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# The Reading Bear Society Newsletter

Thanksgiving Edition | October 12, 2020



Joanne Roussy, RN, PhD

RBS President and Co-founder

We have lots of exciting news to share as we plunge full speed right into the fall season.

While COVID-19 has meant putting school visits on hold, this has allowed us the opportunity to further develop elements of the RBS program. The beloved Doctor Bear visits, which children and teachers thoroughly enjoy, are being adapted for online streaming with the goal to launch later this fall. We're also developing a new and updated website which is coming soon and will feature the resources for young families created by the FLEX medical students.



Center picture is Denise Roussy, who is the heart and soul of inspiration for that the RBS was founded upon. Left is Rozlyn Boutin (MD/PhD 2022) and right is Jennifer Wildi (MD 2021). For people who live with disabilities like Denise, we recognize their enormous strength and capability to manage the isolation restrictions imposed by COVID-19 and their impact on their health. She remains our greatest source of inspiration.



Last spring, former FLEX medical students and experts from the RBS FLEX committee came together to create a series of information sheets for young families about how to manage COVID-19. More recently, we have joined forces with the COVID-19 Womxn's Initiative women's shelters to deliver several hundred books to children, and fundraising plans are also well underway for the annual Mom2Mom Christmas book and teddy bear donations, thanks to our dynamic fundraising team.

In this issue, you will also read about our new RBS Victoria Chapter, our new FLEX committee experts, and many other who have joined the leadership team.

The strength and generosity of everyone who goes the extra mile to lend a helping hand to the team is a true source of inspiration. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to children and young families. Wishing you and your loved ones a happy Thanksgiving.

Warm regards,

Joanne

 [www.facebook.com/thereadingbear](https://www.facebook.com/thereadingbear)

 <https://www.instagram.com/thereadingbear/>

 [www.thereadingbear.ca](http://www.thereadingbear.ca)

# Community during COVID-19

One of the four foundational pillars of the Reading Bear is community; it is what guides our mission to build connections in cities and schools across BC. While many of us have experienced feelings of isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic, we have also had the opportunity to support our friends, family, and community in new and meaningful ways. While the Reading Bear is currently pausing all our in-school activities, our wonderful volunteers are still committed to finding opportunities to provide support for families and children in a safe way.



THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE READING BEAR SOCIETY

EARLY LITERACY	HEART-MIND EDUCATION	INTERGENERATIONAL MENTORSHIP	COMMUNITY
Early literacy leads to lifelong learning and improved health	Educating the heart is equally important to educating the mind.	Mentorship across generations promotes meaningful relationships for mentor and mentee.	People must connect and contribute to one another's lives in a meaningful way to have a sense of belonging.

According to Dr. John Helliwell, RBS advisory board member and Professor Emeritus of Economics at UBC, the art of community connectedness is inherently learnable, and caring for one another is the premise of a happy and healthy society.

## COVID-19 Information for Young Families

COVID-19 presents an added challenge to parents. How should we talk to our children about this? What symptoms should we look out for? What resources are available in the Vancouver area? The Reading Bear Society has come together to tackle these questions. We have combed through many resources and have summarized key points in the link that follows. This project was spearheaded by Jennifer Wildi, Victoria Baronas, Amy Plessis, Brett Collinge, and Katrina Hsu in collaboration with the RBS team of experts. We would like to thank the RBS team of experts who came on board to review all these materials.

[RBS COVID-19 Information Pamphlet](#)

# The RBS FLEX Team



**Joanne Roussy, RN, PhD**  
RBS FLEX Activity Supervisor

This past winter and spring, the RBS FLEX program recorded its largest intake of medical students, nine in total. Since the onset in 2013, we have had a total of 27 FLEX/SDPO students. As the FLEX program runs for three years, many students stay on to do more than one cycle with the RBS. To date, we have had 41 cycles of FLEX students and four non-UBC practicum students. This speaks to the incredible amount of time and dedication from the FLEX committee and all the team of experts who so generously donate their time to assist the medical students.

