in the big picture.

By continuously learning more about how we're doing and being in the world, we are better able to adjust what we do to make it even better. The insights we gain from feedback, data and metrics help us identify how we can streamline our processes, enrich our learners', families', educators' and contractors' experiences and interactions, and improve things both little and big, immediately and over time.

We undertake this continuous process of learning and improving not because the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care now requires it nor because Cognia, an international non-profit, non-partisan online school-accreditation organization from which we have received accreditation, expects it — although both organizations do require and expect it. We do it because we believe in it. We do it because it better serves our learners and other community members, and therefore us. We do it because we recognize it is a necessary aspect of growth and self-authorship as an organization.



Continuous learning; continuous improvement

Here are a few ways we applied this continuous learning–continuous improvement approach to our work this year.

Learning from past experience to guide the transition to a new learning platform

In 2022, SelfDesign Learning Community transitioned to a new learning management system, an integrated-software online platform used for creating, delivering, assessing courses and communicating about learning.

It was a huge change that basically required us to re-examine and overhaul much of the technical aspects of how we communicate with our learners and families, administer the program, set up learner portfolios and track learner competencies.

We've changed learning platforms in the past, and the team leading this year's transition drew on what they'd learned from those earlier experiences.

"We put in a lot of time and effort into this," Chief Learning Officer Nikki Kenyon says. "The training team we brought on shadowed us as we configured the platform, so they were aware of all the decisions we made and knew exactly how to build the orientation to best support our community. And because of that solid training foundation, few challenges emerged when we started up this learning year, even though we were basically changing how we do every single thing on the learning platform."

"We were supported in our orientation by a consultant who facilitated our introduction to and practice with Brightspace," says Catherine Dinim, SelfDesign principal, of the orientation sessions. "We saw demonstrations and walkthroughs of the workings of the new platform and were able to ask questions and practise use of the platform in real-time with colleagues."

In preparation for orientation, a call out for educators, families and learners to be part of the testing team brought incredible response. In the end, the new system configuration and the training materials were tested by a learning consultant, a learning specialist, and a parent with children enrolled in SelfDesign, including learners receiving additional learning supports to meet Individual Education Plan goals and a learner from grades 10 to 12.



“ So many people volunteered to help us test the platform’s setup and our training materials. The work by that user acceptance testing team allowed us to make sure that what we had done made sense and worked as expected and also helped us to refine our training materials before we did the orientations for parents, learners and educators.”

—SelfDesign Chief Learning Officer
Nikki Kenyon

Continuous learning; continuous improvement



Keeping Indigenous Education offerings current and relevant to advance reconciliation in our community

SelfDesign works to advance the journey towards reconciliation by building cultural bridges to Indigenous ways of being, seeing and knowing throughout our educational programs and offerings.

Reconciliation is a process, not a single offering or event or discussion. The conversations and language around reconciliation and decolonization in Canada are continually evolving as Canadians delve deeper and move further along the path towards reconciliation.

The changing landscape of reconciliation requires that we monitor our own approach towards reconciliation. To that end, our practice is to regularly review and update our curriculum and resources here at SelfDesign to ensure they remain current and authentic, continue to speak to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous families, and reflect the changing language and conversations around reconciliation and decolonization.

In addition, every year, we look at the enrolment of SelfDesign families who self-identify as Indigenous to shape our offerings. We use this information to seek out resources and design activities that reflect the ancestry and territories of these families.

Pursuing thoughtful, organic growth

HomeLearners Network, SelfDesign Learning Foundation's newest education program, launched in late 2021 and grew slowly and deliberately this past year. We used data, metrics and feedback to assess how learners and families took up and engaged with our initial offerings, and we used those learnings to shape subsequent offerings.

As a result, we now offer activity series — we have an art series, for example, that learners are engaging with enthusiastically — and we've learned that people are especially interested in engaging with our live, real-time offerings. Based on feedback, we also brought on a guide who specializes in presenting fun, informal, but very informative, science activities, with great results — because that was what learners and families are asking for.

The feedback and metrics also told us SelfDesign community members want more and easier access to HomeLearners Network offerings, so we more closely integrated the program with SelfDesign Learning Community. All families with learners currently enrolled with SelfDesign Learning Community can now access HomeLearners Network offerings at no extra cost. We're also doing market research to explore how to best engage home learners across Canada, make the program's platform more fun and engaging, pilot new series, and explore partnerships to expand offerings.



Continuous learning; continuous improvement

Learning from pilots, launches and feedback to shape new offerings and improve existing offerings

This year, SelfDesign piloted a new math offering for learners in grades 8 and 9. The add-on course was designed based on what our Education Programs team learned in early 2021 when they piloted a grade 11 and 12 math course. It also draws on our learning specialists' years of experience teaching math and pre-calculus using learner interaction, participation and play.

"We collected all kinds of data and feedback during that initial pilot for older learners, including that it is indeed possible for learners to learn math online in this way," says Education Programs team lead Janice Green. "That led to a year of basically forming what we wanted to do with our math courses, shaping first the Math 11–12 offering, which we learned more from, and now the offering for younger learners."

What the team learns during this initial offering will inform any changes they make in the future to improve the offering. This could include, for example, adjusting the online whiteboard platform used in the course, optimizing the weekly learning challenges, and finding yet more ways to engage learners and overcome their discomfort with math.

This is just one example of how we use data, metrics, personal observations and learner, family and educator feedback to adjust and improve our offerings, resources and activities throughout SelfDesign Learning Community.



“ I found that learning math with other [learners] in the meetings is really fun. I am able to connect with my peers, and we help each other not just with math, but simple things like different functions of computer keys. We are a quiet group, and I find it enjoyable to be able to do my work peacefully, while also feeling the presence of others. It makes online learning better.

—a SelfDesign Learner

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 more than 2,000 learners from kindergarten to grade 12 each year.

- ✓ We follow the curriculum of the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care.
- ✓ Our B.C. certified educators provide personalized one-to-one learning.
- ✓ Learners can graduate with a 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 Child Care and are a Group 1 Independent School in the province of British Columbia.
- ✓ The BC Ministry of Education and Child Care inspects our program annually to ensure our programs and processes meet our obligations as a B.C. Group 1 Independent School. Our Learning Experiences Library, our camps and gatherings, and how we provide learners with opportunities to design their own learning 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 our 180 B.C. 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.

Why families choose SelfDesign

At SelfDesign, we offer a flexible, personalized approach to learning.

“We offer B.C. families choice,” says Catherine Dinim, principal of SelfDesign Learning Community. “SelfDesign provides first-choice quality educational programs and services that are inclusive, supportive, accessible to those we serve, regardless of income level, personal or spiritual beliefs, or degree of need. Our approach to learning provides children and families with opportunities and support that are tailored specifically to each learner. We also offer more flexibility than most schools can in how learners might approach their learning.”

We recognize that brick-and-mortar schools may not work for every child and family. The regular school environment may not meet the needs of a child or their family, and families and children may also struggle with how other online schools work. In surveys and conversations with our learners’ families, they have shared with us some of the many reasons why they have sought out our program. Here are five of the most frequently mentioned reasons why families choose SelfDesign Learning Community for their children:

1. **We provide an accepting and inclusive learning environment.**
2. **Our program is structured flexibly.**
3. **Our program allows families to adventure, explore and travel with their children — and to integrate that exploration as part of their child’s education.**
4. **Our program honours and values families’ beliefs and philosophies, which may not align with the approach or philosophy found in brick-and-mortar schools.**
5. **We support and integrate learners who have learning challenges in our program.**





Message

Catherine Dinim, Principal
SelfDesign Learning Community

Self-assessment and continuous improvement are built into SelfDesign's approach to learning.

