



SelfDesign Learning Foundation Community Report 2024



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.





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Message from the CEO

Nikki Kenyon, Interim CEO
SelfDesign Learning Foundation

As we look back on 2024, I can't help but think about our journey to get here. One of my favourite things about SelfDesign is the unique philosophy we share as we trek around the spiral of life and learning, where many small moments create a profound impact over time. Where and who we are in this moment is valid and valued, and while we navigate the messy parts that often accompany learning and growth, there is space for new possibilities as we move forward.

Forty years ago, our founder, Brent Cameron, embarked on a path to support his daughter in learning in a way that would be personally meaningful for her. That decision and the many decisions that followed led us to where we are now.

As we celebrated the 40th anniversary of SelfDesign this past year, we also celebrated the SelfDesign Learning Community, our independent provincial online learning program, now 20 years old. The growth of this organization – from a handful of learners in Vancouver to a community of 2000+ learners across the province – is nothing short of remarkable.

This incredible growth has been accompanied by pivotal moments of change and reflection, with both our strengths and our growth edges contributing to the evolution of our organization and the strengthening of our community.

In January 2024, we welcomed a new Chief Financial Officer to focus on enhancing SelfDesign's financial management practices, including budgeting and forecasting. Her expertise has enabled us to allocate resources more effectively and drive greater impact across our organization.

In February 2024, a long-standing member of our community, River Meyer, stepped back from her role as Director of Organizational Learning and Culture and into the less busy role of SelfDesign Community Advisor. This allowed her to continue to offer her wisdom and organizational knowledge in a different way. I took on the Organizational Learning and Culture role. Together we worked to bring SelfDesign's philosophy of learning to the forefront. Our focus on our philosophy resulted in the release of A Path to SelfDesign, an online course for contractors and sessions at our in-person gatherings last June on how the philosophy impacts us as contractors.

In November 2024, both the President/CEO and the COO left the organization. We acknowledge their contributions to help SelfDesign realize our vision and reach many milestones. We are grateful to them for their contributions. The Board appointed me as interim CEO to support the organization through this transition and to determine the next steps.

Plainly, 2024 was a big year with lots of growth, change, greetings and farewells. I look forward to working with our community members to continue this adventurous trek around the spiral of life and learning and as we focus on how to continue to build shared understanding and grow together, I am eager to see for what 2025 has in store.

Nikki



“

The growth of this organization – from a handful of learners in Vancouver to a community of 2000+ learners across the province – is nothing short of remarkable.”

—Nikki Kenyon



Message from the Board

Verena Gibbs, Chair, Board of Directors
SelfDesign Learning Foundation

As we reflect on 2024, I am filled with gratitude for the dedication and heart that flows through our organization. This past year has been one of thoughtful growth, renewed commitment to our mission of learner-centred education and unique challenges. What we've learned throughout our 40-year journey is that we have the ability to overcome and to thrive.

One of the key themes that guided our Board in 2024 was strengthening our connections—within the organization and with our broader community. We asked ourselves, “How do we assess and nurture the health and well-being of our organization? How do we ensure our learners and families have the support they need to thrive? Do our current systems truly serve our community in the best way possible? How do we know?” These questions shaped our conversations and decisions, always bringing us back to the heart of SelfDesign: the learners and families we serve.

At a recent Board retreat, we explored a powerful analogy that captures the essence of our work. Imagine a stone dropped into a pond—the learner is at the centre, creating ripples that extend outward. These ripples represent the layers of support surrounding each learner: their families, our dedicated educators and

operational contractors, our innovative programs, and at the outermost ripple, the Board itself.

Our role at this outermost ripple is twofold: we look outward, scanning the horizon for opportunities and challenges that may affect our learners and families, while also looking inward to ensure that every decision and policy we implement serves to support and empower them.

Our board members come from diverse professional backgrounds, but we often say that our work is about more than policies and governance—it's about ensuring that every decision we make supports the well-being, growth and success of our learners. A meaningful moment for me last year was hearing a story about a learner with complex needs whose personal project in grade 12 was simply to eat safely without a helmet. Stories like this about learners reaching their personal goals remind us of the real impact of our work and why we must always strive to keep the learner at the centre of everything we do.

A highlight of the year was celebrating SelfDesign's 40th anniversary at our in-person gatherings, LocalLabs. Watching the 40th anniversary video and seeing the

legacy of our organization through the stories of learners, families and educators reminded us of the profound impact of our work. Many of us on the Board have deep personal ties to SelfDesign, whether as former learners, parents or educators, and it was inspiring to reflect on where we've come from.

We recognize that growth often comes with challenges, but we embrace these moments as opportunities for transformation. In the words of Thich Nhat Hanh, “No mud, no lotus.” It’s through navigating difficulties that we often find our greatest strengths and innovations. While much of our work takes place behind the scenes, we are committed to strengthening our connection with the community and ensuring greater clarity in how our actions align with our shared values.

This process is not something the Board can shape alone. It will take all of us—learning, reflecting and working through the mud together—to nurture what’s to come. With trust, care and collaboration, we are creating something strong, lasting and truly special. We’re excited about the possibilities that lie ahead and are grateful for your trust and partnership in this journey as we create new ripples of positive change that extend far beyond our own community.

With gratitude,

Verena

“

No Mud, No Lotus
— Thich Nhat Hanh

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.

We are 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.

Mission

We facilitate lifelong learning and holistic personal growth through programs, opportunities, and support for people of all ages, with an emphasis on choice and self-direction.

Vision

A world deeply rooted in curiosity, compassion, and learning.



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...



Learning is ageless

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.



Learning happens everywhere

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



Learning is inclusive and safe

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



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.



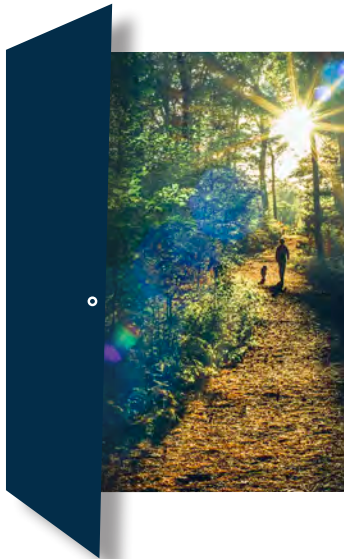
Learners are positioned at the centre of their individualized learning path.



Learning and personal development occur within nurturing, relational environments.



Open the door to lifelong learning



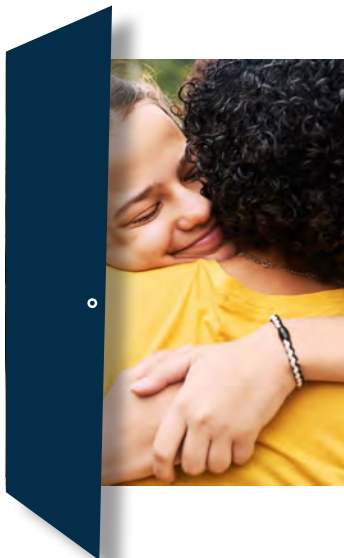
Autonomy

Author your own learning journey



Innovation

Innovative education for people of all ages and abilities



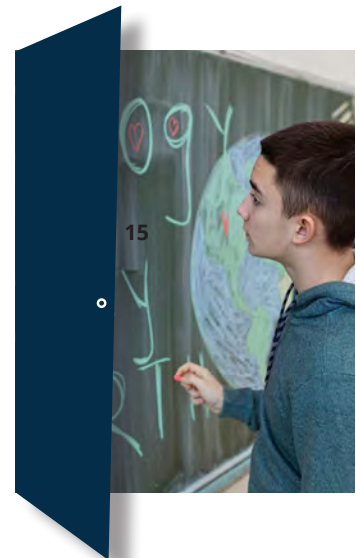
Connections

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

Our Partnerships

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

We are proud to be affiliated with these organizations:



Ministry of
Education and
Child Care

cognia™



Board of Directors



Carlos da Ponte



Devon Girard



Frank Heinzelmann



Lara Kehler



Marianne Bach



Verena Gibbs



Werner Knittel

Leadership team



Nikki Kenyon
Interim CEO



Dave Conroy
Chief Information Officer



Catherine Dinim
Principal, SelfDesign
Learning Community



Shirley Smith
Chief Financial Officer



Debra Sigfusson
Director of
Human Relations



Karen Zukas
Director of Communications
& Marketing



Mara Hawkins
Director of Program &
Service Development



Paul Mackinsoc
Director of
Purchasing

SelfDesign Learning Foundation acknowledges the contributions in 2024 by past president & CEO Amber Papou (2017 - 2024) and past Chief Operating Officer Sandy Steward (2018 - 2024).

Our Programs

1

SelfDesign Learning Community

A technology-enabled school for learners from kindergarten to grade 12, where learners with disabilities or diverse abilities are integrated with other learners, and all learners are supported to succeed

**2**

SelfDesign Home Learning

A flexible option for parents who wish to homeschool their child

**3**

HomeLearners Network

Downloadable activities and live online activities designed by certified educators to help children and youth pursue their passions, learn new things, build relationships and have fun





Spotlight on Inclusivity, Diversity, Equality and Accessibility (IDEA) at SelfDesign

When asked how confident she feels about bringing a renewed culture of belonging to the forefront at SelfDesign, Operations Lead Paula Sobie, replied, “I feel one hundred percent confident.”

“

I believe we can create an even stronger culture of belonging through inclusivity and engagement because it's part of the SelfDesign philosophy and teaching practice.”

**- Paula Sobie,
Operations Lead, SelfDesign**

“It's the foundation that made us who we are. We need to extend that understanding across the organization and commit to upholding it.”

In the fall of 2023, a project team was formed representing HR, Communications, SDLC, and Operations. Together they organized an EDI assessment and strategy by December 2023 with the support of

Inclusivity Insight, a consulting firm that specializes in cultivating stronger organizations through inclusivity.

The team developed a process starting with an audit in February 2024, focused on learning more about the contractors at SelfDesign. Data collected provided valuable insights into contractor demographics, workplace culture, and reflections from different perspectives. Of 252 contractors, 129 participated (51%) in the survey and 35 contractors took part in focus group sessions and one-on-one interviews.

Findings from the audit highlighted strengths within our contractor community including a sense of belonging, fairness, and a supportive working environment. Findings also revealed areas for improvement: namely, providing more opportunities for diverse voices to be heard across the organization.

Contractor demographic calculations helped determine an overall inclusion score to show how contractors feel about inclusivity at SelfDesign. Survey questions were also categorized into five constructs on inclusion to reveal deeper insights into the dimensions of inclusion: belonging, fairness, a supportive working environment, voice and leadership commitment.

Overall, respondents rated their experience at SelfDesign at 77 percent, considered a high ranking for inclusion scoring.

Another clear indicator of contractors' interests and understanding of inclusivity showed up in the survey results when asked if they agreed with this statement: "I support SelfDesign's effort to be inclusive, equitable, diverse and accessible." The result: 94 percent of respondents agreed.