RBS FLEX is welcoming six new members. Drs. Caroline Erdos and Christine Voss join as content experts. Dr. Erdos along with Dr. Linda Siegel and the FLEX committee worked last spring with FLEX student Alex DeGrace on an information sheet entitled “Learning about dyslexia”. We also welcome former FLEX MD students, Amy Plessis, Bhavan Panghali, and Jennifer Wilid who have stayed to provide mentorship to incoming medical students; and Brett Collinge also joins the FLEX team to share his IT expertise.

None of this would be possible without the ongoing support of the RBS FLEX committee and advisory team who donate hours to review the student projects and share their expertise. A huge thank you for your time and so generously sharing your expertise with the students.

## Welcome to our newest RBS FLEX Team members!



**Caroline Erdos, PhD**  
RBS FLEX Content Expert

Caroline Erdos is the Coordinator of Complementary Services at New Frontiers School Board. Prior to this, she was ALDI Coordinator (Advancing Learning in Differentiation & Inclusion) for the 10 English school boards in Quebec, Canada, where she supported resource teachers through various professional development initiatives. Caroline has over 20 years’ experience as a pediatric speech-language pathologist in a tertiary care centre and has worked as a language and literacy consultant and a legal expert in speech-language pathology. Her areas of expertise include bilingualism and multilingualism, reading impairment, oral language impairment, foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and craniofacial disorders. She has guest lectured at Université de Montréal, McGill University, and the McGill University Health Centre. She has also given workshops at numerous conferences across North America and has written and collaborated on several publications.



### Understanding Dyslexia

Ages 0-6



**What is dyslexia?**

Dyslexia, also known as reading disability, is a specific learning disability that is brain-based. Children with dyslexia have trouble learning and applying letter-sound relationships, and this results in reading and spelling difficulties.

Children with dyslexia benefit the most when difficulties are identified early, so they can get the support they need before the gap with their peers widens. It is also important to remember that every child has their own unique talents and strengths, even if reading is a challenge. There are many successful people with dyslexia, including the artist Pablo Picasso and poet William Butler Yeats!

**How will I know if my child has dyslexia?**

Parents or teachers may notice clues that could indicate risk for difficulty learning to read.

- Children with a family history of reading difficulties
- Children who are late talkers
- Difficulty with rhyming or word games, and remembering the names and sounds of letters
- Resistance to reading aloud in class
- Behavioural problems at school such as aggression or defiance of authority
- School avoidance, such as a child who regularly feels ill on school days but improves on weekends

**How can I help my child?**

**Advocacy**

- Arrange an appointment with your doctor if you are concerned about language delay
- Children experiencing difficulty with language or reading should have hearing and vision tested; while such difficulties are not a basis for dyslexia, they are the means by which we learn to read
- If there is concern about dyslexia it is essential to arrange a meeting with your child’s school to discuss the issue and find ways to work together to meet your child’s needs
- Next steps may involve testing reading ability and developing an individualized plan to help
- More information about advocacy is available through the [Learning Disabilities Association of BC](#)

**Helping at Home**

Create a supportive home environment.

- Be patient with your child; avoid being critical of reading difficulties and find ways to help foster self-esteem
- Encourage interests and celebrate talents to help your child flourish



Click [here](#) for the full pamphlet!



## Christine Voss, PhD

RBS FLEX Content Expert

Christine is a pediatric health researcher based at the new UBC Faculty of Medicine Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Management in Kelowna, BC. She is also the FLEX Director for the Southern Medical Program, a bicycle-enthusiast, a volunteer therapy dog handler, and new(ish) mom to one. Christine earned her doctorate from the University of Essex, UK, where she examined the association between cardiovascular health and modifiable health behaviours in a large cohort of schoolchildren. She first joined UBC's Faculty of Medicine as a postdoctoral fellow in 2011. She was a researcher based at the Children's Heart Centre at BC Children's Hospital between 2015-2019, before relocating to Kelowna in 2019. She has a keen research interest in how children's health behaviours (such as physical activity) are related to their physical health and mental well-being.