Our Observing for Learning process, for example, embodies it. At SelfDesign Learning Community, we've spent much of the last year seeking to apply the basic principles of our observing for learning approach more fully to our program, our offerings, our methodologies, and so on.

Throughout 2022, we've been gathering data and tracking key metrics across an ever-growing number of areas of SelfDesign Learning Community that tell us how we're doing and provide insight into how we can adapt or change things to do things better. Our internal evaluation includes a growing number of methods to collect qualitative data from learners, families and educators, including surveys, stakeholder discussions, and other ways to gather feedback, as well as to quantitatively track engagement, support requests, resource use, and more.

We're also continually looking to improve how we self-assess and implement improvements.

This process has paid off in many ways. It revealed patterns of success — for example, our excellent grade 10 to 12 course completion rate.

More importantly, the process allowed us to quickly put in place additional supports for families and learners during the pandemic and has helped us respond to learner and families concerns and adjust our offerings to better meet their needs and BC Ministry of Education and Child Care's requirements.

The process also helped us prepare for our 2022 inspection, which took place in early December.

We've always considered inspections to be opportunities to look back over the year, to assess and share what and how we've done, and to look for ways we can improve over the coming months. In other words, they're another opportunity to engage in internal evaluation and continuous improvement. And this year, I'm happy to report that we continue to satisfy the requirements of our school classification and can continue operating as an independent online school for another year.

In addition to the above work, in 2022, SelfDesign Learning Community undertook two major initiatives. The first was our submission to the Ministry to be considered one of B.C.'s independent provincial online learning schools. Chief Learning Officer Nikki Kenyon led this effort, with support from teams and individuals across our organization, and in September, the Ministry invited us to continue the process. We have since received more information about what will be expected from us as one these schools and have been busy reviewing and keeping the process moving forwards, with an official announcement expected from the Ministry soon.

The other major initiative was our transition to a new learning management system called Brightspace. This happened fairly smoothly, thanks to the dedication and support of so many within our community. At SelfDesign, we've long believed that it truly does take a community to raise a child; based on our experience in 2022, I can say it also takes a community to transition a school to a new learning platform. Thank you to all the educators, team leads and coordinators who invested time and effort into figuring out how to make Brightspace work in a way that fully complies with all of the Ministry's requirements and also supports and works with our unique learning approach. Thank you, also, to the educators, families and learners who volunteered to test the platform's setup and our orientation materials. And thank you to the Brightspace team and the Ministry for their support, as well as to the team we contracted to help us with developing orientation and training materials.

The experience demonstrated, once again, the strength, passion and commitment of this wonderful SelfDesign community that I am so proud of and grateful for.

I also want to thank all of you for your support, enthusiasm and passion for SelfDesign over the past year. I look forward to working and sharing with you over the coming months.

With gratitude,

Catherine

**"SELFDESIGN BELIEVES IN
NURTURING HEART-CENTRED,
CO-INSPIRATIONAL
RELATIONSHIPS BASED ON
ACCEPTANCE, RESPECT AND
SUPPORT OF ONE ANOTHER."**

—CATHERINE

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 B.C. certified educators, to develop a personalized learning plan for each child to help them achieve the path to completion that best suits them — Certificate of Graduation, Adult Graduation Diploma or School Completion Certificate.



Faces of SelfDesign: Gabe



Gabe, an aspiring graphic designer and typographer, started with the Toronto Film School at Yorkville University in September to continue his studies in graphic design and interactive media.

Gabe finished his SelfDesign journey in June 2022 with a Dogwood Diploma (B.C. Certificate of Graduation). He spent his grade 10 to 12 years exploring his passion for visual communications and developing his skill in combining text and graphics to communicate messages visually.

"SelfDesign really gave me the freedom and the space to explore my passions by interweaving them with SelfDesign's curriculum," the learner says. "If I didn't have that opportunity, I may not have found what I'm passionate about so early on in life."

When his family moved to British Columbia from Quebec in 2013, he experimented with online schooling and, for one year, attended a brick-and-mortar school.

But it was at SelfDesign, where Gabe started in grade 8, that he felt he found his place.

"I was excited to be studying completely online, and documenting my life and what I was learning through my experiences," he says. "So far, my favourite form of learning has been through SelfDesign's format."

Gabe says he enjoyed the weekly learning challenges, the many opportunities to learn about Indigenous cultures, and how he was able to often explore current events through the challenges.

But it was being able to integrate his passions, interests,

and goals into his learning and into the weekly and personal learning challenges that each of our grade 10 to 12 learners undertake that he appreciated most.

"During grade 10, I took on a personal project where I designed my own portfolio website," he says. "I was in frequent communication with my learning consultant, demonstrating new iterations of HTML/CSS code across two entirely different versions of my then-upcoming website. She always provided helpful feedback."

He also talked with a branding strategist for the project, someone who works with companies and organizations to help them develop goals and implement plans to improve the identification and preference of their brands by their clients and customers.

"They helped me upgrade and perfect what would essentially be the first public version of my website," Gabe says.

Gabe's big project in grade 12 emphasized his love of graphics and lettering. It is a map of downtown Victoria's Government Street that he designed to help cruise ship tourists plan and visit shops in a hurry.

His SelfDesign explorations and learning projects should stand him in good stead as he continues his post-secondary learning journey at college. His long-term goal, he says, is to set up his own design company or run a type foundry to design the lettering used in computer programs and graphic design.

How it works



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 and Child Care 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.

How it works

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 B.C. 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.

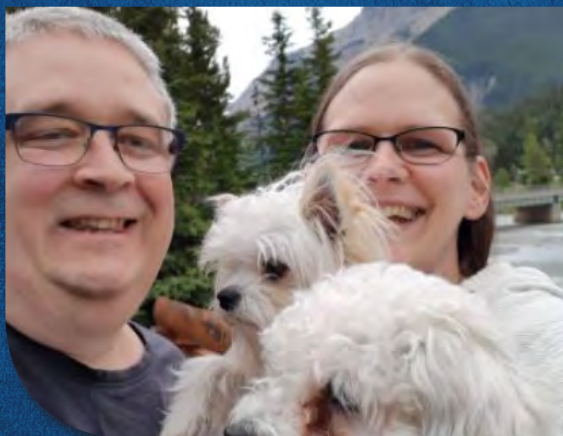


We assess our learners based on competencies

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.



Faces of SelfDesign: Michael



"The most exciting words I ever say to a learner are, 'What are you interested in?'" says SelfDesign educator Michael. "Because what comes out of their mouths in response is phenomenal. You find out so much about who they are as individuals and what drives them."

Michael joined SelfDesign in 2009. Originally from the U.S., he is a learning consultant for learners in grades 10 to 12, a learning specialist and a theme facilitator. He is also SelfDesign's MineCraft workshop teacher-liaison. In that role, he and SelfDesign administrative coordinator Lori support the 60–100 SelfDesign learners who use the role-playing video game platform each year to collectively negotiate how to design and build communities in SelfDesign's own MineCraft world.

