

Students work with alumnus to create hope in city

Julianne Vallotton
Staff Reporter

They don't have art supplies or books, so painting and reading are luxuries. But the Cambodian students at the Logan Hope School in Philadelphia have a school run by people who care about them. For these students, that's a blessing.

Anita MacBain, a 1977 'Stoga graduate, is the principal and a teacher at the Logan Hope School, a kindergarten through eighth grade Cambodian Christian charter school in the Logan neighborhood of North Philadelphia. Juniors Danielle Heron and Kimberly Winters are joining MacBain in helping Logan's children by volunteering at the school. The school's goal is to educate Cambodian children in a neighborhood that would not necessarily have access to a good school otherwise. MacBain wakes up every day with the hope that she can make one of these children's lives bright and happier.

"I was so tired of watching kids from the neighborhood give up on school and become pregnant or join a gang," MacBain said. "I wanted them to have a future—to have hope."

In 2002, MacBain and her husband, Ken, bought a house across the street from their apartment with the initial goal of developing a small after-school program to lift the spirits of kids around the area. Eight years later, the Logan Hope School has 61 students enrolled in a daytime school.

"I love my job so much. Every day brings a new experience and new story," MacBain said. "All of the kids are unique and have different talents. You have to treat all of the students like individuals. You need to get to know them before you help them to learn."

MacBain remembers her experience as a student at Conestoga as a positive one where she learned several important lessons that led her to where she is today. However, she wants high school students to remember what she wishes she had known.

"One thing I wish I knew was not to get too caught up in knowing exactly what I wanted to do with my life," MacBain said. "Your future really depends on your experiences. If you have patience, everything will fall into place."

Winters and Heron are working with MacBain for their Gold Awards in Girl Scouts. Each student will use her individual talents to help.

Heron is organizing a library in the basement of the school. She has already collected more than 800 books and is working on a Dewey decimal organization system.

"I never thought about how much I take simple things like books for granted until I saw that they don't

"It altered my perspective on why we really live and how privileged we are."

- Junior Kimberly Winters

even have that [at the school]," Heron said.



Logan Hope students play outside together at school. Juniors **Kimberly Winters** and **Danielle Heron** are working with children at the school for their Gold Awards in Girl Scouts.



Photos courtesy Anita MacBain

Conestoga alumnus **Anita MacBain** (upper left) smiles with the Logan Hope School Reading Olympics team. MacBain helped start the school in the Logan neighborhood of Philadelphia after being inspired by the difficult situations that children in the neighborhood faced and their need for a better educational system.

Meanwhile, Winters will be teaching a four-week-long art class at the program MacBain runs at the school over the summer. She plans to instruct basic drawing, painting and mixed-media art in a 45-minute daily session.

"I love art and I love kids—a combination of the two couldn't get much better. I just started my project but it already feels so rewarding," Winters said.

Winters will also be organizing an art supplies drive later in the year because the school does not have enough funding to pay for its supplies.

"When I visited the school for the first time, it altered my perspective on why we really live and how privileged we are. I cried the second I got home. It was so upsetting," Winters said.

MacBain is grateful for people like Winters and Heron who use their time to help, as well as how much working with the children has taught her.

"If there's anything I've learned from my experience, it's that every day and every child brings something new and interesting," MacBain said.

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