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## Jennifer Wildi, MD 2021

RBS FLEX Student Mentor

Jennifer is a 4<sup>th</sup>-year UBC MD student with a passion for promoting healthy living in children. Jenn was the Canuck Place Hospice for Children Coordinator (2018-2019) and was nominated by the RBS and received the YWCA Young Women's Achievement Award. She is hoping to pursue a career in Pediatrics, with the goal of making a healthy lifestyle more achievable for children in vulnerable families. She strongly believes in the benefits of outdoor activity and spends most of her free time in the mountains or by the ocean. Click [here](#) to watch a video of Jenn describing what the Reading Bear means to her.

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## Bhavan Panghali, MD 2021

RBS FLEX Student Mentor

Having completed her BSc in Microbiology at UBC Okanagan, Bhavan was eager to continue her studies in Kelowna as part of the Southern Medical Program MD Class of 2021. She started working with the RBS in her first year as a volunteer for Teddy Bear Clinics in Vancouver and Kelowna. Since then, she has served as the RBS Okanagan Chapter co-chair while continuing to further develop the Teddy Bear Clinic module. Her experiences with RBS in addition to her background in childcare and youth advocacy have inspired Bhavan to apply to a pediatric residency in her upcoming graduation year. Bhavan's FLEX project was creating a pamphlet on handwashing and she did all three FLEX rotations with the RBS.

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## Amy Plessis, MD 2020

RBS FLEX Student Mentor

Amy Plessis founded the RBS Kelowna Chapter in 2016 and was Chapter chair for two years while attending close to 100 school visits. Amy completed all of three FLEX cycles with the RBS. She created a children's book and module for the famous Visit to Doctor Bear. During her last FLEX practicum, she created an info sheet to assist parents when attending a doctor's office visit. Amy also brought the Reading Bear to the Canuck Place Hospice for Children for its initial visit. Amy is currently a pediatric resident in Victoria, BC.





## Brett Collinge

RBS FLEX Project  
IT Support

Brett graduated with a BSc (Hons) in

Biochemistry before beginning his MSc at the University of British Columbia in the Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Program. He is currently in his second year and conducts his research at the BC Cancer Research Institute. Brett has been involved with the RBS since 2017 and has been a fundamental part of the leadership team within the organization in his role as co-chair of communications. In this role, Brett is currently focused on working with another member of the communications team (Gavin Doyle) to develop the new RBS website. He has also taken on the role of assisting FLEX RBS medical students with technical support for their projects and is leading an initiative to consolidate parenting resources created by students into a single, comprehensive source for parenting information. In addition to being shared with parents, this information module will be a major feature of our new website, serving as an invaluable resource for parents with young children for years to come.

### Tips for Visiting the Doctor's Office



COVID-19 Resources  
or Parents

Handwashing



Keeping Active



Healthy Eating Tips



Early Reading Tips



When to See the  
Doctor



Resources near Pearson  
Road Elementary, Kelowna

Understanding  
Dyslexia



Healthy Lifestyle



Screen Time



A Visit to Doctor Bear  
Reading Book



A Visit to Doctor  
Bear Coloring Book



Early Childhood  
Websites



Resources near Admiral  
Seymour School, Vancouver



## Summer Practicum Student: Jamie Beaulieu

*As a summer practicum student at the RBS, Jamie worked on an information sheet to support parents with early reading. He is currently translating A Visit to Dr. Bear to French.*

Recently graduated from Concordia University in cell and molecular biology (BSc), Jamie is currently working as an intern at Université de Montréal's Institute for Research in Immunology and Cancer. In August 2020, he will be undertaking a master's in neuroscience at McGill University under the supervision of Dr. Roberto Diaz from the Montreal Neurological Institute's Brain Tumour Research Centre. For the past few years he has also been working alongside children with reading difficulties as a tutor in an after-school program.

See page 9 for an article written by Ceilidh Matthews, our other summer practicum student!



# 2020 RBS FLEX Project Student Profiles



## Arman Singh, MD 2022

### Topic: Screen time for children

Arman grew up in Surrey and completed his undergraduate degree in Biomedical Physiology at Simon Fraser University. Throughout his childhood, Arman always had a passion for reading and school visits with the Reading Bear have allowed him the opportunity to pass this passion on to future generations. In addition, Arman's experiences working with disadvantaged people have influenced him to be a health advocate for those in need of help.