Michael ascribes the kindness found throughout SelfDesign to the organization's approach to learning and community. When you place learners at the centre of their own learning journey, as SelfDesign does, you build in a requirement to listen to, to see and to notice each learner as and where they are in that specific time and space — and to accept them as they are.

"If you feel heard and seen and noticed," he says, "you're more likely to be kind."

As a child growing up in the American Deep South, Michael's experience of education was often adversarial.

"Everything was either a protest or an argument or a contention or a clamping down by the administration," he says. "It was all about control and authority of one type or another. It was competition between the teachers and me, between the teachers' expectations and my abilities, between the administration and the way I wanted to

express myself. I knew all my principals really, really well — I spent a lot of time in their offices."

Local events added to the childhood perception that conflict was the norm. At the time, Black people in the American South were fighting for basic rights that white Americans routinely enjoyed.

Their struggle, however, was often met with resistance and sometimes with violence.

Young Michael was a bit of an outsider himself. He was a technology geek, hand-building personal computers. In the first computer science course offered at his Virginia high school, he taught the teacher how to code.

Michael also played Dungeons and Dragons. The role-playingboard game (referred to as "D&D" by its fans) was — and continues to be — popular among gamers and fantasy enthusiasts.

Michael's third passion was music. During high school, he played guitar in a rock-and-roll and blues band.

With those interests, Michael often felt that he didn't fit in with his family or most peers at school. However, those early experiences laid the groundwork for one of his most powerful experiences as a SelfDesign educator working with a learner who felt he, too, didn't fit.

"During one of our first Observing for Learning sessions,

Faces of SelfDesign: Michael

I asked him, 'What are you interested in?' And he didn't share anything. So I asked, 'What do you do with your free time?' He said he didn't have much free time. Then I asked, 'Well, if you could do anything in the world — anything at all, no limitations whatsoever — what would you do?' And he just shrugged. So I said, 'Is there nothing that interests you? If you could change anything, what would you be doing?' He then told me, 'I'm not really that interesting.'"

That changed within six months of the learner enrolling with SelfDesign. At the end of that learning year, the learner reflected on having felt not very interesting.

"The biggest thing he mentioned in those reflections," Michael says, "was that no one had really listened to him before. Whenever he talked about his interests — technology and games — a disconnect happened with the people around him. They didn't understand what he was talking about."

He says, "Why would we be interested in ourselves if no one else is interested? If we're not seen or understood? By listening to this learner and translating his interests and passions so that his parents could recognize and understand his excitement, he began feeling visible and interesting again."



Preparing for the future

Setting ourselves up to offer high-quality learning opportunities across B.C. for another 20 years

About two decades ago, the Wondertree Centre for Natural Learning started offering its unique kindergarten to grade 9 learning model as a BC Ministry of Education-funded Group 1 Independent Online Learning School to learners and families across British Columbia. In 2010, WonderTree became SelfDesign Learning Foundation.

In the years since, we have continued and expanded the work begun by WonderTree. We have grown our online school, now called SelfDesign Learning Community, now consistently reaching over 2,000 learners from across the province every year. We've integrated our Support Services for learners with learning challenges into the core school program. And we've expanded the program to include high-quality grade 10 to 12 offerings that are learner-centred, align with SelfDesign's philosophy and approach, meet the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care's requirements, and allow learners to finish grade 12 with a Dogwood Diploma, Adult Dogwood Diploma, or a B.C. School Completion Certificate.

This growth has been made possible by a commitment to continuous improvement and to innovation.

We demonstrated our commitment to innovation once again at the start of the 2022–2023 learning year when we transitioned to our new learning management system, Brightspace. A learning management system is an integrated-software online platform used by schools for creating, delivering, assessing courses and communicating about learning.



Preparing for the future

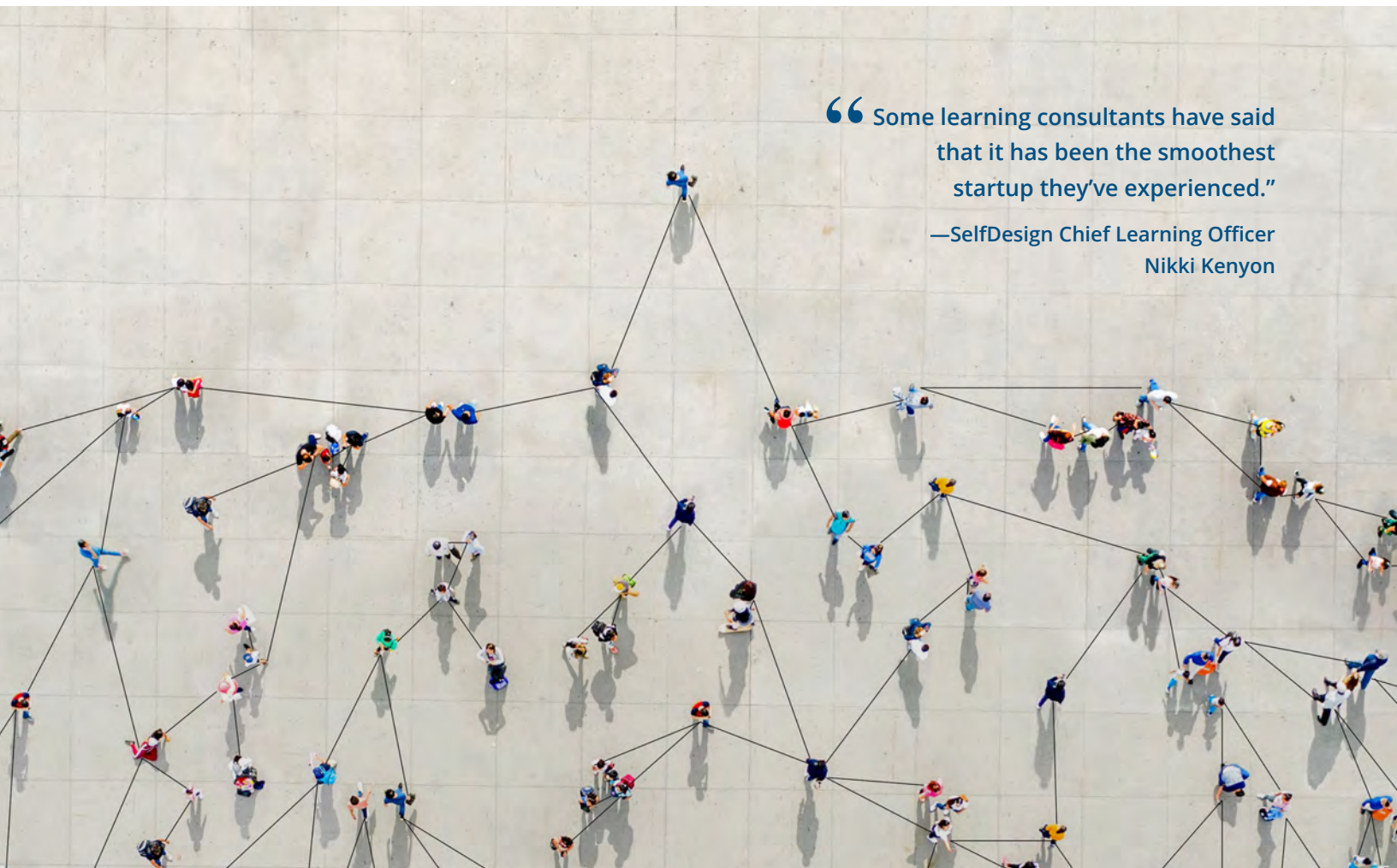
Reasons for change

Starting in September 2023, new B.C. guidelines for online education will require all schools providing services to learners across the province to be designated provincial online learning schools by the BC Ministry of Education and Childcare.