"When everyone feels welcomed, especially when people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives see other people like themselves within their workplace, they feel valued and respected. We want to strengthen our culture of belonging at SelfDesign."

Paula believes any school can help 'model the way' for their communities to embrace inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA); SelfDesign included.

"I think we'll look back on 2024 as a turning point for IDEA at SelfDesign. It feels like both our history and these fresh insights will lead to new opportunities, new growth, and empower us with a new understanding of ourselves."

Our IDEA roadmap outlines four focus areas for this work:

- 1) Governance and accountability**
- 2) Education and communication**
- 3) Systemic changes**
- 4) Community engagement**

"Throughout, there will be an emphasis on our philosophy and why we choose to work at SelfDesign. Because we aren't just here to follow the curriculum. We also follow our hearts and ideas that challenge us and help us grow."

Learn more here:

<https://www.selfdesign.org/about-us/idea/>

I think we'll look back on 2024 as a turning point for IDEA at SelfDesign. It feels like both our history and these fresh insights will lead to new opportunities, new growth, and empower us with a new understanding of ourselves."

– Paula Sobie



Profile: Making SelfDesign Even More Accessible

Q+A with accessibility consultant Stephen O'Keefe

For SelfDesign, being accessible means creating learning and work environments that allow everyone to participate fully without barriers. We aim to become more accessible. This approach is key to who we are as a community.

As we increase access to SelfDesign, we've worked with accessibility expert Stephen O'Keefe.

Stephen's extensive expertise helped shape our [Accessibility Plan 2023-2026](#), a living blueprint that identifies needs, priorities, and actions for the coming year.

Stephen brings to SelfDesign many years of experience providing consulting services to private, public, and non-profit organizations to help them comply with accessibility legislation and as a part of their business strategies.

To do this, he draws upon his legal background and experience as a senior business leader. Stephen has a law degree from the University of British Columbia, was the CEO of a national manufacturing business, and was the board chair of the Children's Hearing and Speech Centre of BC.

Born with a profound hearing loss, Stephen also has personal and lived experience of accessibility. His TEDx talk, [How to Listen Better](#), was translated into 22 languages. He also developed and starred in a web TV series through Telus' Optik channel, Listening in a Silent World, and a documentary on his life and stand-up comedy interests was featured on PBS and CBC.

Read more on our blog - [Q+As with Stephen O'Keefe](#)



SelfDesign by the Numbers

Statistics from our 2023/24 learning year

1,939

Number of learners in kindergarten to grade 12 enrolled in SelfDesign Learning Community

902

Learners with disabilities or diverse abilities

1,368

Total number of HomeLearners Network activities delivered in 2024

330

Home learners from 233 families were registered with SelfDesign Home Learning

150

B.C. certified educators supported learners this learning year

1,378

External service provider contractors who supported our learners through Learning Resources and Services and individual education plans

136

Learners completed their learning journeys with the SelfDesign Learning Community

18

Guides (educators) who lead live, online learning activities for HomeLearners Network

197

New activities created for HomeLearners Network this year

84

Contractors who supported SelfDesign administration and operations



SelfDesign Learning Foundation - 2024 Highlights

A year of celebration, learning, connection and transformation



Welcoming new leadership

In November 2024, Nikki Kenyon, former Principal of SelfDesign Educational Programs and Director of Organizational Learning & Culture, was appointed Interim CEO and Executive Director, bringing with her a wealth of experience and deep-rooted commitment to SelfDesign's mission.



Introducing a new online orientation program

In our continuous efforts to strengthen and support our team, SelfDesign launched a new online orientation training program for all contractors. This interactive training features compelling visuals, music, and voice-overs and provides essential guidance on working with SelfDesign, privacy, security, occupational health and safety and SelfDesign's core philosophy.



Revising the SelfDesign website

In 2024, we launched a redesigned website to enhance user experience, featuring a dedicated resource page for parents, an educational support page, improved accessibility options and mobile-friendly navigation.

SelfDesign Learning Community - 2024 Highlights

SelfDesign Learning Community (SDLC) is an online K-12 school that offers children a personalized and flexible approach to learning.



Marking our first year as an Independent Provincial Online School (POLS)

Provincial Online Learning Schools (POLS) provide online learning services to kindergarten to grade 12 learners across B.C. SDLC became a B.C. independent POLS in July of 2023 after being approved by the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care.

“The transition was so smooth largely due to the groundwork laid in 2021 and 2022,” says SelfDesign Learning Community Principal, Catherine Dinim. “Key among those efforts was our move to the Province’s designated learning management system, Brightspace, in August 2022,” she says. “Our experience since then shows that the early decisions around how the platform would be configured to meet both the Ministry’s requirements and our own unique needs were well thought out and executed.”

Until now, independent distributed-learning schools in B.C. have had single-year, annually renewed contracts with the Ministry. With our new status, and for the first time in SelfDesign’s history, we have a multi-year contract with the Ministry.



Successful inspections by the Ministry of Education and Childcare

Because of how the learning year cycle works, SelfDesign® Learning Community engaged in two inspections during 2024. Inspectors from the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care visited in January 2024 for a monitoring visit, and again for a full external evaluation by committee in November 2024.

SelfDesign Learning Community - 2024 Highlights



Re-accreditation by Cognia in 2024

Cognia is a 130 year-old international non-profit that guides schools toward educational excellence. SelfDesign was first accredited by Cognia in 2011, and again in 2018 and 2024. This re-accreditation demonstrates our consistency, as well as our progressive approach and success at meeting the needs of our learners, families and educators. Cognia also helps SelfDesign by identifying areas where we can improve.



Free in-person spring and winter camps for teens

SelfDesign offered free winter and spring camps to learners in grade 8 to 12 (ages 15 and up). The camps provide learners with opportunities to share and socialize with their peers in informal and impromptu ways that often aren't available during online real-time meetings. Learners have shared that meeting and getting to know each other in person was the biggest highlight of their camp experience.



SOGI 123

Highly accomplished advocate Mischa Oak, a Vancouver-based 2SLGBTQIA+ trainer, strategist and collaborator returned to SelfDesign in 2024 to present workshops on excellence in diversity and inclusion to SelfDesign educators. Mischa aims to improve the lives of 2SLGBTQIA+ people and supports the development of justice and equity on sexual orientation, gender identity (SOGI) and ways to create allyship for educators. Mischa worked with our educators and SDLC support teams to ensure consistency in that all educators in our community share a common understanding, practice and similar tools to support learners and one another. See our [SOGI story page 41](#)

SelfDesign Learning Community - 2024 Highlights



Mentor support for educators

The SDLC Educator Services team continued to support learning consultants and specialists through both group discussions and one-on-one meetings. These informal yet structured connections provide a responsive and collaborative support system for educators, reinforcing our belief that learning is a continuous journey—one best traveled together.



Celebrating the Class of 2024

In 2024, 156 learners finished their learning journeys with the SelfDesign Learning Community. Of these, 49 attended the in-person Commencement ceremony in the Lower Mainland with their families in May. It was a full room with more than 250 learners, parents, guardians, family members, educators and SelfDesign leadership in attendance! More than 150 community members celebrated via livestream as well.

“

In 2024, 156 learners finished their learning journeys with the SelfDesign Learning Community.

40th Anniversary Highlights



Our journey has been a testament to the transformative power of education and community. Forty years ago, our founder Brent Cameron incorporated SelfDesign Learning Foundation as a charity in British Columbia. He believed that learning is unlimited, ageless and continuous and that it should be a personalized experience for children.

For the last four decades, thousands of learners, families, educators, contractors and supporters have continually shaped and expanded SelfDesign. We've watched as they follow the beat of their own educational drums, and were inspired to see them explore their interests and passions.

In 2024, we celebrated this important milestone in a multitude of ways.

“ The more that Brent worked with the learners and the more he listened to their interests, the more his philosophy developed. Over the years, he created tools and strategies that supported his revolutionary approach, shifting the methods of traditional schooling to a beyond-schooling practice of excellence and a passion for lifelong learning.”

**- River Meyer,
SelfDesign Community Advisor**

Capturing our history in a commemorative book

Stories of SelfDesign: 40 Years of Lifelong Learning (1984–2024), is a special edition book featuring the compelling history of our organization along with stories from learners, families, educators and supporters. This collection captures the evolution of SelfDesign, from its humble beginnings in Brent Cameron's home to becoming one of British Columbia's largest online schools. This book is a true testament to our 40-year journey of personalized and lifelong learning.

[Read the online version of the book here.](#)



Celebrating memories through video

We asked learners, families, educators and contractors what they love most about SelfDesign. The response was so amazing, we compiled their stories in a new video, [“What I Love about SelfDesign.”](#) Another video, [“40 Years in the Making”](#) captures the incredible history of SelfDesign, told by the people who were there in the beginning. Not only does it cover our rich history and timeline, it's full of inspiring and impactful stories, including from founder Brent Cameron's own daughter, Ilana, the inspiration for and reason why SelfDesign exists today.



A t-shirt contest led by learners

To celebrate SelfDesign's 40th anniversary, we created a special commemorative t-shirt and hoodie. In order to create a design that spoke to the people in our organization, we asked SelfDesign contractors and learners to vote for their favourite design and t-shirt colour using words previously submitted by SelfDesign learners (Creative, Supportive, Awesome, Freedom and Community). The Fibonacci spiral (seen in SelfDesign's logo) design was the number one favourite. Contractors and learners then received their very own t-shirt or hoodie.



40th Anniversary promotional items

Our communications team created an assortment of promotional items for the 40th anniversary including branded laptop covers, umbrellas, stickers, magnets, pens, mugs and more. These items were given away through monthly giveaways, at our LocalLabs in-person gatherings and other avenues.



Monthly giveaways

Throughout the year, we ran multiple giveaways both internally and on our social media channels. On Facebook and Instagram, we spread the word about our 40th anniversary to the public and the learners and families who follow us there. We used our platforms to inform our audience about who we are, what we do, fun facts about the organization and dove deep into our history. We also ran monthly giveaways to increase our reach and spread the word. Learners, families, educators and contractors were also invited to answer monthly trivia questions to win a special gift that could bolster their learning journeys (i.e. gift certificates to Indigo Books). The trivia questions were asked to inspire our community to read and learn more about SelfDesign's origins and philosophy. Winners also received 40th anniversary promotional items and free activities from our HomeLearners Network program.



★ Feature: LocalLabs - Celebrating 40 Years of SelfDesign in person



It is especially important in a remote organization to spend time getting to know colleagues in person to build rapport and to inform our work. This is the rationale behind LocalLabs, established in 2016, where all-day events are held to unite SelfDesign contractors, build relationships and strengthen connections using the SelfDesign philosophy and teaching model. Relationships are at the heart of learning and community at SelfDesign.

Previously, SelfDesign held an annual gathering each year across a three-day stretch. To make it easier for people to attend, three or four events were held for one day in a major centre. With a shorter running time, having the event closer to home and with an agenda as impactful and fun as always, LocalLabs hit the mark.