## Arjun Arora, MD 2022

### Topic: Screen time for children

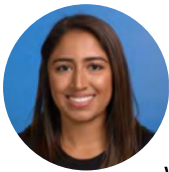
Arjun is a third-year medical student in the UBC Vancouver Fraser Medical Program. Born and raised in BC, Arjun previously completed a BSc in Health Sciences at Simon Fraser University. Arjun is working with another RBS FLEX student, Arman, to design a pamphlet on screen time for children.. Arjun is excited to continue working with the Reading Bear Society to promote literacy and wellbeing in children.



## Darren Guenther, MD 2021

### Topic: Helping young children develop emotional regulation

Originally from Chilliwack, BC. Darren has been in the Okanagan for the past three years while studying in the Southern Medical Program. During his medical education, Darren has worked with the Reading Bear Society to refine and promote the Dr. Bear visits in Kelowna, BC. With a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, years of research experience in child development, and a young child of his own, Darren is passionate about helping children develop healthy attitudes towards their physical and mental health. After graduation, he is excited to work with young children to ensure a bright future for our little ones. Outside of the RBS and medical school, Darren spends all of his time with his wife and young son.



## Anisha Bains, MD 2023

### Topic: Breathing techniques for young children

Anisha grew up in the Lower Mainland and attended Simon Fraser University to complete her Bachelor of Science, where she majored in Biomedical Physiology. Through her work, Anisha has developed a passion for early childhood education and developing and advocating for programs that promote mental and physical well-being for children of various age groups. Anisha is continuing her second FLEX cycle with the Reading Bear this fall, focusing on calm breathing for children.



## Eloise Moss, MD 2023

### Topic: The Importance of Outdoor Play in Children aged 2-5

Eloise joined the Reading Bear Society last year as a FLEX student, investigating the benefits that connecting with nature offers young children. Before medical school, Eloise completed her BSc at UBC, studying Physiology and Neuroscience with a focus on early childhood development. Eloise is continuing her second FLEX cycle with the Reading Bear this fall and she looks forward to taking on the new role with the Reading Bear Society to create virtual Dr. Bear visits that are accessible to families across the province.



### Bhavan Panghali, MD 2021

**Topic:** Effective strategies to educate children and families about handwashing hygiene

Having completed her BSc in Microbiology at UBC Okanagan, Bhavan was eager to continue her studies in Kelowna as part of the Southern Medical Program MD Class of 2021. She started working with the RBS in her first year as a volunteer for Teddy Bear Clinics in Vancouver and Kelowna. Since then, she has served as the RBS Okanagan Chapter co-chair while continuing to further develop the Teddy Bear Clinic module. Her experiences with RBS in addition to her background in childcare and youth advocacy have inspired Bhavan to apply to a pediatric residency in her upcoming graduation year. Bhavan's FLEX project was creating a pamphlet on handwashing.



### Alex DeGrace, MD 2021

**Topic:** Understanding Dyslexia

Alex was born and raised in Nelson, BC, and enjoyed a successful career in the recording industry prior to completing a BSc in biology at Nord University in Bodø, Norway, and beginning his medical education with UBC's Island Medical Program. Alex has been an avid reader since childhood, a habit that was encouraged by his mother who is both a novelist and retired librarian. He also enjoys writing and has had work published in the magazine *Canadian Musician*. Alex is looking forward to working with the team at The Reading Bear Society this spring and contributing to the valuable work they do in the community.



Hundreds of books will be delivered in the next week to several women's shelters in the Lower Mainland. In the picture is Katherine Gray, President of the Community Womxn's Initiative, along with Eloise Moss, Co-Chair of the RBS Vancouver Chapter and co-founder of the Community Womxn's Initiative. Thank you to the many book donors for their generous book donations as well as the RBS Fundraising team who sorted the books.