All schools seeking to become a provincial online learning school must also adopt Brightspace as their learning management system by September 2023.

The timing was tricky for SelfDesign. The Ministry announced Brightspace as its learning-platform choice in March, giving us less than six months to configure the platform to our unique needs and to tailor orientation materials to our community. In addition, the company that owns PowerSchool, the platform we used until June, pulled that system off the market in August.

“We knew, with PowerSchool shutting down, we needed a new learning management system,” Chief Learning Officer Nikki Kenyon says. “We also want to be able to continue offering our services to families across the province, which meant we’d be moving to the BC Ministry’s chosen learning management system. And because switching platforms is disruptive for learners, families, educators and administrators, we really wanted to shift learning management systems only once and we didn’t want to do it during the learning year.”



“Some learning consultants have said that it has been the smoothest startup they’ve experienced.”

—SelfDesign Chief Learning Officer
Nikki Kenyon

Preparing for the future

On the path to become a provincial online learning school

We submitted our package to be considered one of B.C.'s new provincial online learning schools in June. On September 6, the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care invited SelfDesign Learning Community to continue the process to become a provincial online learning school.

The Principals team and SelfDesign Learning Foundation leadership have been working with the Ministry to understand its expectations and clarify the requirements of the new online school model.

As an independent provincial online learning school, we will be able to continue to support learners and families across B.C. with the high-quality program SelfDesign has been delivering for the last 20 years.

“At SelfDesign, we've long believed that it truly does take a community to raise a child; based on our experience in 2022, I can say it also takes a community to transition a school to a new learning platform.

—Catherine Dinim, Principal
SelfDesign Learning Community



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.



2022 Highlights from Family Services

Here are a few of the many ways in which the SelfDesign Family Services team of dedicated and passionate people worked to support learners, families, educators and other contractors across the SelfDesign community in 2022.

Supporting mental health

Counselling services

In 2022, our registered clinical counsellor, Franya Jedwab, supported 75 learners and families.

Franya receives referrals from learning consultants who identify whether learners or their families might benefit from clinical support. Consulting with the learners and families, Franya offers support by either directly working with each referred learner's own learning team and providing counselling sessions or by referring learners and families to clinical resources and related support within their own communities.

Of the learners referred for clinical counselling support in 2022, no two needed the same kind of support. The most common challenges learners brought forward for counselling were related either to autism or to anxiety — including trauma, grief and stress.

Helping learners live life to the fullest

Working with HomeLearners Network, Family Services arranged for the Canadian Mental Health Association to deliver its research-backed youth program, Living Life to the Full, to SelfDesign learners.

The course filled up within days, with 20 learners aged 13 and up taking part in the seven-week interactive series from October to December. Living Life to the Full is designed to help youth deal with everyday life challenges and learn self-management skills. Topics covered include learner safety, bullying, prevention, inclusion and diversity, making it a great fit for Family Services sponsorship.

Response was so positive, the Family Services team has arranged for the course to be offered again in 2023.

2022 Highlights from Family Services

Supporting diversity

Age and developmentally appropriate resources for younger learners

We work to implement SOGI 1 2 3 (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity 1 2 3) throughout our organization and offerings to support our community members who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, transgender, queer, intersexual, two-spirit or other, or who might be exploring their gender identity and sexual orientation.

As part of those efforts, Family Services developed the Rainbow Hub to support learning about issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity in a way that is age and developmentally appropriate. Developed for learners in kindergarten to grade 5 and in grades 6–7, the Rainbow Hub complements the SOGI resource collection available for grades 8–12.

Age-appropriate resources draw on sources such as SelfDesign’s own Learning Experience Library. Monthly offerings with rotating themes, such as ‘Sexual Identity and Friendships’, ‘Gender Spectrum and Self Worth’, and ‘Body Awareness and Consent’ include memes and graphics, books, videos and links to Learning Experience Library topics.

“ Early SOGI education takes it out of the taboo realm. That is important because providing well-curated resources instead of leaving it up to kids to ‘find’ is way safer.

—a SelfDesign learner & member of the SelfDesign GSA



2022 Highlights from Family Services

Bringing anti-oppression training to SelfDesign educators

A Fundamentals of Anti-Oppression workshop presented in 2021 by a guest speaker for members of SelfDesign support teams served as the basis for the Family Services team to develop extension activities to continue learning about this important topic and to develop and deploy a workshop on inclusion and diversity for other SelfDesign teams.

In 2022, Family Services presented the workshop to other SelfDesign Learning Community teams, including the Principals team, the Educator Services team, and the Educational Programs team.

“ It was a great way for us to get a better understanding of where we are and how we are in the world, and also of how we can better interact with others in our work.

—Family Services team lead Todd Butler



2022 Highlights from Family Services

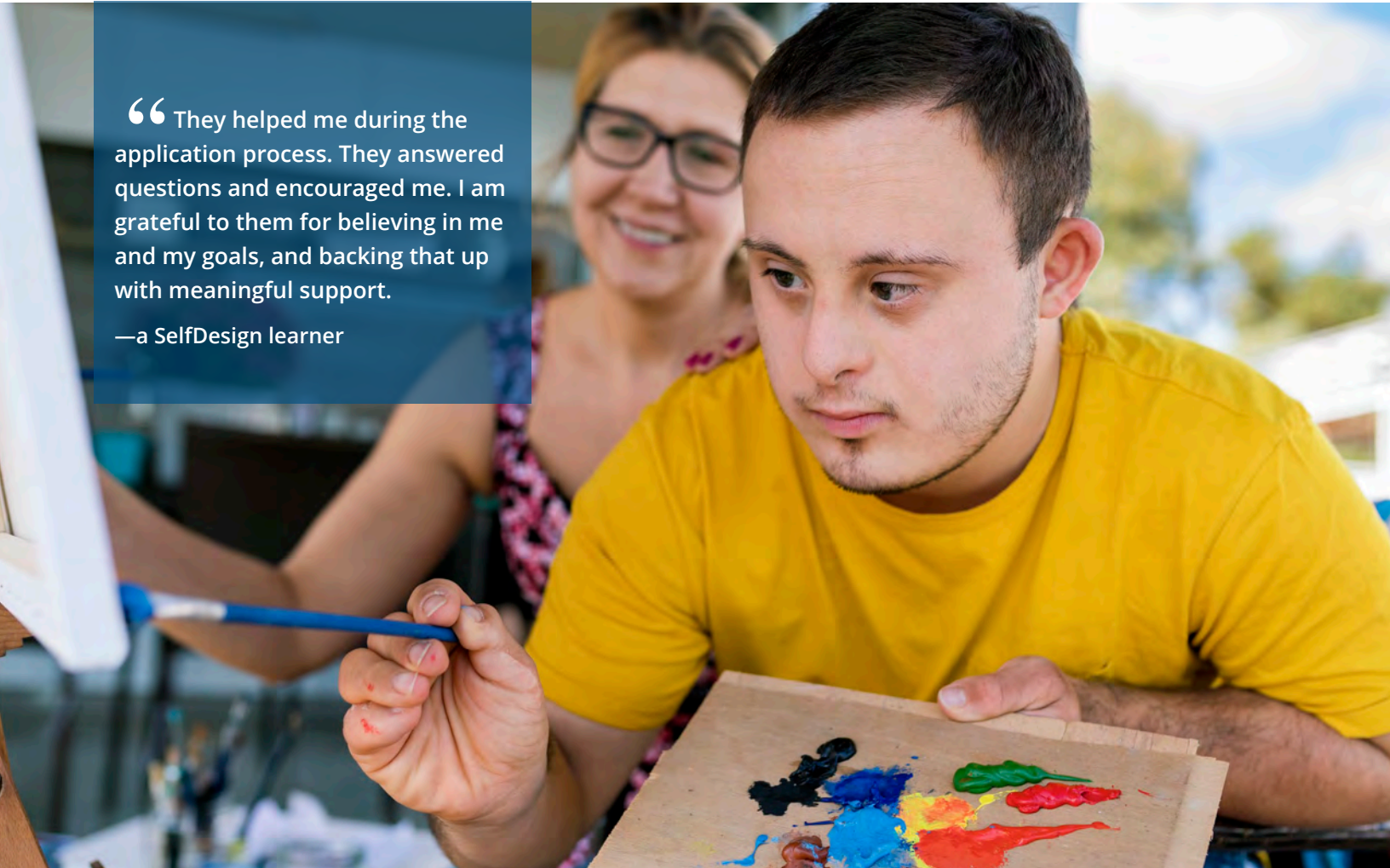
Supporting learners on the path to completion