“

LocalLabs reminds us that people are social creatures at the most basic level. We have survived and thrived by forming groups and communities over thousands of years. Positive social bonding releases those feel-good hormones, too, and can reduce stress. We thrive on social opportunities.”

**–Nikki Kenyon, Interim CEO
SelfDesign Learning Foundation**

A 40th anniversary event in true SelfDesign style

LocalLabs facilitator, Michelle Buck, made sure the 2024 LocalLabs helped to celebrate the organization's 40th anniversary.

“Our goal is to make LocalLabs meaningful and engaging for everyone,” says Michelle. “We focus on enhancing a sense of community, building relationships and strengthening connections with each other, all grounded in the philosophy and model of SelfDesign learning, while also celebrating SelfDesign's 40th anniversary.”

This year the LocalLabs took place in Nanaimo, Kelowna and Nelson. Approximately 130 contractors took part in the events.

“People were really hungry to come together and be together in person again,” recalls River Meyer, SelfDesign Community Advisor and one of the event organizers.



The theme: Celebrating 40 Years of SelfDesign

"There were custom made buttons, balloons and other promotional items" says Michelle. "Participants made their own party hats with the support of mentors from HomeLearners Network. A Magic Moment wall mural was populated with favourite photos of participants, their family, friends, relatives and pets. An informal book swap table was set up and left open to all for the day."

Michelle says one of the highlights was serving cake as we prepared for the "world premiere" screening of the SelfDesign 40th anniversary video.

"Amongst the laughter and good times, prizes were given away, activities engaged us all, catching up with colleagues and friends was enriching, and spending time revisiting the SelfDesign philosophy was insightful," she adds.

A collaborative discussion on how SelfDesign principles and philosophy impact our work and help build and strengthen community through relationships led to conversations on professional and personal growth.



“

It was a wonderful way to spend a day celebrating SelfDesign. Everyone left with a goody bag and a notable smile.”

– Michelle Buck,
SelfDesign LocalLabs host

Feedback from a few LocalLabs attendees

“ Amongst the laughter and good times, prizes were given away, activities engaged us all, catching up with colleagues and friends was enriching, and spending time revisiting the SelfDesign philosophy was insightful.”

“ I really enjoyed connecting with colleagues and going through the activities.” “I had fun, met new people and reconnected with folks I haven’t seen in a long time.”

“ This was by far my favourite LocalLab — it had a great pace with fun, meaningful and engaging activities, lots of time for connections.”

“ I loved the day. It exceeded my expectations and remained in my thoughts for a day or so after as I processed all the great activities. I especially enjoyed considering the interconnection of individuals and how together we form a system of learners.”





Message from the Principal

Catherine Dinim, Principal
SelfDesign Learning Community

“My word for this year is ‘flourish’”

The past few years have brought big changes, requiring flexibility, vision and a willingness to adapt. Last year, my guiding word was ‘deepen’—a reminder to root ourselves more firmly in what’s new, to strengthen the philosophy that guides our approach to learning, and to enrich the ways we work together.

This year, the vision has expanded. It feels like we’ve grown into the space we’ve created through our efforts over the past few years. I imagine a ceramicist at the wheel, skillfully stretching, smoothing and shaping a vessel—carefully drawing it outward, just as we are broadening our reach and refining our work.

As Principal, my role is twofold: to support and lead our school community and to work closely with the SelfDesign Learning Foundation teams, ensuring that our systems and processes run smoothly.

Our commitment to continuous improvement is strong. We listen, we learn and we adapt. The grades 10 to 12 end-of-semester survey has provided valuable insights from our learners, as has feedback from the Learner

Council and groups like the Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA). We’re always looking for ways to hear from our community – identifying what’s working well and where we can do better.

Through our relationships with Cognia, the Ministry of Education and Child Care’s inspection process, and their new Accountability and Quality Assurance Framework, we have guidance and support in shaping our approach to continuous improvement and data collection. One of our key goals right now is to bring consistency to the standards by which we assess ourselves – creating a framework that reflects our philosophy and serves as a foundation year after year.

SelfDesign Learning Community is a living, breathing network woven together with care and dedication: learning consultants, learning specialists, parents and caregivers, support teams like Contact Assistance Team, Guidance, and Educator Assist, IT responding to support requests, Procurement processing invoices. Every one of us contributes to this big, beautiful web, working in service of our learners and supporting their growth.

Greater transparency and collaboration can open up new ways of working together. This takes time and

effort, especially as we build the space to truly listen to each other's experiences and perspectives. But this is essential work, and it's a key focus for our team.

As we step into this new year, my goals are clear: to continue offering support, to listen with greater clarity, and to find more direct ways to connect with educators, learners and parents. We have a real opportunity to collaborate, to dream and plan together, and to keep broadening and strengthening the ways we support one another.

Here's to a year of flourishing – individually and as a community.

Catherine



“

One of our key goals right now is to bring consistency to the standards by which we assess ourselves – creating a framework that reflects our philosophy and serves as a foundation year after year.”

—Catherine Dinim



SelfDesign Learning Community

An innovative and personalized approach to learning. We go above and beyond the walls of a classroom.

1. **We offer a unique, personalized and inclusive approach to education** for more than 2,000 learners from kindergarten to grade 12 each year.
2. **We follow the curriculum of the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care.**
3. **Our B.C. certified educators provide personalized one-to-one learning.**
4. **Learners can graduate** with a Dogwood Diploma (Certificate of Graduation), Adult Dogwood Diploma (Adult Graduation Diploma) or Evergreen Certificate (School Completion Certificate). They have the same opportunity to apply for university or college as a child in a brick-and-mortar school.
5. **Our inclusive education program provides equal access to learning opportunities** for all learners by providing personalized support services to learners with disabilities or diverse abilities.
6. **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.
7. **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.
8. **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 guided by one of our 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 experts in knowing their children and are a valued part of the circle of relationships that supports learners.



How it works

1

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.



2

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.

3

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 resources 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.

4

We assess learners based on competencies

Because our kindergarten to grade 12 program is based on competencies, we communicate about and assess learning through a process we call Observing for Learning. Our B.C. certified educators participate in ongoing weekly conversations with family members and their child.



Why families choose SelfDesign

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



What sets us apart



Learning happens everywhere



Prepared for success



Personalized learning



A supportive approach



BC Ministry of Education and Child Care approved



Indigenous Learning



SelfDesign Learning Experiences Library



Inclusive education





Spotlight on Family Services

Encouraging understanding and safety for all

The Family Services team supports the Educational Environment of Safety, Acceptance and Respect Policy and the Emergency Preparedness Policy. They provide learners, parents, caregivers and educators with access to information, supports, policies and procedures about learner safety, inclusion and diversity, and a school culture of safety, acceptance and respect.

Throughout the learning year, Family Services publish articles on fire and earthquake emergency preparedness, shelter in place and lockdown emergency preparedness, online safety and digital literacy, bullying prevention, mental health and suicide awareness and support.

Franya Jedwab, our registered clinical counsellor, accepts referrals from learning consultants who identify when learners might benefit from clinical support. Consulting with the learners and families, Franya provides counselling sessions, referring learners and families to clinical resources and related supports within their own communities.

Finding placements for learner assessments in 2024 and 2025

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 supervised and 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 at the assessment sittings.

In 2024, we continued with the success of our SelfDesign-hosted assessment events and will offer these same supports in 2025. In communities where we have a significant number of learners taking the assessments, we host our own assessment sittings. These are held in key locations throughout the province and each location is designed to have a warm and welcoming atmosphere so learners have a positive experience that is as comfortable as possible.



Spotlight on SOGI123

A clear picture of our teaching

SelfDesign recognizes that all learners are impacted by inclusive measures including the right to safety, confidentiality and self-expression. In addition to educator professional development and educational program offerings, the Family Services team works to support and contribute to a school culture of inclusivity, safety, acceptance, respect and encouragement for all members in regard to ability, learning style, culture, race, personal or spiritual beliefs, gender identity and expression.

At SelfDesign Learning Community, we support learning about issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity in a way that is age and developmentally appropriate. We have a variety of resources available to learners, parents/caregivers and educators. Educators are encouraged to share these resources, as appropriate, in their communications with families (ex: Observing for Learning responses, weekly newsletters, on the landing page of their virtual class in the Learning Platform). In addition, learners and families can find related content in our Learning Experience Library.

SOGI 123 helps educators make schools safer and more inclusive - <https://www.sogieducation.org/>

In 2022, we introduced the Rainbow Hubs and the SOGI Hub for learners with age-appropriate resources on SOGI topics through the two Rainbow Hubs (for kindergarten to grade 5 and grade 6 to 7 learners) and the SOGI Hub (for learners in grades 8 to 12). In 2023, we launched a bi-monthly newsletter to inform our community of our many activities. Our goal was to improve how SOGI-related information was shared while also offering a deeper level of understanding among community members. The newsletter is a valuable resource on SOGI-inspired news, events, resources and feature stories, all designed to explain our work and intentions. We are grateful, too, to work with a SelfDesign learner writer and other members of the SelfDesign community on this project.

In 2024, we added a section called [**Getting Started: An Introduction to SOGI**](#) at SelfDesign, with resources and information to provide parents, caregivers and contractors a clear picture of our offering. This approach helps people learn, ask questions, and gain a richer understanding of how supportive SOGI learning can be for young people. We want to keep our learners feeling safe by building an inclusive learning environment.

“

...providing well-curated resources instead of leaving it up to kids to ‘find’ is way safer.”
- a SelfDesign learner



★ Feature: SelfDesign receives commendations during BC Ministry of Education Inspections

Because of how the learning year cycle works, SelfDesign® Learning Community engaged in two inspections during 2024. Inspectors from the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care visited in January 2024 for a monitoring visit, and again for a full external evaluation by committee in November 2024.

“

The external evaluation process is an opportunity to reflect on how we're doing. It also gives us a chance to welcome fresh perspectives to help support our continuous improvement. The committee of inspectors is made up of Principals and administrators at B.C. independent schools. So they understand our context, and often have thoughtful questions and ideas for us.”

**—Catherine Dinim
SelfDesign Learning Community Principal**

The January 2024 monitoring visit coincided with the [re-accreditation meetings with Cognia](#).

One of the Ministry commendations was for how the SelfDesign seeks continuously to improve its programs, offerings and services, gathering data from learners, families and educators to identify where and how things may be tweaked to improve learner experience and outcomes.

In his report, the Ministry inspector specifically mentioned the recent re-accreditation process that SelfDesign was engaged in with Cognia — a process whereby we had to demonstrate to Cognia continuous improvement from year to year.

The other Ministry commendation was for SelfDesign's criminal record check tracking processes. As with all schools in B.C., SelfDesign educators, service providers and contractors are required to undergo a criminal record check before working with children, youth and vulnerable adults to provide services to SelfDesign Learning Community learners.

