

Motivation and Purpose by Carole Morrison



Mature women students who are served at the Ban Righ Centre say they benefit from the peer community, quiet work spaces, soup, student advising, and financial support. Special initiatives like the Writing Studio, the Winter Bazaar, and Faculty Mentoring strengthen the sense of community too. Another long-standing tradition at the Ban Righ Centre is the Speaker Series. Each of these activities fosters learning and helps mature women students feel that they have a place on campus designed with them in mind. A place they belong.

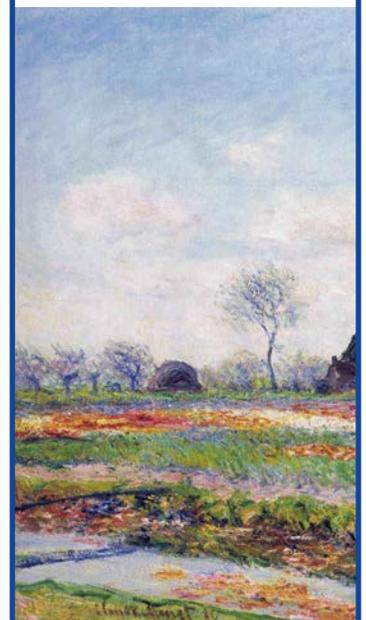
But why are these targeted efforts so important? It is widely acknowledged that lifelong learning is beneficial to both individuals and to their nations' economies. "Countries with lower skill levels risk losing in competitiveness as the world economy becomes more dependent on skills" (OECD, p. 6).

Women in Canada continue to access post-secondary education in ever higher numbers, yet it can be challenging for women who have not gone directly into higher education, are older than the traditional cohort, and/or who have family responsibilities. Some female students express feelings of isolation and stress. In a recent study women said that one of their main reasons for returning to school is that "a college degree would allow them to provide a better life for their children" (Deutsch & Schmertz, p. 490 & p. 487). Employment is clearly a motivation for continuing education. And the purpose of education is often self-investment, "valuing of self enough to believe that personal growth, learning, and education are needed and deserved. It includes an investment of time, energy, and funding in oneself, not merely toward a degree" (Vaccaro & Lovell, p 173). Each of the reasons alone would be enough to justify our collective efforts. Thank you for sharing in this work.

References

- Deutsch, N. L., & Schmertz, B. (2011). "Starting from Ground Zero:" Constraints and Experiences of Adult Women Returning to College. *The Review of Higher Education*, 34(3), 477-504.
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2013) Skilled for life? Key findings from the survey of adult skills. Web: <http://skills.oecd.org>.
- Vaccaro, A., & Lovell, C. D. (2010). Inspiration from home: Understanding family as key to adult women's self-investment. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 60(2), 161-176.

Join us as we celebrate student success. Please save the date: The Ban Righ Foundation Spring Award Celebration will be held on Saturday, **April 28, 2018**, Wallace Hall.



Ban Righ Foundation Inspiring Women 2017 Event photo credit : Bernard Clark



Board member Sylvie Charlebois, 2016 Award recipient Georgette Fry and Ban Righ Foundation 2017 Leadership Award recipient Susan Belyea



Board member Dr Asha Varadharajan and Ban Righ Foundation 2017 Mentorship Award Recipient Karla McGrath



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Sangeeta Shakrawar, MASC'13

On October 20, the BRF held its annual Inspiring Women celebration. With thanks to an anonymous benefactor, the Foundation has plans to celebrate each year for 5 years and perhaps beyond. Shining a light on amazing women inspires us all!



Amma Bonsu, BA '03



Lynn Miles, singer/songwriter

Student Research Profile

by Mandi Veenstra

My doctoral research is a comparative project that examines mothering practices alongside child welfare policy and programming in Ontario and Finland. With a passion for dissecting Canadian social policy

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Photo: Mandi Veenstra and family

and its impact on mothers, this research places the voices of women at the centre of the analysis. Biological mothers remain the primary caregivers of children. This attributed responsibility is amplified in the marginalization of mothers involved with child welfare. By comparison, the Finnish context serves as a fascinating example where an emphasis on preventative programming reflects the state's valuation of caregiving and commitment to gender equality. As calls for child welfare reform echo across Canada, it is critical to seek reform that implements the voices and lived experiences of marginalized mothers, and takes into consideration family service paradigms in other nations.

Gender Studies in 2014. I completed my Masters in the Fall of 2017, and I am currently working in the anti-violence sector in Toronto. My experience as a graduate student at Queen's was sadly not an easy one. While dealing with the usual amount of academic stress and anxiety that one typically experiences as a graduate student, I also faced many challenges in my personal life. When things escalated to a tipping point, I sought out the Ban Righ Centre (BRC) at the recommendation of a friend, to seek support in dealing with all my overwhelming struggles. Periodically, I met with staff members who listened to me when I spoke about my problems. They also assisted me with planning, and advised me about on-campus resources. They not only provided me with financial support as a mature woman student, but they were also always there to offer emotional support when I needed it. The BRC supports and rewards strong women who overcome challenging situations. I was no exception. I am incredibly grateful to the BRC at Queen's.



Photo: Zoya Islam

Student Experience by Zoya Islam

I completed my Bachelor of Arts Honours in Gender Studies at Queen's University in 2012. After graduating, I worked in the anti-violence against women sector, locally and abroad, before returning to Queen's to do my Masters in