# RBS Victoria Chapter

## Introducing the new Victoria Chapter of the Reading Bear Society

In Victoria, the RBS team has been working to build connections and develop strategies for virtual visits, as well as recruit other medical students who would like to volunteer with the RBS Victoria Chapter. They are doing their best to get the new chapter off the ground and have a strong year of community engagement, while also creating an organized framework for future RBS Victoria leaders.



**Celine Edwards, MD 2022**  
RBS Victoria Chapter Co-Chair

Celine completed her BSc in Microbiology at UBC Okanagan before attending UBC's Island Medical Program in Victoria. Celine has a heart for children and has spent much of her young adult years babysitting and volunteering for various community programs. Celine was raised on a ranch in Falkland, BC, along with her four wonderful siblings. Growing up with younger siblings in a rural setting made Celine especially aware of the need for further literacy programs and exposure to medical professionals. Celine is excited to bring her enthusiasm about medicine to the classroom as her role as the Chair for the RBS Victoria Chapter.

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**Alex DeGrace, MD 2021**  
RBS Victoria Chapter Co-Chair

Alex was born and raised in Nelson, BC, and enjoyed a successful career in the recording industry prior to completing a BSc in biology at Nord University in Bodø, Norway, and beginning his medical education with UBC's Island Medical Program. Alex has been an avid reader since childhood, a habit that was encouraged by his mother who is both a novelist and retired librarian. He also enjoys writing and has had work published in the magazine *Canadian Musician*. Alex is looking forward to working with the team at The Reading Bear Society this spring and contributing to the valuable work they do in the community.

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**Kathleen Cherry**  
RBS School Liaison Officer

Kathleen was born and raised in Vancouver and worked as a teacher, school counsellor and school psychologist for Coast Mountains School District in Kitimat, BC. More recently, she moved to Vancouver Island and is working as a school psychologist for the Sooke School District. She enjoys supporting families and students throughout their educational journey. Kathleen is an avid reader, writer and educator. Before moving into education, Kathleen worked as a newspaper reporter. She is the author of a middle grade novel, *Everyday Hero* (Orca Book Publishers, 2016), a picture book, *Blowing Bubbles* (2012) and has also written women's historical fiction as Eleanor Webster. Kathleen studied at the University of Victoria and has a B.A. and an M.Ed. in counselling psychology. Kathleen is certified with the B.C. Association of School Psychologists.



## RBS Vancouver Chapter

To begin their role as the Vancouver Chapter Co-Chairs, Anisha and Eloise represented the Reading Bear Society at MUS Clubs Night and welcomed new volunteers to the team. They are currently working with Community Womxn's Initiative to donate books to children of all ages who are residing in women's shelters in the Lower Mainland. Anisha and Eloise have also begun adapting the Dr. Bear School Visits to an online platform so that children across the province will be able to learn about health-related themes from home or at school. The adapted "Visit to Dr. Bear Module" consists of a manual for teachers, video demonstrations for parents and children, as well as a video reading of the book *A Visit to Dr. Bear*.

Cynthia Gunaratnam, MD 2017

Former RBS Ambassador

The Reading Bear program taught me so much about typical parental concerns and questions and gave me insight into some of the easiest ways to set parents at ease about child health and development. The community programs we had a relationship with, gave me insight into the realities of what is available for parents and I am grateful for that because as a pediatrician who does not have kids yet, it helps me relate better to parents and be able to provide useful and practical information to them.



Vancouver RBS Ambassadors Mariam Manna (Canuck Place Hospice for Children) and Kat Xie (Ronald McDonald House)



Cultural diversity is embedded throughout the RBS programs via the diversity of the eight bear species. Did you know there are eight main species of bears? We love bears because they're all so different in where they live, what they eat and how they sleep. Yet they have much in common: bears love their cubs, have an impeccable sense of smell and are great swimmers and climbers. Watch this [video](#) to learn about the amazing diversity of bears, including polar, panda, sun, sloth and spectacle bears, and more.