SelfDesign Learning Community Guidance Centre

The Guidance Centre is a key support for learners and their families to help plan their final years with SelfDesign and map out their transition to adulthood after they finish their SelfDesign journeys. In 2022, the Guidance team worked to expand their services and to increase awareness among learners and families of the support available through the Guidance Centre.

The team supports educators, learners and families as learners navigate SelfDesign's grades 10 to 12 and the graduation requirements for the Dogwood and Adult Dogwood diplomas set out by the Province. The team processes requests from learners to cross-enrol with other B.C. high schools. It tracks external and dual credits for learners and organizes opportunities for our learners to take the BC Ministry of Education's provincial graduation assessments.

The team also works to inform learners and families about possible scholarship opportunities for post-secondary studies or training. They share information about scholarship, bursary, financial aid, and other post-secondary funding programs generally, and administer the B.C. Excellence Scholarship and the B.C. School District/Authority Scholarships programs for the school.



“ They helped me during the application process. They answered questions and encouraged me. I am grateful to them for believing in me and my goals, and backing that up with meaningful support.

—a SelfDesign learner

2022 Highlights from Family Services

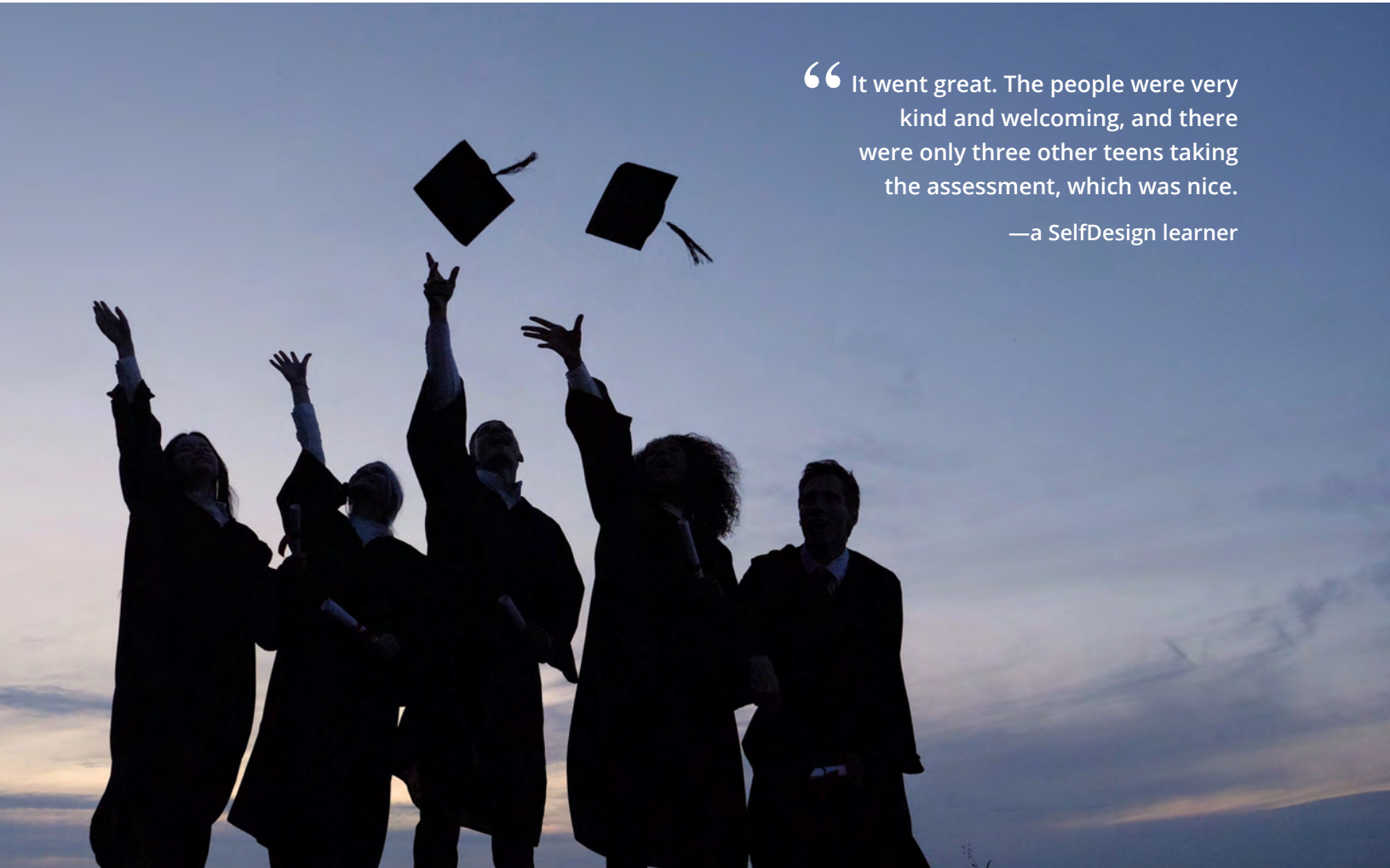
Provincial graduation assessments

Every young person in B.C. seeking to finish grade 12 with a Dogwood Diploma is required to write the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care's three high school assessments in numeracy and literacy.

As supervised events, the assessments are often held in person at brick-and-mortar schools. Because SelfDesign Learning Community is an online school, our Guidance team collaborates with brick-and-mortar schools in communities around the province to find placements for our learners. In communities where we have a significant number of learners taking the assessments, we host our own assessment sittings. In 2022, we held these in six key locations throughout the province.

