The Benefits of Patience and Persistence: An alumna story — by Lindsay Rodgers

Raising children while studying presents its own set of pleasures and pains, struggles and successes. In the university environment, we are expected to perform well and to prioritize academic success. This leaves little time to look after ourselves and our families, or to manage the stresses and anxieties that being a student often elicits. As students, we can often identify our self-worth with how well we are doing academically, and/or how quickly we’re meeting our goals; this goes for parents too. We feel guilty and inadequate if we are not spending enough time with our children. However, it is important to remember that there are strategies and resources to foster positive experiences for parents and their children while attending Queen’s.

Take it from Xiaomei, one such parent who graduated with an M.Ed and Ph.D from the Faculty of Education. When she began her Ph.D., her two children were three years and eleven months old. Despite being advised that "your Ph.D. is your priority and you have to put everything else in the back seat," Xiaomei’s advice to parents is to “be persistent and be patient with yourself.” Xiaomei also encourages student parents to “use resources you can find, plan ahead of time, and know that it’s OK if the progress is not what you anticipate.”

Xiaomei noted that the Ban Righ Centre was one such resource, and described it as a welcoming and friendly space for women and parents to visit. She recalls that, “mature students just smiled, cooked lunch together, and chatted with each other,” and it provided a space where she could “feel safe just being who I was”. This kind of environment is especially important for students with children because, as Xiaomei describes, building “a supporting network” enables parents to move through their studies with less stress and isolation, and to also have fun! Xiaomei was lucky enough to live by one of the many parks in Kingston that had an ice rink in the winter.
These days, Xiaomei is the successful Senior Research Assistant and Instructor at Georgia Southern University, working on academic and administrative program assessment, program evaluation, and institutional accreditation. In this position, Xiaomei says that, “I definitely have more time to look after myself! I also have a much broader vision about the operation of the institution, colleges and programs, and faculty life while academic progress tends to be THE major thing as a student.”

The Ban Righ Centre News Fall 2018

2018 Spring Award Celebration

Event photo credit: Bernard Clark

The Ban Righ Foundation Spring Celebration took place on April 28, 2018. Each year at the annual ceremony we honour women students who are demonstrating perseverance and determination.

While the award recipients recognize the positive impact their education has on themselves and their families, we hope they also understand the significant “get the job done” skills they will bring with them to the workplace and community. At the Ban Righ Centre, we celebrate the women who receive awards and we celebrate the fact that each of them will make a significant contribution to her community in her area of interest.

This year former Vice-Principal of Advancement and current Provost Tom Harris joined us to celebrate these successes. And the Ban Righ Foundation took the opportunity to thank Dr. Harris for helping the foundation to work towards a sustainable future. The work of this Centre and these talented women students will continue.
Student Research Profile

Jennifer Williams, who recently defended her Master’s thesis in Kinesiology, is doing important work for women. She studies how sugar impacts the arteries of the body during different parts of a woman’s menstrual cycle. Part of what influenced Jennifer’s interest in this research is that premenopausal women have lower rates of cardiovascular disease compared to men, until they stop menstruating, at which point the rates are equal. Jennifer explores the role of estrogen in protecting women from these diseases. While she is still delving into the findings, she notes that, “sugar impairs our arteries, but estrogen during the women’s menstrual cycle may protect against that harm. While more studies are needed, maybe our physiology can protect us against the effects of sugar, and of fat.” Until Jennifer’s contribution, there were 31 studies looking at how men experience sugar, and not one for women. “We are in 2018, we need to be understanding female physiology.” We wish Jennifer all the best as she begins her Ph.D. at MacMaster this fall!

A son’s loving tribute to his mother lives on in two Ban Righ Foundation awards.

It is with sadness that the Ban Righ Foundation announces the passing of Nicholas Joseph “Joe” Paithouski. Joe graduated with two Queen’s degrees: BA ‘79 (Film and Economics) and BSc ‘80 (Mining Engineering), and was a loyal supporter.

The Barbara Paul Prize, the medallion shown above, was established by Joe in 1994 and designed by local Kingston jeweler, Kim Snyder. The Prize is presented to mature women students in recognition of their efforts and skill in juggling the competing demands of school and work or family.

A second award, The Barbara Paul Award, was established and comes with monetary support also in the name of Joe’s mother. Each of these awards honours the life of Barbara Paul and the Paithouski family, and each was created to celebrate the achievements of women.

There is a ripple effect that comes from this kind of honouring: Joe’s legacy lives on and the award itself influences others to keep working constructively to improve the lives of those who are striving to reach their goals, just as Joe himself did.
A message from the Director…

We talk often about juggling roles. For the next six months, I will be managing two roles myself: BRC director and interim director of the Queen’s University International Centre (QUIC). I return to the Ban Righ Centre full-time in early 2019. I am excited for the opportunity to learn and develop new skills that will enable me to support students in meaningful ways in each of these roles. I often encourage women students to trust in their own abilities and to keep learning; I feel it is important I do the same. Lisa and Gamila will remain at the Centre, and their work is supported by Nikisha Ridley, Ban Righ Centre assistant and Maureen McDonald, Coordinator of Communications and Operations. I look forward to both my new adventure and to my full-time return in January.

The Ban Righ Foundation community mourns the loss of a kind friend and supporter.

Frances Elizabeth Goodspeed
April 18, 1923-June 27, 2018

Intelligent and fiercely quick-witted, graduating from Queen’s with a degree in chemistry in 1947, Frances was the first woman to be elected president of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada. Frances worked hard and stayed active throughout her life, enjoying photography and being outdoors. Her greatest pleasures arose from her relationships; she remembered her Queen’s friends and her Ban Righ Hall roommates very fondly.

It is not surprising that women’s issues were a central concern for her. In retirement, Frances supported the Victorian Order of Nurses and the Ban Righ Foundation. In particular, Frances chose to make a transformative gift to the Ban Righ Foundation. She wanted to make a real difference in the lives of students, particularly women who were returning to their studies later in life. Her gift will have a long-lasting effect and she will be remembered by all those who benefit from her outstanding generosity and support.

Rest peacefully Frances, and from all of us, staff, students and board members, thank you for everything.

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