“The inspector noted that we’re tracking criminal record checks at least six months out from their expiry and that we’re sending people emails when they need to renew,” Catherine says. “The SelfDesign Procurement team has a robust system, and everything is filed well. When they came into the meeting with the inspector, he was wowed by how everything is at their fingertips and how everything is automated.”

The January 2024 monitoring inspection was the first Ministry external evaluation SelfDesign has undergone since [becoming an independent provincial](#) online school in July 2023. Independent schools in BC have had an external evaluation framework for many years. That framework is now part of the Ministry of Education and Child Care’s new Accountability and Quality Assurance Framework that applies to all provincial online schools — independent and public.

In November 2024, SelfDesign welcomed a different committee of inspectors for the External Evaluation by Committee (EEC), all ready to learn about SelfDesign’s unique approach.

SelfDesign received three commendations:

- **“The School’s new Administrative structure appears to have facilitated more effective, efficient and wholistic service to students, families and educators at SelfDesign.”**
- **“The EEC commends the School for the creation of the HomeLearners Network, which offers students and their families valuable extra-curricular opportunities to explore their interests while fostering connections in a fun and supportive environment.”**
- **“The EEC commends the school for creating opportunities for students to build online communities through learning lounges and real-time meetings. The All Access Pass program is exceptional, allowing students to delve deeper into subjects they are passionate about.”**

In the spirit of continuous improvement the EEC recommended that the school consider improving the course maps the Educational Program Curriculum Design Team uses to include assessment strategies to enhance visibility and understanding the methods used in our grade 10-12 themes. This suggestion was met with readiness – the Curriculum Design Team has now re-designed the course map template.

In both January and November’s inspections, SelfDesign did not receive any statutory or policy requirements, meaning that they identified no compliance issues that needed to be addressed.





Principal Team from left to right: Vanessa Kuran, Catherine Dinim, and Clarissa Tufts

★ Feature: SelfDesign scores high with prestigious re-accreditation

SelfDesign® Learning Community recently received a glowing performance re-accreditation from the pre-eminent Cognia network.

The re-accreditation — [SelfDesign's second](#) since it was first accredited by Cognia in 2011 — demonstrates the school's continuing success at meeting the needs of its learners and families and helps us see where we can improve further.

Cognia offers accreditation and certification, assessment, professional services and consulting within a framework of continuous improvement. Based out of the U.S., the not-for-profit, non-partisan organization has been accrediting schools around the world for more than 100 years with a commitment to ensure schools meet and exceed performance standards and to help them improve.

“

Cognia's digital self-assessment framework for online schools helped focus SelfDesign's process.”

**– Catherine Dinim,
SelfDesign Learning Community Principal**

The new framework was developed largely in response to the pandemic, when many schools around the world temporarily became online schools and the process and matrix used for brick-and-mortar schools were less relevant.

“For our re-accreditation self-assessment, we undertook surveys and went through different parts of our learning platform as we worked through the self-assessment based on Cognia's performance standards,” Catherine says. “We did a lot of thinking, looking at the data that we had collected, figuring out the patterns and what they were telling us, and then based on the data and analysis, determining plans and possible goals for further continuous improvement. It was a big process.”

High scores on performance standards

SelfDesign scored higher than the Cognia school network average on all performance standards.

Consultant Mary Gervase was one of the education professionals on the Cognia team that reviewed SelfDesign's re-accreditation. She says, “SelfDesign Learning Community demonstrated once again their fidelity to their long-established mission of providing all students equal access to a high-quality, high-touch, technology-enabled, authentic, personalized learning experience.

The SelfDesign leadership and community are commended for continuing to redefine the parameters of how, where, and when learning can occur.”

Although being accredited by Cognia means adopting a continuous improvement mindset across all school activities, the re-accreditation team flagged two areas for additional focused improvement.

They noted that SelfDesign Learning Community could:

- **more actively engage families** in the support of school priorities and guiding principles that help to promote learners’ academic growth and well-being, and
- **expand the collection of trend data** to inform decision-making about programs, strategies and practices that impact learner’s growth, well-being and learning.

Benefits beyond re-accreditation

The process overall, says Catherine, was also extremely helpful in preparing SelfDesign Learning Community for the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care’s new assessment and quality assurance (AQA) process for provincial online schools.

“Cognia’s new self-assessment framework for online schools is so good, and it’s asking us to show up with a game plan,” she says. “The Cognia framework provides a way of thinking about how we make decisions and how we improve and deepen and expand what we offer as a school. Because of that, I feel we’re well prepared for what’s coming as we move into the early stages of the BC Ministry AQA process.”

Benefits for learners and families

The Cognia re-accreditation also brings benefits and broadens opportunities to learners and families.

At commencement, all SelfDesign learners received a SelfDesign certificate with the Cognia seal, indicating that the school meets Cognia’s performance standards.

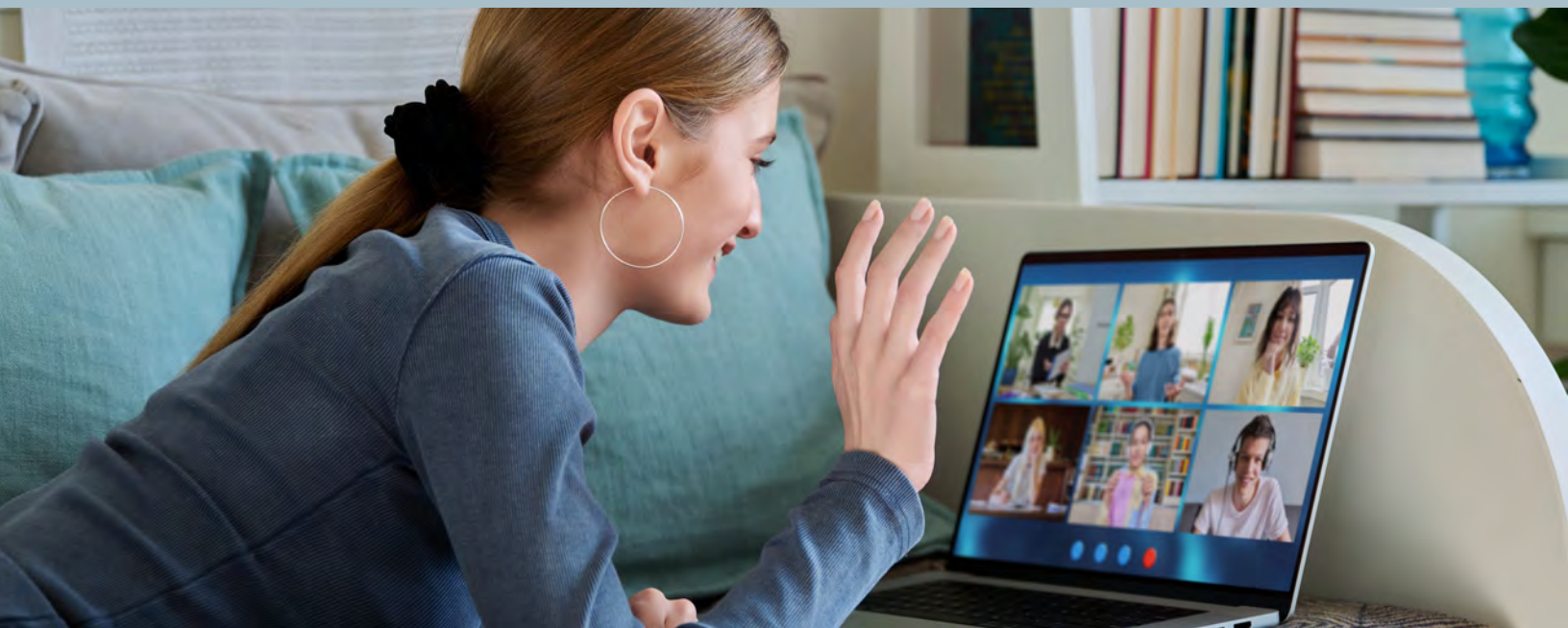


Having a B.C. Dogwood Certificate will help gain a learner admittance into most universities in Canada but identifying that SelfDesign is also accredited by Cognia can improve a learner’s chances of getting into many U.S. schools, particularly not-for-profit post-secondary schools that are also Cognia accredited.”

– Nikki Kenyon, President and CEO

It can also help younger learners be accepted into programs or schools internationally, Catherine says. “If a SelfDesign family moves or is posted to work overseas and is looking at enrolling their children in online programs or brick-and-mortar schools around the world, from China to South Africa to the UAE, the Cognia accreditation may help with the intake conversations. The family will be able to say, ‘We’ve come from a unique educational environment and our last report card looks different than what you might expect, but it’s from a Cognia-accredited school.’”





Spotlight: Connecting with others

Learners have many options to connect and share interests

Here are a few of the ways our learners gather together.



Learner Council

Every fall, learners from grades 8 to 12 with SelfDesign Learning Community elect peers to represent them on [SelfDesign's Learner Council](#).

This group of elected learners is a voice for the school's learner body and acts as a bridge between learners and the school's leadership and administration. Learners throughout the school can bring issues and questions to any council member for consideration.

The council also provides its elected members with opportunities to build their communication and leadership skills. The young people on the council gain experience organizing events and activities for their peers, learn how to prevent and deal with conflict, and take on and complete initiatives that advance learners' cause and their experience within SelfDesign.

As a member of the Learner Council, grade 10 learner Ameya says, "We have a lot of fun together, and we work together on the things we're all passionate about. It's a great way to meet people that are similar to you, and to make friends and enjoy SelfDesign."



“

Our learners are craving social connection and meeting like-minded peers. They tell us that. Open Spaces helps them meet that need.”

**–Janice Green,
SelfDesign Learning Community
Program team lead**



Open Spaces

Open Spaces are online spaces where SelfDesign learners can interact socially with each other in ways that are co-designed by learners every week. Learners can come together and join their peers in online “rooms” according to their interests.

The offering is our version of a brick-and-mortar school’s common spaces – the hallways, cafeteria, front steps and library – where young people gather, connect and interact before, between and after their classes.

Piloted in 2021 for learners in grades 8 to 12 and expanded in 2022 for learners in grades 4 to 7, we started offering this opportunity to learners in kindergarten to grade 3 in 2023 to join the space with their parents or guardians and to connect with their peers.

Learners gather on our online meeting platform at the start of each Open Spaces session for their grade level to propose ideas for topics they’d like online meeting rooms for. The offering’s facilitators set up the rooms, and the learners take ownership of the spaces. They can visit the room or rooms they’re interested in to chat about the posted topic and work on a shared goal or interest. The facilitators monitor the online spaces and are available to support learners as needed.

Gender Sexual Orientation Alliance

SelfDesign’s own Gender Sexual Orientation Alliance (GSA) provides a place for SelfDesign learners in grades 8 to 12 who identify as two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, plus (2SLGBTQIA+), or who might be exploring their gender identity and sexual orientation, and their allies to connect, learn and support each other and to contribute to a healthy school environment for all.