"We like to be able to have a warm and welcoming SelfDesign face at the door," says SelfDesign Guidance Team Coordinator Ruby Payne. "We put vases of flowers out on the desk and write welcome signs — little things that can help to bring that anxiety down a bit and that can make a real difference in terms of the atmosphere of a room. We like to do these kinds of little things when we can."

In total, 387 individual high school assessments were written in 2022. Forty-six per cent of these were written in a SelfDesign-hosted location.

A photograph showing the silhouettes of five graduates in academic regalia against a twilight sky. They are all raising their arms in celebration, and two graduation caps are seen flying through the air above them.

“It went great. The people were very kind and welcoming, and there were only three other teens taking the assessment, which was nice.”
—a SelfDesign learner

Faces of SelfDesign: Rupert



When he was 10 years old, Rupert learned that just one or two people can change the world.

Shortly after he attended SelfDesign, Rupert attended a David Suzuki Foundation event in Victoria. The event was part of the launch of the foundation's Blue Dot Movement, which aims to enshrine the right to a healthy environment in Canadian law.

"At the event, David Suzuki asked everyone to persuade all three levels of Canadian government to recognize environmental rights," says Rupert, who commenced from SelfDesign in June with a Dogwood Diploma.

"So I wrote a letter to the candidates running in the Victoria municipal election, telling them that if they supported making an environmental rights declaration, I would ask my parents and others to vote for them."

With help and support from others, he also organized and spoke at a rally outside Victoria City Hall. Inside, city council passed a motion to declare the environmental rights of the city's citizens. These rights include, for example, the right to breathe clean air, the right to drink clean water, the right to consume safe food and the right to participate in decision-making that will affect the environment. The declaration also states that the City of Victoria should take cost-effective measures to prevent the degradation of the environment and protect the health of its citizens.

"I could see how a kid could make real, positive change," Rupert says, "so I continued."

Over the years, he and younger sister, Franny, wrote hundreds of letters, organized events, educated their peers, and met with municipal leaders from across B.C.

Their work led to 23 B.C. municipalities declaring the environmental rights of their residents.

Beginning in 2018, the two learners began meeting with provincial and federal leaders to increase awareness about environmental rights and campaign for the adoption of a Bill of Environmental Rights, and they helped persuade dozens of B.C. municipalities to declare climate emergencies.

The siblings have been recognized with multiple awards. Rupert also was nominated as a BC Centre of Ability, Community Brain Injury Program, Hero of Ability for 2013. Rupert continues to attend and present at online workshops and to write articles. He and Franny also submitted a House of Commons Petition requesting the federal government update the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* and to include environmental rights language in the updated *Act*.

Faces of SelfDesign: Rupert

The petition gathered more than 8,000 signatures and was presented to Parliament.

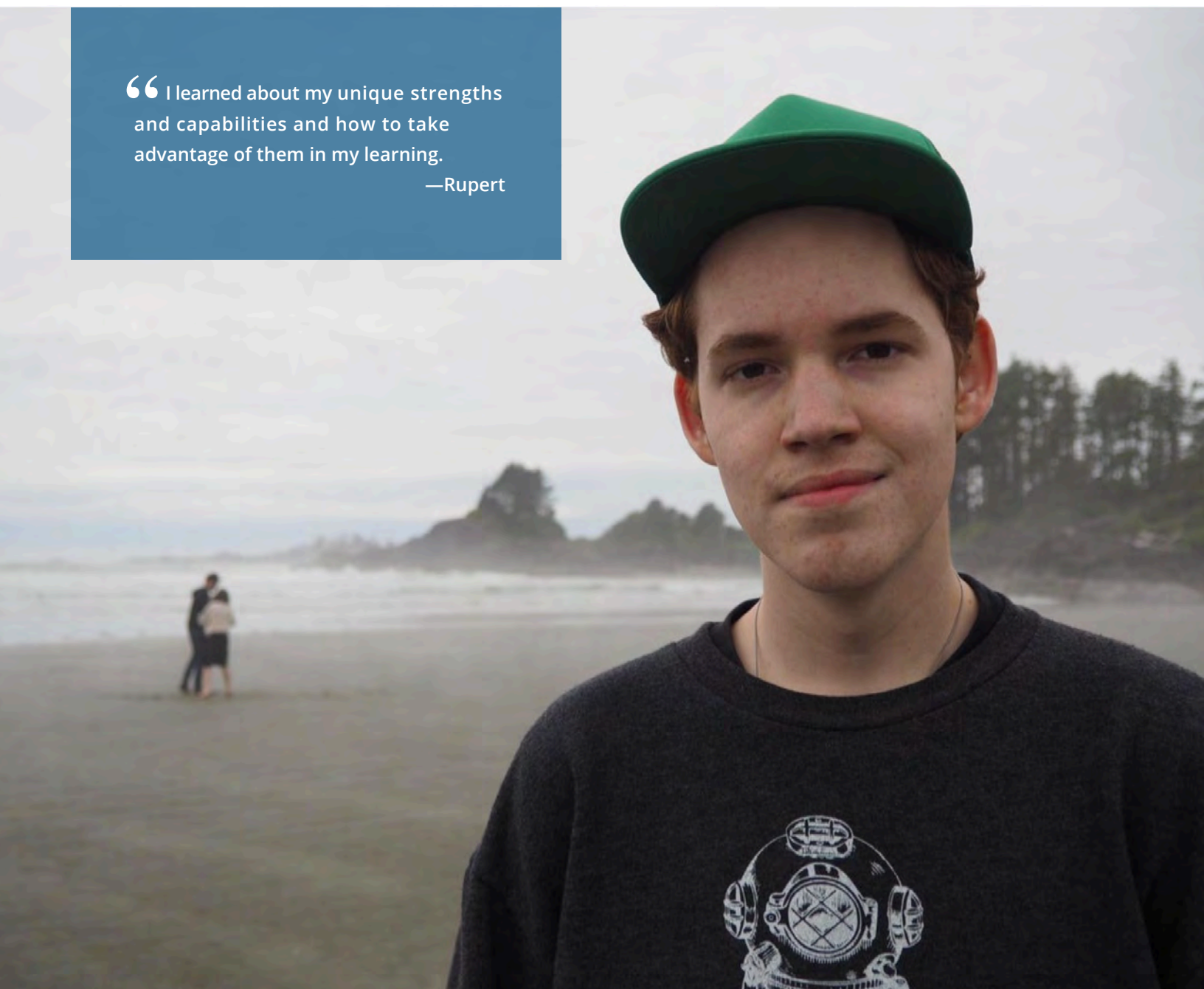
Because of SelfDesign's unique, learner-centred approach to learning, Rupert exceeded his learning, creativity, advocacy, and wellness goals. The learner experienced a brain injury in grade 2, which led to his family enrolling

him in SelfDesign. Rupert learned "about my unique strengths and capabilities and how to take advantage of them in my learning."

Rupert's next learning journey is now unfolding at university in Victoria, where he is studying anthropology and music to explore the relationship between music and culture. He also intends to continue using his voice for change.

“ I learned about my unique strengths and capabilities and how to take advantage of them in my learning.

—Rupert



Advancing the journey towards reconciliation

SelfDesign works to advance the journey towards reconciliation by building cultural bridges 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, which comprised a First Nations elder, a First Nations SelfDesign parent and learner, and SelfDesign educators with Indigenous heritage.