# Volunteer Perspective



**Ceilidh Matthews**  
RBS Chair of Fundraising

Being involved with The Reading Bear Society for the past 9 years has been an incredibly enlightening and rewarding experience. I began my journey in early childhood literacy with RBS in Grade 8, when Dr. Joanne Roussy invited me to attend a StrongStart visit at an elementary school in Vancouver. I saw immediately the impact of the StrongStart program in the excitement that greeted us as we walked through the classroom doors. The immediate connection and power of the relationships

fostered by reading together made a very strong impression upon me and I continued to be involved with book drives and visits during my high school years.



While completing my undergraduate degree in Health Sciences at McMaster University, I looked forward to returning to Vancouver to reconnect with the Reading Bear as a Summer Practicum student. During Summer of 2017, I planned a Focus Group for the Grade 8 students, guided by the RBS group discussion modules. The adolescents reflected upon their experiences with the Reading Buddy program, highlighting the enjoyment involved in meeting their partners and reminiscing nostalgically about the connections they had formed. We discussed the support material, the books children especially enjoyed and the areas in which they felt the program could grow. The students all called enthusiastically for more frequent visits. I saw the program in action and also observed a Reading Bear session at a Vancouver elementary school, where I was moved by the kindness, patience and warmth of the 13-year-olds as they greeted their excited buddies and read to them. Watching the older students nurture the confidence of a timid child highlighted the magic of the Reading Bear connections. I reflected on how this partnership was of benefit to each and every student in the room, and I summarized my findings in a report for the RBS.



Ceilidh Matthews and Brett Collinge hand out books at the 2018 Mom2Mom Summer Picnic.

During the Summer of 2018 and 2019, I was delighted to be able to volunteer at the Canuck Place Children's Hospice. Joined by fellow RBS volunteers, we read stories, sang songs, and interacted with the children and their families at Canuck Place. I also enjoyed visiting a Grade 1 class, where we guided children through a Dr. Bear visit. Another highlight from my time with the RBS was attending the Mom2Mom Summer Picnic. Dressed up in a bear suit, I read to children on a beautiful summer day in the park; the image of the children leaving with a bear and book bag in hand lingered long afterwards.

In April 2020, I was very happy to reconnect with RBS to engage in another Summer Practicum. My task is to review literature on vaccination, parent decision-making, and best practice in presenting information to guide the creation of an information sheet. I am grateful to be able to volunteer with the Reading Bear Society in a remote capacity, learning from and working with UBC Medical School FLEX students, under the guidance of Dr. Roussy.

My involvement with the RBS has allowed me to develop and build upon a multitude of skills. Working with children, fellow volunteers, and RBS leaders has challenged my interpersonal, communication, and collaboration skills. I have learned to look at situations from numerous perspectives, to be empathetic, caring and understanding in my outlook and interactions. At times I have been pushed out of my areas of comfort, be it by donning a bear suit, singing vivaciously, or leading a group of 18 teenagers in discussion. Each Reading Bear experience has triggered reflection, personal growth and a strong desire to help communities in need. I look forward to continuing my involvement and contributing to the RBS mission to foster the essential early literacy skills and intergenerational mentorship.

## RBS Kelowna Chapter

### Volunteer Profile: Larissa Steidle

In each newsletter, we profile one of the many valued supporters and volunteers of the Reading Bear Society. In this edition, we are proud to feature Larissa Steidle, MD 2023, Co-Chair of the RBS Kelowna Chapter.

#### Tell us about yourself.

I am originally from Chilliwack, BC, where I grew up spending all my free time outdoors. I love hiking, camping, kayaking, snowboarding, and of course, working with kids! I moved to Kelowna in 2015, to complete a bachelor's degree in Biochemistry at UBC Okanagan. I am currently in my first year of medical school, at Kelowna's Southern Medical Program, where I am hoping to specialize in pediatric care.

#### How did you become involved in the Reading Bear Society?

I first heard about the Reading Bear Society at Club's Day for medical students in Vancouver, and I instantly knew that I wanted to be involved. After beginning classes at the Kelowna campus, I reached out to the Co-Chair of RBS Kelowna, Svetlana Hadkin. I also learned more about the program and room for growth by speaking with Joanne Roussy. Svetlana was looking for a first year Co-Chair, and I was eager to fill the role.