I really wanted to create a way for 2SLGBTQIA+ learners to connect within SelfDesign,” says Ayalla, a SelfDesign learner who graduated in 2021 about why they and their peers proposed the GSA in 2020. “The world isn’t always an easy place to live in as an 2SLGBTQIA+ person, and making those connections with people who have similar experiences is really important.”

Members of the GSA provide ideas, input and inspiring content to share with learners and families on SelfDesign’s [Rainbow Hub](#).



Winterlude festival

Every January, we welcome learners to our annual winter celebration. [Winterlude](#) takes place during the second week of January. The festival allows learners to gather online to connect with their peers and to build community.

Offerings presented by our Education Program team and Family Services team, guest speakers and learner groups such as Learners Council, the Gender Sexual Orientation Alliance, the SelfDesign Climate Action Group, and the HomeLearners Network give learners an opportunity to discuss topics that do not fit into their regular learning activities in a fun and informal way.

We also invite learners in grades 8 to 12 to present their projects and learning in a live learner showcase.

Initially focused on learners in grades 10 to 12, Winterlude expanded in 2022 to include learners in grade 8 and 9. Now learners in kindergarten to grade 7 and their parents and guardians can also join in and take part in age-appropriate activities.

Grades 6 to 7 and 8 to 9 themes

Learners in these grades connect with their peers, discuss their passions and explore new interests together in [safe online spaces](#).

The offerings consist of a series of topics geared to engage learners in grades 6 and 7 and in grades 8 and 9. Learners explore each topic over four weeks through weekly online meetings, resources and activities that learners can explore in their own time, and discussion spaces where they get to know one another and share their learning.

By taking part, learners become comfortable with communicating online under the guidance of supportive SelfDesign [educators-facilitators](#). Learners also gradually [learn the skills they'll need in later grades](#). SelfDesign provides the offerings on the same online platform and with the same online tools that are used in grades 10 to 12. Learners can explore the spaces and tools at their own pace, with educator-facilitated support.

Participation is optional, and learners can join one meeting or attend them all. They can also participate at whatever level they feel comfortable.

“The focus is on fun, connection, and learning through collaboration,” says the theme facilitator, Melinda. “It is a great way to learn in community and from fellow learners in grades 8 and 9. Learners can show up however they feel that week.”





In-person camps

Some learners say attending an in-person SelfDesign camp changed their lives.

“It was unlike anything I had experienced before as a home learner,” says former learner Mason, Class of 2020. “The activities were fun, too, but it was the social side of the camps that made me want to go back and do it again and again. It changed me, you know. It drew me out of my shyness. I made friends. I actually had a reason to have an Instagram account.”

When in-person activities restarted after the pandemic, there was pent-up demand among learners to meet and connect with their peers in person at SelfDesign camps. Twenty learners in grades 9 and up attended our first post-pandemic camp, [Winter Camp, in the Shuswap](#) in February 2024. Another 20 gathered for Spring Camp in the Lower Mainland in May.

The learners took part in seasonal outdoor activities, learning and fun. They connected to and socialized with each other, played games together, and explored Indigenous ways of knowing and art as a way to express themselves.

In the 2023/24 learning year, we offered two camps for learners. Learner-only camps are open to learners enrolled in grades 9 to 12 with SelfDesign Learning Community and learners aged 15 and older registered with SelfDesign Home Learning, our home-school option.

“

SelfDesign is a unique opportunity to pursue your interests in a different way. It’s also a great opportunity to find like-minded people – which could be hard to do otherwise – but SelfDesign provides perfect opportunities for connections to be made.”

**–Erik,
learner, class of 2019**

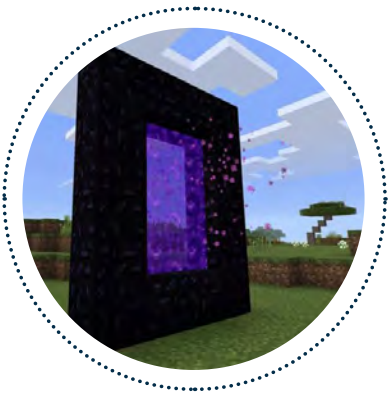


Learner-led newspaper

[The Design Post](#) provides a space where learners of all ages can gather, work together, and contribute their writing, artwork, photography or thoughts. Now in its third year, the publication is led by an editorial team of five learners.

Learners of all ages are invited to join in and to submit articles, photographs, poems, stories and artwork.

“The Design Post is for everyone,” says the publication’s founder, Aerin, now in grade 11. “Learners have asked, ‘Is there a grade limit? Is this for learners in grades 8 to 12, or 10 to 12?’ But it really is for anyone who’s interested — whatever grade they’re in, whatever they’re interested in.”



Minecraft group

When learners in kindergarten to grade 9 gather in our [Minecraft](#) workshop space to share, talk and connect, they build community among themselves and also more literally.

Every year, 60–100 learners use the popular role-playing video game platform to collectively negotiate how to design and build communities in SelfDesign’s own Minecraft world.

Minecraft is a video game in which players create and break apart structures and landforms in three-dimensional virtual worlds, using what are called “blocks” (think, very generally, of how Lego blocks can be used to build things). The point of the game is to build, explore and survive.

“Minecraft, just like other toys and adventures in life, is a wonderful avenue for learning,” says [Lori](#), the SelfDesign Minecraft server administrator. “When finding a safe place for children to connect online, it can promote a higher sense of engagement and teamwork that may be missing in some learner’s lives. This opportunity to engage together online can be so helpful to those who are feeling alone.”



Earth-Wise Collective

SelfDesign learners in grades 8 to 12 who are interested in the environment can share and grow those interests by joining SelfDesign's learner-led [Earth-wise Collective](#).

"Every meeting, we include a range of activities to include as many people as possible," club leader and grade 10 learner Ameya says. "We start off catching up with each other and reporting on a project or discussion. Sometimes we'll watch a short documentary. Then we'll work on a project. And we end each meeting by planning what we'd like to work on next week."

The learners have investigated food-use calculators to see how the food choices we each make on a day-to-day basis affect the world around us. They've put together slideshows and other presentations. They craft useful items from recycled materials. The group also designed a sustainable city.



HomeLearners Network activities

In 2024, all families with children enrolled with SelfDesign Learning Community were provided with free enrollment for [HomeLearners Network offerings](#).

The online downloadable and Realtime activities range from single offerings, series and even clubs. Activities are designed for young people aged 5-15 years, depending on the offering, to help them pursue their passions, learn new things, build relationships and have fun together.

Almost every year, new opportunities arise for learners to gather and connect with each other. By taking part in these offerings, learners can meet and make new friends, reconnect with peers, learn new skills, gain confidence and have new experiences.



Spotlight on Indigenous Education

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. This leadership team includes Indigenous families and educators.

We integrate the First Peoples Principles of Learning into our work, programs and learning opportunities.

We carefully curate authentic resources to help learners explore and understand Indigenous ways of being, seeing and knowing, through listening to Indigenous voices from many territories in BC and across Turtle Island.

We provide grants for Indigenous learners to deepen their connection to their cultural practice.

We offer learners opportunities to connect with Indigenous Elders, traditional knowledge keepers, Indigenous educators, and each other.

This work is ongoing. We are always seeking ways to improve:

- how our programs and offerings integrate Indigenous ways of being, seeing and knowing.
- how we include and acknowledge the diversity of Indigenous Peoples, cultures and territories our community members live and learn on.
- how we support our learners and families who self-report as Indigenous.
- how we support all members of our community as they deepen their understanding of Indigenous world views and ways of being in the world.

Indigenous Education Highlights from 2024

Crafty Time offered in Open Spaces

The creative and traditional teaching initiative, Crafty Time, began in 2022 as an Indigenous-led space open to all learners from K to 12. Nested within a welcoming space dedicated to learning and practicing Indigenous art and craft, learners and their families have had the opportunity to learn skills such as beading, or bring their own projects and work on them in a collective space.

During Crafty Time, we have featured inspiring indigenous artists and introduced learners to important campaigns such as the Moosehide Campaign. We welcomed guest knowledge keeper Patricia Collins, who brought teachings on mocassin-making and working with porcupine quills as well as Angela Gladue, who shared beading tips and her experiences bringing her beading to Toronto Indigenous Fashion Week.

For 2025, educator Amy Kealey will design our winter/spring program for Crafty Time, bringing the opportunity for learners to connect even deeper to the Moosehide Campaign. She has invited special guest Elder Patricia to some of the sessions to share traditional teachings with our learners.



Patricia Collins
Indigenous Education Facilitator



Profile: Michael Harris, Elder in Residence

Gitxsan Elder, Michael Harris was Elder in Residence for the 2023/24 learning year and again during this 2024/25 learning year at SelfDesign, a virtual community he has supported for many years. Elder Michael supports learning on subjects relating to cultural safety that involves:

- **Reflect** on your own culture, beliefs, and attitudes about others.
- **Develop** trust.
- **Be aware** of power imbalances.
- **Be respectful.**
- **Be open** to learning about other cultures.

Our team researched and consulted with knowledge keepers on how to best honour and support Elder Michael in this role. We continue to meet with Elder Michael weekly in various capacities to consult, plan and reflect on how we can further integrate First Peoples' ways of learning within our Indigenous Education program, and through seeing and being.

In 2024, Elder Michael was a guest facilitator at Open Spaces with learners of all grades and their families. In these informal gatherings, Elder Michael passed along teachings, connected with everyone and brought Indigenous perspectives to themes such as reconciliation – even Halloween – reconnecting his audience to Indigenous culture and spirituality. Michael also shared teachings at two Lunch and Learns in 2024 and invited educators to bring questions that shaped conversations.



Elder Michael belongs to the Gitxsan Nation, Gitanmaax Village, House of Wii Gaak, and Laxgibuu (Wolf Clan). His Spirit Name is Nagwa Yel Wa, which means He Who Walks Far, and he is a sought-after traditional healer, traditional pipe carrier, sweat lodge water pourer, ceremony leader and Sundancer! Learners, families, educators and contractors have many opportunities to make a meaningful connection with Elder Michael throughout the year.

Providing opportunities to connect with elders and knowledge keepers is one of the ways SelfDesign encourages engagement with Indigenous worldviews and perspectives. We support the connection between learners, educators and Elder Michael through online workshops and conversation groups, regular events and activities at SelfDesign, including Real Time Meetings, Learning Lounges, 8/9 Themes, and Winterlude.

Indigenous families provide valuable feedback to program planning

Early in 2024, Indigenous families were asked to complete a survey on our program and provide their feedback on ways we can better support Indigenous learners. We recognize that Indigenous families come from unique cultural backgrounds and territories. The better we know and understand our families, the better we can support them. Their responses help guide our work.

We are looking at specific territories and cultural groupings of families, learning about them, and shaping resources and curriculum with them in mind. Our goal is that all learners can see themselves, their cultures and communities reflected in our learning materials.