This year, we demonstrated our leadership in this area by continuing our efforts to seek out ways to inspire our learners, families, educators and contractors by connecting to Indigenous excellence:

1. **We deepened our connections to First People's Principles of Learning** by adding to the ways in which our educators can integrate the principles into their own educational practice. As part of this process, we continued to review and update our curriculum and resources to make sure they are authentic and current, speak to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous families, and reflect the changing language and conversations around reconciliation and decolonization.
2. **We sought out opportunities** for learners, families and educators to connect meaningfully with Indigenous elders, knowledge keepers and artists. For example, we hosted nehiyaw (Cree) powwow dancer and beadwork artist Angela Miracle Gladue during our Winterlude celebration and one of our Crafty Fridays, and learners and educators were able to connect with Gitxsan Elder Michael Harris during our Lunch and Learn professional development series and at our Commencement ceremonies.
3. **At an organizational level, we consult with Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers** and work to build and enhance those relationships. SelfDesign Indigenous Education Coordinator Amber Santos is taking part in two Indigenous facilitation workshops with Indigeneyez, a B.C.-based Indigenous-led organization.
4. **We provide safe spaces** where Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners can exchange ideas safely and respectfully.
5. **We consider the land** in our work, always, and seek out ways to further land-based learning in our programs and offerings. For example, Indigenous SelfDesign Learning Consultant and Learning Specialist Patricia Collins hosted a lunchtime conversation about land-based learning that was inspired by her own experiences of learning about her culture and by workshops and discussions presented at IndSpire's November 2021 National Gathering for Indigenous Education.

We're proud that our educators and contractors are also working to advance reconciliation. In 2022, many engaged in professional development opportunities offered by SelfDesign or other organizations, and took part in nation-wide conversations about Indigenous issues, including the Moosehide Campaign, Orange Shirt Day, and Truth and Reconciliation Day.

Our educators supported their learners' journeys as well. They attended events that related to their learners' own lived experience or culture, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Day event, and sought out resources and support specific to their learners' ancestry, traditional territories, or the territories they currently live on.



Indigenous Education highlights, 2022

Cultural Learning Grants

Eighteen of our Indigenous learners accessed our Cultural Learning Grants to connect more deeply with and learn more about their traditional cultures and languages this year. They used the funds to purchase books, games, beads, smudging supplies, craft supplies and drum-making supplies.

Indigenous Education highlights, 2022

Special events, cultural connections



SelfDesign Winterlude (January 9–15)

SelfDesign hosted powwow dancer Angela Miracle Gladue. Angela is a nehiyaw (Cree) and Greek mother, dancer and beadwork artist from the Frog Lake First Nation in Alberta. She started cultural dancing (Métis & powwow) at age six and continued her award-winning dance career as a hiphop artist since 2003. At Winterlude, she facilitated a workshop and talk. She also joined us as a special guest at one of our Craft Friday sessions.

Also during Winterlude, 15 learners attended a solidarity event for the Wet'suwet'en people, who are seeking to regain sovereignty over how the resources found within their traditional territories are used.



Art and healing workshops

Fourteen learners attended a workshop in January, during Reconciliation Week, on how engaging in making art can help with processing difficult information and experiences and with healing from trauma. We held a second workshop, called DIY Art for Healing and Honouring Reconciliation, for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, in September. Thirty-one learners took part.

These opportunities allow learners to process their emotions and reflect on reconciliation in personal and safe ways, which they can draw on as needed.



Talking Totems Indigenous Art Tour

Nineteen families took part in a culturally enriched Indigenous art tour of Stanley Park, Vancouver, led by Talasay Tours. The guide, a trained Indigenous artist and a member of the local Coast Salish tribes, shared stories, styles and practices of Indigenous art on the North West Coast. The event was organized by Darrell Letourneau, a member of our Education Programs team.



Crafty Fridays: Exploring Indigenous crafts and traditions with each other

Crafty Fridays took place every Friday from January to May. For three sessions, special guests powwow dancer and beadwork artist Angela Gladue and SelfDesign's own Patricia Collins shared their wisdom from their own cultures. On other occasions, one of our own Indigenous learners helped co-facilitate the sessions. Fifteen families registered. In some weeks, as many as four members of a family took part.

Indigenous Education highlights, 2022

Lunch & Learn professional development series

We held two Lunch and Learn conversations about Indigenous ways of seeing and being for educators and contractors. Patricia Collins led a conversation about land-based learning, and Michael Harris shared his wisdom as a Gitxsan elder. The 2021–2022 learning year series was inspired by workshops and discussions presented last November at IndSpire’s National Gathering for Indigenous Education.

Every fall, the Indspire gathering provides educator-led workshops that allow their peers to refresh and renew their passion for teaching by meeting other educators and learning more about best practices in Indigenous education.

“We sponsored a team of 10 educators from SelfDesign to attend IndSpire to find ways to strengthen the learning experiences of Indigenous students and further the dialogue about reconciliation in our organization,” says SelfDesign Learning Community Principal Catherine Dinim.

Those educators then led Lunch and Learn conversations to talk about what they learned and share those learnings with others in SelfDesign who didn’t go to the conference.

Catherine calls this approach “an investment in our educator community and in the organization’s commitment towards reconciliation. It’s that idea of investing in and connecting with new ideas and inspirations and sharing them on.” The series is just one way in which we seek to integrate, strengthen and deepen Indigenous culture and perspectives in the SelfDesign experience.



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, and 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 team 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. This includes offering support services to learners who have been, in accordance with BC Ministry of Education and Child Care guidelines, professionally diagnosed with low incidence needs or who may or may not have been diagnosed with high incidence needs.



Faces of SelfDesign: Corinne



In early 2020, SelfDesign learning consultant and Support Education Services Team Coordinator Corinne Metcalfe took on the role of SelfDesign Support Education Services team lead.

Corinne brings to the role decades of experience working with children with special needs, including nine years as a SelfDesign learning consultant, 15 years coordinating programs for children with special needs at schools around the world, and over 10 years as a special education teacher and inclusion consultant in Alberta. She has also overseen university practicum programs for special education assistants-in-training.

We sat down and talked with Corinne about her experiences. Here is part of our conversation.

SD: Describe your background. For many years, you developed and implemented special education programs at schools overseas. Describe that journey for us.

Corinne: I've been working in the field of special education for well over 30 years in a variety of different positions. My bachelor's degree is in special education, and I have a master's degree in international education. For 15 years, I coordinated special education programs at international schools in Japan, Kuwait, Syria, and Scotland. I knew from a very, very young age that I wanted — needed — to travel. Having the opportunity to work around the world was a real gift. When you live and work in a place, you really get to know the culture and the country. My home base for many years was a house I bought in Brittany, France. Friends and family would come visit, instead of me going back to Canada. It was an incredible time in my life.

In 2010, I returned to Canada feeling ready to put down roots. I sold my house in Brittany a few years ago, and have found my place in Canada on Salt Spring Island.

Travel was my life for many years. At this time in my life, I continue to enjoy travelling, but not with that same sense of need and pull.

SD: How has your international experience shaped how you approach your work at SelfDesign?

Corinne: My international experience has given me a diverse and global outlook on life, learning and education. In all the years that I've worked in special education, what has guided me most — and continues to guide me — is the insight that every child has gifts and abilities that we need to celebrate, acknowledge, nurture and build upon. I honour this in my SelfDesign work.

