

Dear Alumnae and Past Faculty & Staff,

I want to thank you for engaging in the discussion around the refurbishment of the Chapel. I know that everyone's comments come from a place of care and concern for the Trafalgar that you knew and loved when you were here, whether as a student or as faculty or staff.

Some of you I have met at school events or when you've come by for a visit or to have a cup of tea with me. Most of you I have not met, but I do hope to have the chance to welcome you back to the Castle in the near future. Our 145th reunion takes place this June.

Although I cannot address all concerns raised on this forum, I would like to try and tackle a few, recognizing that social media is a tricky thing (as we always tell our girls) and that face-to-face or direct communication is often better. Here is what we would like to share:

- The Castle has been a non-denominational institution for many years and daily Chapel has not taken place for close to a decade. While the frequency of Chapel has changed, we remain committed to bi-weekly student assemblies that focus on character, values, inclusion and the Trafalgar sisterhood. We have guest speakers, student presentations and messages from our faculty to inspire the girls to lead lives of purpose.
- We recently sold the land to the north of the School. The School had no need for the land as we have ample space for future expansion on our current grounds.
- The School, however, is not expanding as it has no ability to fund any major construction. We operate responsibly and endeavour to meet the needs of our students and maintain our beautiful but aging building with the revenues that come largely from tuition. Many of our current families, staff and faculty give to the Annual Fund, and that allows us to provide program "extras". We do not, however, at this time receive significant donations that would allow for a capital build.
- Prior to the sale of the land, the school did not have an endowment to provide the security any school needs to safely see it through potential hardship arising from downturns in the economy or unforeseen events. The proceeds from the land sale has given the School the financial security it so greatly needed to ensure that your beloved OLC and Trafalgar Castle School sisterhood will continue for generations to come.
- One small note about the Resource Centre: As a laptop school, our girls access information in ways very different than previous generations. We have lovingly restored one of the rooms in Upper Main as a beautiful Reading Room, now filled with our entire fiction collection. It's heart warming to see the girls curled up with a book on the sofa, or working quietly at the study tables we have in the space. The Reading Room is used on a daily basis and is also a favourite evening spot for our

boarders. The non-fiction materials are housed within each of the subject classroom, although we find that non-fiction research is normally done on-line and with the use of the multiple databases that we provide for the girls.

- Grade 5 was added a number of years ago, prior to my arrival at the Castle. This year we added Grade 4, and the enrolment of students in these earlier grades provides much need financial stability for the School.
- Finally, today's Chapel requires loving care. The carpet has needed to be replaced for a number of years and many of the pews are cracking with age and are unstable for the girls to sit on. We are required to take some action.

Invitations to discuss the land sale went out in advance of the Annual General Meeting in 2015, and an invitation to participate in the Master Site Plan was sent out in the Spring of 2018 to students, staff & faculty, current families, alumnae and past members of the Trafalgar community. If you do not receive emails from us and would like to, please contact Harries-Taylor.Sarah@trafalgarcastle.ca.

Today's Trafalgar girls learn in new and wonderful ways. We know from research that desks or chairs in rows don't promote optimal learning, and because of the way the Chapel space is configured, it is rarely used outside of student assemblies. It's unfortunate to see such a beautiful space empty most of the week, and if we had the resources to restore the Chapel to its original splendour while meeting the needs of today's students, please know that we would be doing so. Without that option, we are trying our utmost best to honour the past, rejoice in the present, and prepare for the future.

Thank you for the care you show for dear old Trafalgar. I hope you will continue to support the mission, vision and values of the school for today's students so that they, like you, will build a lifetime of memories of their years at the Castle. Much will change as time marches forward and the needs of future generations evolve, but rest assured that the sisterhood, the heart of OLC and Trafalgar Castle School that is found not in the building but in its people endures.

I hope to see many of you at the presentation this evening.

Sincerely,

Dr. Leanne Foster
Head of School