Opening Circle

At the end of the school year in 2024, the Indigenous Education team offered a Closing Circle ceremony to the SelfDesign community, facilitated and guided by Elder Michael. The idea was to close our year together in a good way.

By offering a space for gratitude, speaking to successes and learning throughout the year, and looking ahead intentionally to the next season, the team was inspired. Why not start the learning year in community with an Opening Circle? And so they did in the fall of 2024 at the beginning of the school year.

Elder Michael invited learners and educators to set intentions and personal goals for the learning year, while also connecting with what is happening seasonally and on the land that each and every person was standing on.

Elder Michael asked those of us working and supporting him in this community space to bring a deeper understanding of the territories where our learning community studies, works and lives on. He asked us to speak the names of the nations aloud, and to learn humbly and to the best of our abilities how to pronounce these names.



Winter and Spring 2024

Elder Michael offered two sessions for Winterlude that shared cultural knowledge and teachings. These sessions were open to our K to 12 learners and educators. Classes involving Indigenous art and traditional regalia including wall hangings, talking sticks, walking sticks, regalia, rattles, flutes and drums.

Elder Michael offered Real Time Meetings and some were tied into Crafty Time programming and Learning Lounges. He was also a guest participant at 8/9 themes, 6/7 themes, and 8/9 English add-ons. Some sessions were geared towards K to 7.



Profile: Amy Kealey, Indigenous Educator

In December 2024, the Indigenous Education team welcomed Amy Kealey, who brings years of relevant, valuable experience to the role from her community in Northern Ontario.

A proud Métis citizen, Amy resides on the historic Williams Treaties Territory, the traditional land of the Anishinabek people. This area is home to the Council of Three Fires – comprising the Chippewa, Odawa, and Potawatomi nations – as well as the Algonquin, Saulteaux, Nipissing and Mississauga First Nations along the eastern shores of Lake Huron.

Amy was part of the SelfDesign Community for ten years, a while back, at an exciting time. “The International School of the Kootenays merged with the SelfDesign K to 9 program in 2009. I mentored students there and managed operations and administration at our Nelson office,” she explains. In 2013, she took time off when her daughter was born, then again in 2016 when her son was born, returning to work as the school’s Graduation Planner.

Today, she works virtually with SelfDesign learners alongside educators Amber Santos, Indigenous Educator, and Michael Harris, Elder in Residence. Amy provides essential learner support with knowledge and experience in Indigenous curriculum development and creative arts.

Deeply committed to celebrating and preserving her own heritage, too, Amy actively participates in cultural workshops, practices traditional healing, creates Indigenous-inspired art for local businesses, volunteers at Métis Rendezvous, supports Indigenous-led art galleries, and donates resources for Truth and Reconciliation ceremonies.



Photo: Amy Kealey heads home with an armful of birch bark from a forest nearby. This harvest will serve as fire starter; a gift of tobacco given in return - ahsemma.

“

Amy has been working with Indigenous gallery curator, Elder Patricia Monague, who joins us as a special guest at Crafty Time sessions. Trish and Amy have collaborated on designing various art pieces with learners this school year. Their work, and the work of our learners, is amazing. Amy and Elder Patricia have brought our whole team together.”

–Amber Santos,
Indigenous Educator,
SelfDesign Learning Community

Elder Patricia's true name is Giizhgondokwe - which means 'Cedar Woman' - and she is from Beausoleil First Nation in Northern Ontario.

"I met Patricia after returning to my home town, Penetanguishene, and attended a cultural workshop she was hosting. When I was asked by an acquaintance to join our local Indigenous Art Gallery committee as a Métis member and descendant of the area, I was thrilled to join Patricia in circle."

Patricia is curator and programming coordinator at the Midland Cultural Centre Gallery of Indigenous Art. The work shown at this gallery has included artists and artisans of the Beausoleil First Nation and members of the Georgian Bay Métis community. The inclusive space also shows works by the broader community of Canadian Indigenous artists and artisans.

A world of teaching and learning has opened up to Amy since coming home, returning to SelfDesign, and working with Amber, Elder Michael and Elder Patricia.

"I spent years learning about my own Métis heritage, decolonizing my own way of knowing and being, and SelfDesign played a role in this. I was excited to return home and work within our community in a good way to support our Indigenous youth in a new capacity," says Amy.

"When Elder Patricia is teaching, I set an example for learners as an active listener," says Amy. She also shares how Elder Patricia is a knowledge keeper who has permission from her Elders to share her teachings. "After introducing herself," says Amy, "Elder Patricia dives into teaching, and we make sure to leave time for questions from the learners. I am there to help and hold space."

Another example of holding space, to be present without judgment, happened recently when Amy was invited to hold a Blanket Stitch workshop with grade 8 learners alongside Patricia and fellow Métis community member Scott Carpenter during an exhibition of Métis work at the gallery.

"My Auntie Ruth Quesmelle was one of the artists featured in the exhibition, so I was honoured to share a bit of my family history and the skills passed to me from her mother, my Memere (grandmother)."

"It is my honour," says Amy, "to work alongside Patricia."



Elder Patricia in ceremonial Ojibway attire.



Patricia and Amy with summer peonies.



Spotlight on Supporting learners with disabilities or diverse abilities

Individual education plans, access to specialists where each learner is unique

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 disabilities or diverse abilities. 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, family 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.

Support varies learner to learner and grows with children. Older learners are supported to plan for their transition to high school and beyond. SelfDesign offers the B.C. Dogwood, Adult Dogwood and School Completion Certificate (Evergreen) paths to completion.

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.



★ Feature: Grades 9 to 12 learners can turn to the SelfDesign resource room for extra support in their learning

Grades 10 to 12 at SelfDesign are flexible and customizable, in keeping with our learner-centered approach to learning.

We provide a comprehensive, theme- and relationship-based approach to high school that aligns fully with the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care's graduation program.

However, to meet Ministry requirements, grades 10 to 12 are somewhat more structured than earlier years. Learners collaborate directly and regularly with their educators, with support from parents as needed, and take on more responsibility for their own learning. The workload also increases, and deadlines become important. Some learners find it a lot to manage.

“

The higher grades are pretty fast paced. There's a learning challenge due every week. Many people with learning difficulties, and even those without learning difficulties, are challenged by that kind of timeframe.”

– Kathy Rollheiser,

SelfDesign Educational Coordinator

For learners who may be struggling to stay organized to keep up with their regular weekly grade 10 to 12 coursework, we provide the online Learning Support Services (LSS) Resource Room where they can go for extra support.

A supportive learning environment

“The LSS Resource Room has been a godsend for my learner,” one learning consultant shared with Kathy. “He would not be able to function without that additional support.”

“The resource room is there to help them stay current with the work that SelfDesign expects in grades 10 to 12,” Kathy says. “Except in rare cases, it doesn't provide general tutoring. The goal is to help learners finish their challenges and stay up to date.”

For example, if a learner who has difficulties with reading comes to the resource room, the education assistants who run the room might help by reading some of the work to them and by helping the learner express an answer.

Or if a learner is having difficulty with a math-related challenge, the assistant would make sure the learner understands the questions. A mini math lesson may be provided if the learner is missing a math concept that's needed to finish that challenge.

The focus, however, Kathy says, is on helping the learner finish the [learning challenge](#) they're working on.

"Sometimes the learners are looking for emotional support," she says. "They may have anxiety or they're worried that they're going to do something wrong. Even just having somebody there, saying, 'You're doing great,' is enough to take the edge off and let the learner finish the challenge."

"We were on the verge of hiring a tutor when we were made aware of the LSS Resource Room, and it was exactly what we needed," SelfDesign parent Eryn says.

"The LSS team has given my daughter the support to understand and complete assignments as she needs, without having to wait, a virtual room that she can silently work away in, and get individual assistance as she needs. They have been amazing at coaching, instructing and mentoring, academically and with assignment planning strategies. I am relieved and thrilled for the help my daughter has received from the resource room."

One SelfDesign learning consultant says that many of their learners have used the resources room. "I've seen my learners blossom with independence, self-confidence, and success and growth with completing challenges for their school work. As a learning consultant, I feel very included as part of a team that supports each learner where they are at!"



“

I feel very included as part of a team that supports each learner where they are at!"

**- Anonymous Learning Consultant,
SelfDesign Learning Community**

Serving a broad learner population

Open for 16 hours each week, the resource room is available to learners in grades 9 to 12 enrolled in SelfDesign's general program, or who have been diagnosed with more commonly encountered learning difficulties, who have been referred to the resource room. (Learners who have been diagnosed with [more challenging, less common learning needs receive funding](#) to access other learning supports.)

Learners, parents or guardians can request a referral through the learner's learning consultant if they are struggling or feel they would benefit from extra support. Learning consultants may also refer a learner to the room if they see the learner is having trouble keeping up.

Since 2020, when it was first offered, the number of learners using the resource room has grown. Up to five or six learners come by for support during each drop-in session. Some learners stop by for one or two hours every week for several weeks in a row. Some learners attend the drop-in sessions during their school work time whether they need support or not. There is always an education assistant there to ask for help if the learners need it.

Learners can also book one-on-one sessions with the resource room education assistants.

Beginning this learning year, learners in grade 9 can also ask to be referred to the resource room for drop-in support.

"Most learners have been doing interest-based learning for a long time that might not include doing a lot of writing," Kathy says. "But in grade 10, they have to be able to do some writing. So our grade nine resource room focuses on making sure these learners are aware of what they would need to have in place when they begin grade 10, as well as how the learning platform works and how to submit assignments."

The grade 9 to 12 resource room has been well used and well received by learners, families and educators.

"Attending both math and English-focused LSS resources rooms has helped me organize myself, keep track of my weekly workflow, and complete challenging assignments," one of our grade 12 learners says. "Through LSS support, I have notably improved my confidence levels as a student, improved my productivity, and avoided burnout due to stress and anxiety."



The learners are happy the resource room is there. The parents are over the moon, and learning consultants tell us it's making a big difference in their learners' experience."

**– Kathy Rollheiser,
SelfDesign Educational Coordinator**



A woman with long brown hair and bangs, wearing a blue button-down shirt over an orange top, is leaning over a desk and smiling at a young man. The young man has dark hair and is wearing a yellow hoodie over a grey shirt. He is looking down at a laptop screen. On the desk, there is an open book with a green cover and a white mouse. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting.