SD: What led you to SelfDesign?

Corinne: It was a number of different experiences and circumstances. When I returned to Canada, I was visiting classrooms for my work with university students, and began to feel discouraged. I observed children struggling when they were faced with barriers to access learning with minimal support. It was around that time that a friend introduced me to SelfDesign, and at about the

Faces of SelfDesign: Corinne

same time, I also came across SelfDesign on the BC Ministry of Education website, where I was doing some research.

The more I read about SelfDesign, the more it resonated with me. I felt, “Aha! This is the missing piece — relationship, putting the learner first, learner-centred learning, igniting those passions and interests.” I was so excited.

That was the beginning. I’ve been with SelfDesign ever since.

SD: What is it about working with SelfDesign that drives and excites you?

Corinne: There are so many things. I love how inclusive and accepting we are at SelfDesign.

At the end of the day, however, the learners are what drive me. I can be enmeshed in administrative work, but the heart of my work always revolves around the learner. I can’t imagine doing this work without being involved as a learning consultant.

“In all the years that I’ve worked in special education, what has guided me most — and continues to guide me — is the insight that every child has gifts and abilities that we need to celebrate, acknowledge, nurture and build upon.

—Corrine



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 British Columbia 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. In the 2021–2022 learning year, about 450 home learners were registered with SelfDesign Home Learning.



Comparing our programs

How SelfDesign Learning Community differs from SelfDesign Home Learning



SELFDISIGN LEARNING COMMUNITY

- 1 EDUCATOR LED**
Learners and families work with a B.C. certified educator
- 2 ONLINE & EXTERNAL SUPPORT**
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 EDUCATOR-LED ASSESSMENT**
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 HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA**
Learners in SelfDesign Learning Community earn credit for courses in grades 10 to 12, and can graduate with a B.C. 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.



SELFDISIGN HOME LEARNING

- 1 PARENT LED**
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 LIMITED ONLINE SUPPORT**
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 LEARNING NOT ASSESSED**
Parents take responsibility for the learning program and do not report to the school. Learners' work is not assessed.
- 4 DOES NOT GRADUATE**
Learners do not earn credit for courses in grades 10 to 12, nor do they graduate and earn a high school diploma.

HomeLearners Network

HomeLearners Network, SelfDesign Learning Foundation's newest program, builds on our 20 years of experience in providing home learning and resources for kids and families everywhere.

HomeLearners Network offers online downloadable and real-time activities for children and youth, from kindergarten to grade 12, to help them pursue their passions, learn new things, build relationships and have fun.

All of our activities are led by passionate B.C. certified educators and are designed using educational best practices. During the program's first full year of operation, our guides offered more than 700 sessions for close to 500 learners. Some of the most popular activities are offered through partnerships with UME Academy for video game design and the Canadian Mental Health Association and Wandering Star Ventures Inc. for mental health and well-being. Partnered offerings filled quickly in 2022 and are already filling in 2023.

Every learner enrolled with SelfDesign Learning Community, no matter where in B.C. they live, receives an all-access (free) pass to HomeLearners Network activities as part of their enrolment. In 2023, we will conduct in-depth market research to learn more about how we can uniquely support homeschooling families across Canada.

A key learning this year has been the high value children and their parents place on series and clubs that explore engineering, science, math, biology, photography, poetry or other creative topics. In the coming year, we plan to continuously learn about what the SelfDesign Learning Community needs by providing new opportunities for feedback and suggestions. We will expand partnerships, activity offerings, and add more cool features to improve the learning experience.



LIVE instructor-led activities



Downloadable PDFs
you can work on anytime!



HomeLearners
Network

HomeLearners Network

We also worked to spread the word about this exciting new program through advertising and articles in family-oriented magazines, the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Council, social media, and SelfDesign Learning Foundation's communications and marketing channels. With the dream of developing a self-sustaining, virtual learning community that helps home learners everywhere, we are exploring new and exciting ways to engage and build HomeLearning Network in the coming months.

We learned a lot from the data and metrics we collected about HomeLearners Network over the past year. We learned that parents and children want to take part in more activity series and clubs. We learned that they place high value on activities that help children and youth explore video game design, engineering, science, biology, photography, poetry and other STEM and creative topics. We learned that the most popular activities are labelled, "I can do this independently." We're using this information to guide our way forwards. We plan to develop and offer more of these kinds of exciting activities over the coming months.

Throughout 2022, we also continued to improve our platform's functionality, or how learners' and families' experience our website, streaming channel and individual offerings. We worked to better understand how we can best optimize our website and offerings, and we have applied those learnings by fine-tuning the site this year and putting in place plans for bigger changes in 2023.

Take a look at our 2022 numbers



More 2022 Highlights from SelfDesign



Learners launch their own e-magazine

A learner in grade 8 approached our Education Programs team with a proposal to start up and run a newspaper or magazine by learners for learners. The inaugural *Design Post*, featuring essays, artwork and photography by learners, was published online in May. A second edition is in the works for 2023.



Learners make Open Spaces their own spaces

Piloted in 2021, Open Spaces offers learners in grades 10 to 12 safe and informal opportunities to interact socially and share their interests with each other in a way that is learner-directed and less structured.

In 2022, the creative writing group met regularly in Open Spaces, with agreed-upon tasks and projects to work through each week.

Learners have also hosted rooms to share and appreciate music and rooms to explore, for example, the topic of psychology.



2022 Commencement Ceremonies return in person and continue online

We were delighted to welcome members of the SelfDesign community to our first in-person event since early 2020. Learners, family members, educators and other contractors gathered in Coquitlam in late May to celebrate the achievements of the 110 learners who completed their SelfDesign journeys in 2022.

Recognizing that some families are unable to join us in person, we also held an online ceremony to honour our Class of 2022.

More 2022 Highlights from SelfDesign



Presenting at the 2022 Can eLearn digital education conference

When SelfDesign Learning Community Principal Catherine Dinim attended the Can eLearn Digital Learning Symposium in April, she presented an in-person session to colleagues and peers in the digital education field on how SelfDesign supports personalized learning. As part of her presentation, she described the evolution of our grade 10 to 12 offering, which piloted grade by grade from 2017 to 2020. This high school offering is unique, and it was shaped significantly by the analysis of data collected each semester and by feedback from learners, families and educators.

“Every semester during development of that program, we asked our learners for feedback in a survey,” Catherine says. “We asked, ‘What worked? What didn’t? How can we do this or that better?’ And we asked our educators, ‘What’s working? What’s not working?’”

“And even now,” she says, when the fourth cohort of learners to enter the program is now in grade 12, “we’re still gathering feedback and using it to inform existing, current and future projects for these grades. That’s our commitment to continuous improvement. We know we can always improve, and we take steps to make it happen.”



Cognia school inspection team participation

Cognia invited SelfDesign Learning Community Vice Principal Vanessa Kuran to join the evaluation team for a school engagement review. In the spring, she participated in the online assessment of a school in Central America, helping to evaluate whether their programs, processes, and continuous improvement plans meet Cognia’s rigorous requirements and standards for accreditation.

Cognia is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that has been accrediting schools for over 100 years (formerly under the name AdvancEd), with a commitment to ensure schools undergo research-driven, supported self-evaluations to help them improve. SelfDesign received accreditation in 2019 and actively works with the continuous improvement framework provided by Cognia.