SelfDesign Home Learning

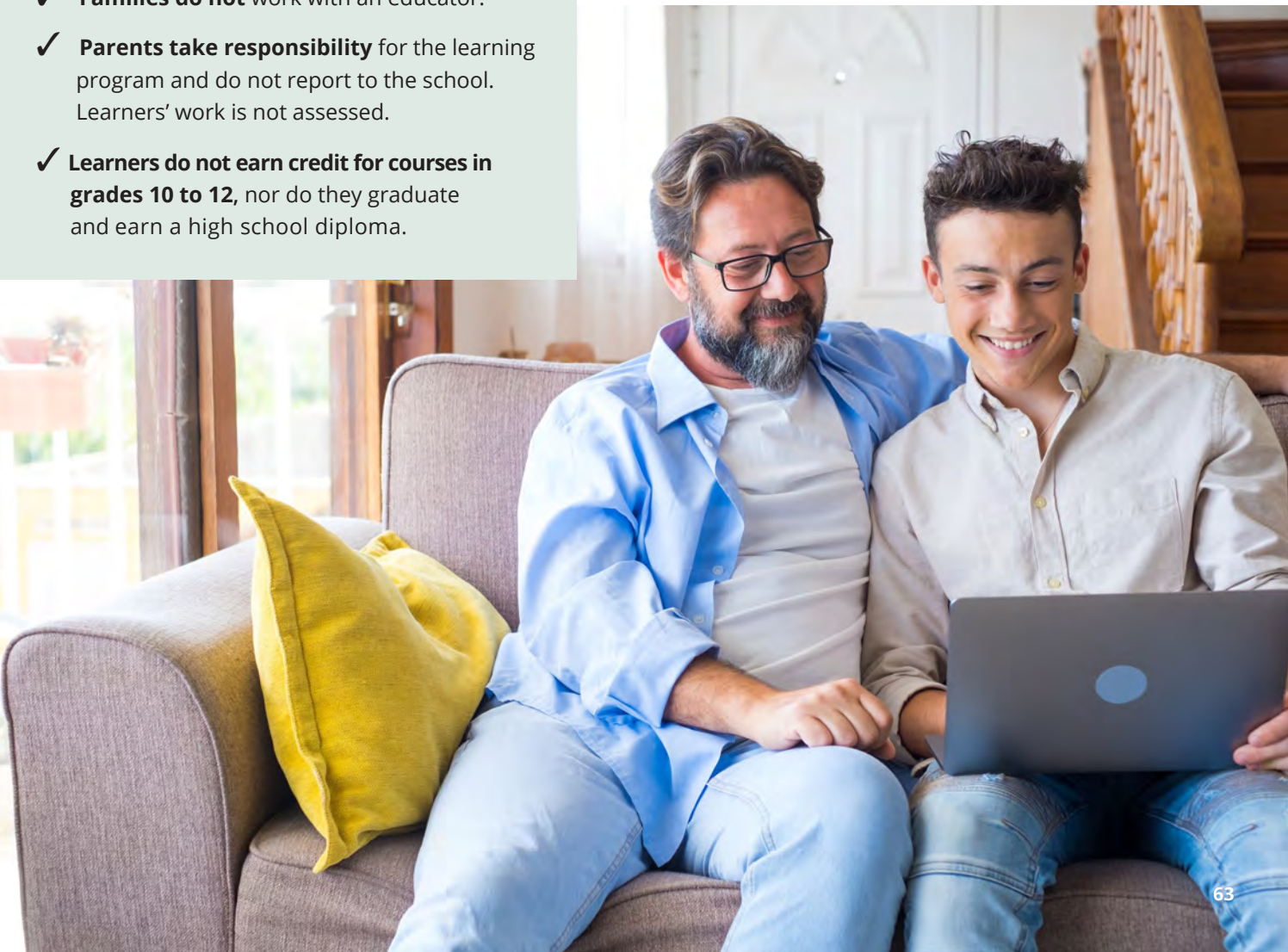
Pursuing learning independently

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, as defined by the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care, it is the most flexible learning program we offer at SelfDesign Learning Foundation. It best suits families where the parents wish to take on the responsibility for their child's education and do not wish to follow BC Ministry of Education and Child Care requirements.

To enrich the homeschooling experience, we provide learners and families with access to a suite of subscriptions to high-quality online learning opportunities, such as HomeLearners Network, 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 SelfDesign Home Learning families, and information about free online learning resources.

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 do they graduate and earn a high school diploma.



Comparing our programs

How SelfDesign Learning Community differs from SelfDesign Home Learning.

SelfDesign Learning Community



★ Kindergarten to grade 12
provincial online learning school ★

EDUCATOR LED

- 1 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 BC Certificate of Graduation, Adult Graduation Diploma or School Completion Certificate. Learners leave SelfDesign Learning Community after grade 12 with the same opportunities to apply for university or college as a child in a brick-and-mortar school does.

SelfDesign Home Learning



★ Homeschooling option ★

PARENT LED

- 1 Parents take full responsibility for their child's learning program and do not report to the school.

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 homeschoolers, 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.



Profile: Home learning helps the Hagemann family explore the world on their own terms

Christina Hagemann loves that she gets to spend so much time with her kids! Her daughter Riya (age 12) and son Adrian (age 10) have been learning from home for years, and she's grateful that this route has provided them with opportunities to explore the world on their own terms.

Last year, the Hagemann family discovered HomeLearners Network (HLN) and ever since, the platform's fun and educational activities have provided Christina with the perfect solution for engaging her children at home, enriching their learning, and making their fruitful home learning experiences even more accessible!

Learning from home has opened doors for Riya and Adrian

The Hagemann family has explored multiple routes of education for Riya and Adrian. They've attended brick-and-mortar schools, done homeschooling, and recently enrolled in SelfDesign Learning Community's K-12 home learning program.

“

The kid's learning styles are better suited to a home environment. They're very quiet, and they don't like to be in large, noisy groups. They also pick things up quickly, so being in a brick-and-mortar school could get boring for them.”

– Christina Hagemann

Christina keeps an eye on their home learning curricula to ensure they're on the right track, but she's thrilled they can pursue their interests at a level best suited to them. “From an academic standpoint, I love that they can go where they want to go. If my son wants to learn a program in Python, there's nobody there saying no,” says Christina. “My daughter wants to learn how to multiply fractions, she can do that. She doesn't have to wait to be in the right grade.”

The kids love doing science experiments, taking field trips, and participating in anything that makes learning a hands-on experience. “They both learn better that way,” says Christina, thrilled with the hands-on approach of HLN's activities.

Fun, personalized learning activities that give Christina a break.

HLN is an online platform for interactive activities designed especially for homeschoolers and home learners. All activities are led by qualified and passionate Guides, and new activities are added every month in the form of Singles, Series or Camps.

For Christina, HLN makes planning her weeks effortless, and her kids are immersed in discovering new educational topics and hobbies. Adrian loves that he can take activities with the same Guides, and Riya's favourite part is interacting with other kids!

"Probably one of the biggest things for me is that, because we live rurally, we don't have a lot of options. For example, there are no coding classes that Adrian can sign up for and go to. That's huge for me because I couldn't teach him how to code, like, let's be real." Christina laughs. "So HLN has really broadened things up for us."


Most HLN activities come with a basic materials list and don't require parent or guardian supervision. "I throw everything from the list onto the table, and they just figure it all out," says Christina. "I like to hang around just to make sure they're off to a good start, but then I wander off and just have an ear in, in case they need anything. It's something that I absolutely love – that they're so engaged."

HLN's group sizes are small, so Guides have the unique opportunity to adjust activities to suit each participant. "The Guides always interact with the kids and make sure that everybody's doing what they're capable of doing. It's important when some of the age groups for activities can be broad," says Christina, who is confident in her kids working alongside other age groups enrolled in the activities. "They've never felt that an activity wasn't speaking to them."

"Compared to before, when I had to do everything, HLN just gives me a little bit of a break," says Christina. "If the kids want to learn about something like bubble science, they can have at it! I don't have to do it or learn about it. These activities have added so much positivity to our weeks. The kids look forward to them, and I feel like we're in a really good place right now."

If you are the parent or guardian of a homeschooler or home learner, check out [HomeLearners Network](#) and sign up for awesome hands-on, educational, and fun activities today!





HomeLearners Network

Learner engagement boosted by 166% increase in monthly activities

HomeLearners Network is a SelfDesign program that offers learning activities for kids with all kinds of passions and interests! Our synchronous activities (Realtimes) are designed and led by enthusiastic educators (we call them Guides!) on topics that interest kids.

Kids can do the activities on their own, together with family or with friends. We've also received feedback that kids love making new friends in the activities and developing connections with our Guides!

The HomeLearners Network team is committed to listening and making changes to meet the unique needs of learners and families. In the past year alone, we have taken the time to listen to feedback from families about their needs for greater diversity and more activities.

In response to what we learned from families, we expanded our Realtime activity offerings, increasing them by 130% from last year.

The families were highly instrumental in helping us improve these supports.

The opportunity to explore a variety of topics and interests is one of the reasons that learners and families love HomeLearners Network. We excel at creating unique ways for learners to try out new things in a flexible and comfortable virtual space. Our newly launched Flex-Series offers a series of connected yet independent activities where families can sign up for one, two or all sessions. The Flex-Series enables learners to feed their curiosity and experiment.

To help us grow this year, we welcomed six new passionate guides to our team who bring a wealth of experience and diversity. Each of our guides are carefully selected based not only on their unique specializations and talents, but also on their alignment with HomeLearners Network values of fun, belonging and growth.

“

As a result, we saw a 166% increase in the number of learners signing up for activities each month and decreased the number of activities cancelled due to low enrollment by more than 30%.



Photos of some of our passionate guides

New activities include American Sign Language, French and German. Our guides wove storytelling, art and cooking into these activities, now in high demand. We're already planning to offer more of these popular activities in the coming year.

Keeping up to date with new technologies like coding, programming, design and gaming can be overwhelming for families, so we ensured there were ample opportunities to try out digital tools across our HomeLearners Network.

These activities included Scratch, AI tools, Minecraft, MinecraftEducaiton, and Canva. There are valuable benefits in using these tech-based activities as they encourage learners to explore many different subjects in engaging formats, including storytelling, art, design, science and math.

We were also excited to round out the fine arts activities HomeLearnersNetwork provides with more music, playwriting and theatre options. Singing, dancing, songwriting and acting supports learning by getting the whole body involved and stretching personal comfort zones, which, in turn, builds confidence and creativity.

A favourite activity for learners is the theatre series that challenges participants to write a short play and act it out, culminating in a live, virtual performance for the families.

Looking ahead to the upcoming year, the HomeLearners Network team will continue to listen and respond to the needs of learners and families. We will expand and evolve our Realtime offerings with new guides, topics and technologies. Our dedicated team and partners are also hard at work planning new asynchronous (anytime) activities and platform improvements to make our HomeLearner Network easier to use and even more fun to learn.

Feedback from 2024 survey

Here are a few of the comments our family members shared with us in our HomeLearners Network annual survey from spring 2024.

“

Really love the very calm guides. They provide a safe space for my learner.”

“

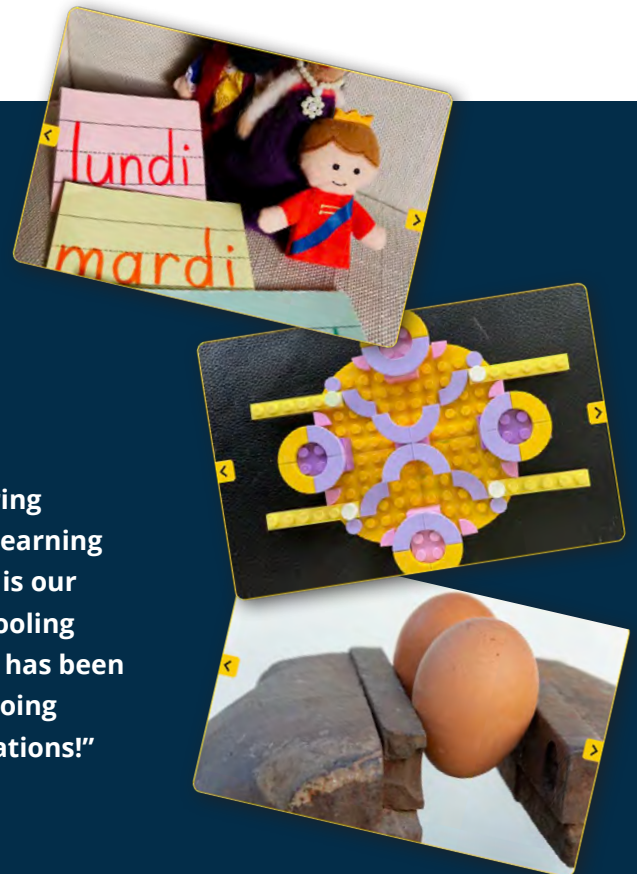
My child always enjoys story time. And it's nice when the kids get a chance to share something as well. They also had fun with a freeze dance game. Thought that was a great way to interact even on Zoom.”

“

Thank you for offering this way of (extra) learning for my daughter. It is our first year homeschooling and HomeLearners has been a big reason for it going beyond our expectations!”

“

HLN has improved a lot this past year. Well done! Thank you for asking for feedback and taking it to heart. We have noticed!”



HomeLearners Network by the numbers

In 2024, we established a Customer Advisory Committee to provide regular feedback on platform and product development, allowing us to quickly test our assumptions and gain a better understanding of customer needs during platform improvements—user experience and functionality—and content development.

We also collected feedback and conducted focus groups with learning consultants, HomeLearners Network guides, customers and other key stakeholders to inform the evolution of the platform and product offerings.

INDICATOR	2023	2024
Average number of Realtime Activities offered per month	50	114
Average number of learners signed up for Realtime Activities per month	175	466
Number of new Realtime Activities launched in 2024	169	197
Total number of Realtime Activities	595	1368
Number of singles	438	1168
Number of camps and series	157	200
Cancellation rate due to low attendance	26%	18%
Total customers	293	360
New customers	196	193
Average number of customers per month	17	16
Number of guides	12	6
Guide satisfaction	4.6/5	4.6/5
HLN overall satisfaction	4.6/5	4.4/5

Profile: Say hello to Katie and Steve, our creative new guides!

HomeLearners Network (HLN) offers a playground of fun, online learning activities for your home learner. Our guides excel in both crafting and leading diverse STEAM-focused activities that blend multiple subjects into topics that kids love. Our goal is to create a fun, interactive, and hands-on learning experience for your kid!

We're thrilled to add the creativity of our brand-new Guides, Katie and Steve, to inspire your kids in their learning journeys. We sat down to chat with Katie and Steve so you can get to know them better.

Meet Katie the Baker!

When we say our guides are always cooking up new activity ideas, with Katie, we really mean it!

Katie has been baking for as long as she can remember and has watched countless hours of Food Network and YouTube videos to learn new recipes and techniques. Her favourite things to bake are triple-decker birthday cakes. "I love getting an idea about the cake's flavour and design and bringing that to life. It's cool that I can share my love of baking with others, including HLN learners!"

Katie's education began with a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics and a minor in English. Her Bachelor of Education specialized in K-7 childhood education, where she shadowed educators in elementary school classrooms. She still works as an on-call educator in her local school district, teaching classes from kindergarten to high school

Katie is not new to making online learning engaging and fun. "I taught a grade three online classroom, and it was a very eye-opening experience to see how education can look in a setting other than a traditional classroom. Kids had activities that they could do anytime throughout the week, similar to HLN. I liked the flexibility and small group sizes, and I think there's something very treasured about small group sizes because they're rare."



For Katie, building relationships is the best thing about being an educator.

"I feel fulfilled when I help kids ignite a light inside of them that makes them feel proud, excited or inspired," she says. "I want to be remembered as someone who made learning fun. I hope to set them up for a successful life of learning, unlearning and relearning."

HLN's unique community and relationship-building philosophy drew Katie to become an HLN Guide.

"It's always a treat to see familiar faces and it's fun to get to know each other better. It makes everyone feel more connected, strengthens our community, and is a comfortable environment to meet new friends, laugh, share, ask questions, gain confidence and try something new!"

Meet Steve, the maker. Steve is rolling up his sleeves to introduce your kids to the wonders of LEGO!

Steve loved LEGO as a kid and finds immense joy in connecting with HLN learners and his own kids over fun LEGO projects.

"I love that LEGO is a hands-on material where kids can build their ideas right in front of them," he says. "There's no limit to the creativity that goes into building and making!"

Steve is inspired by kids adding their twists and takes on creative projects. "It's so open-ended, and I enjoy the give-and-take of offering my ideas and seeing what kids do with them."

A keen interest in people's stories drew Steve to complete an undergraduate degree in History with a minor in Latin American studies. He spent a portion of his education in Southern Mexico, which was an incredible opportunity to immerse himself in the culture and language. The experience enticed him to teach English as a Second Language. He took a TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) diploma and began teaching adult newcomers to Canada. "They were very interesting people and highly motivated to learn our culture and language. It was great because they brought their cultures and backgrounds to me."

During this time, Steve also worked at a daycare and noticed he loved working with kids. He then took a teaching program at Simon Fraser University. "I was called to teach at a public Montessori school, which eventually led me to pursue a two-year elementary certification for Montessori teaching."

The intriguing overlap between the HLN and Montessori teaching philosophies compelled Steve to become an HLN Guide. "I love the emphasis on student-led, student-driven work. The educational approach makes so much space for kids to explore," he says.



"Something that struck me right away about HLN compared to teaching in a classroom is that HLN kids tend to be more engaged and excited to participate."

Steve says HLN's sense of community is one of the most significant benefits of signing up for activities.



Kids start to form familiarity with each other, and I imagine that for a home learner, that's of high interest. I want to create a safe space for kids to feel welcomed, accepted and respected while they build their communities and grow."

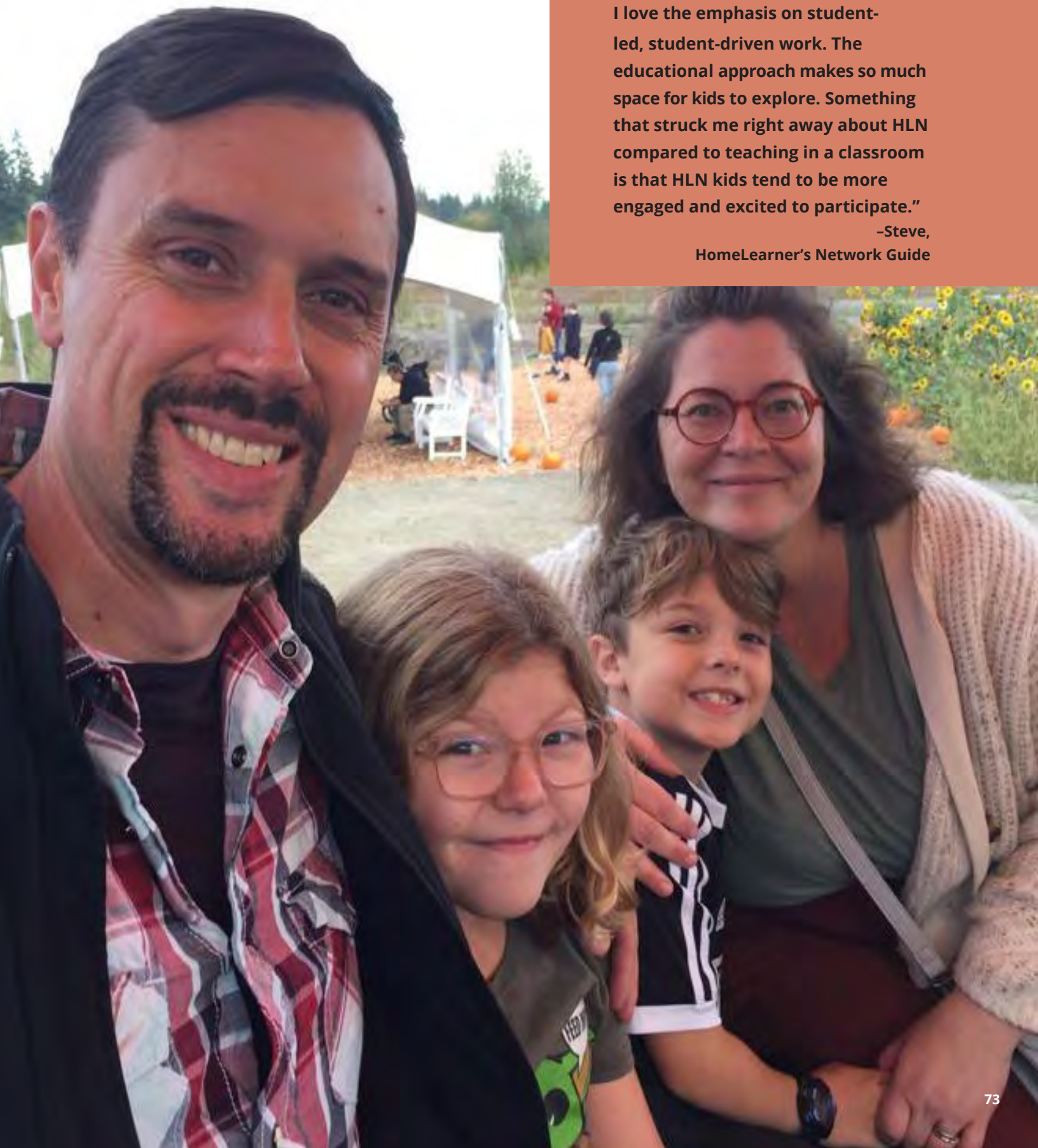
To browse all HLN activities, visit homelearnersnetwork.ca.

“

I love the emphasis on student-led, student-driven work. The educational approach makes so much space for kids to explore. Something that struck me right away about HLN compared to teaching in a classroom is that HLN kids tend to be more engaged and excited to participate.”

–Steve,

HomeLearner’s Network Guide





“

2024 was a big year with lots of growth, change, greetings and farewells. I look forward to working with our community members to continue this adventurous trek around the spiral of life and learning and as we focus on how to continue to build shared understanding and grow together, I am eager to see for what 2025 has in store.”

–Nikki Kenyon
Interim President & CEO,
SelfDesign Learning Foundation





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