#### What is your current role with the RBS?

I am currently a Co-Chair of the RBS Kelowna Chapter. In this role, I help organize school visits to StrongStart and Kindergarten classes, and recruit and coordinate volunteers to help run the school visits. During our visits with Dr. Bear, we introduce children to what a visit to the doctor might be like, and the tools they might use in a physical exam. Through a large group story time, and small group exploration of different tools and strategies, we engage with the children and are able to raise excitement about their own health and visiting the doctor.

#### What is your best memory of RBS?

My best memory of RBS was during my most recent visit to a StrongStart classroom. At the end of the visit, the students ran up to me and insisted on giving me a hug, and saying "Thank you doctor". This moment allowed me to see just how much fun visits with Dr. Bear can be, and how much the kids enjoy it. It also encouraged me to see the impact that I will be able to have in children's lives as I pursue a career in medicine, focused on early childhood development.

#### Why do you support the RBS?

With each visit to Dr. Bear that we do, it is clear to see the benefit to both the children and the volunteers. The kids love the stories, and are so excited to learn and share their experiences. It is wonderful to watch the students open up, expand their vocabulary, and acquire new skills. I also appreciate being able to work with other volunteers who show so much enthusiasm for working with kids. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to be involved with the Reading Bear Society.



"With each visit to Dr. Bear that we do, it is clear to see the benefit to both the children and the volunteers."

# A Visit to Dr. Bear



## What is A Visit to Dr. Bear?

A Visit to Dr. Bear is a 1-hour session in which children learn about healthy lifestyle through body facts, story time, and play. Each visit begins with an interactive story, which introduces children to common reasons for visiting the doctor. Throughout the story, medical students use teddy bears to demonstrate procedures that children might experience at a doctor's office, such as a checkup, a vaccination, or an X-ray. After story time, the children rotate through stations in which they practice procedures on stuffed animals with toy instruments, work on proper hand washing technique, perform mindful bear breathing, and listen to their own heartbeat with a real stethoscope.

Click [here](#) to read the full Dr. Bear info sheet (online edition coming soon)!

# RBS Communications



## Katrina Hsu

Director of Communications & Newsletter Editor

This edition of the newsletter marks our 15<sup>th</sup> publication. Being editor of the newsletter has been my most consistent role with the Reading Bear since I joined six years ago and I've always appreciated the opportunity to compile and share all the incredible work done by our teams. The organization has gone through so much growth, and I'm grateful to have been a part of so much of it: from visiting elementary schools, recruiting students at volunteer fairs, and now coordinating the Communications team. A huge thank you to the wonderful members of the RBS Communications team (profiled below). Later this fall we look forward to unveiling our updated website, but in the meantime, please stay connected with us on social media for the latest Reading Bear news!



## RBS Communications Team 2020-2021



### Katrina Hsu, Director of Communications

Katrina graduated from Simon Fraser University with a BSc in Biomedical Physiology and completed her master's in Global Health at McMaster University. Though her graduate studies have focused on studying health issues at a global level, she is interested in how local community-driven efforts can contribute to improving the health of individuals and families.



### Brett Collinge, Co-Chair of Communications

Brett graduated with a BSc (Hons) in Biochemistry before beginning his MSc at the University of British Columbia in the Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Program. He is currently in his second year and conducts his research at the BC Cancer Research Institute. His strong support for engaging youth and promoting early literacy initially brought him to the RBS and he looks forward to continuing his role this fall.



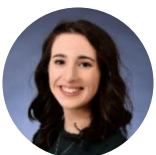
### Tiana Lee, Graphic Designer

Tiana is currently completing a Bachelor of Design at Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU), specializing in graphic design for marketing. She joined the Reading Bear Society to gain experience and make a difference in the world. In addition, her passion for layout and app design, and love for reading is what convinced her to join the team.



### Gavin Doyle, Web Manager

Gavin grew up in Vancouver and studied Economics at Wilfrid Laurier University before seeing the value in learning to code. When he heard about the RBS and its mission of promoting early literacy, he was happy to join the Communications team to make a difference in his community while gaining new skills in web design and management along the way.



### Nicole Minielly, Social Media Coordinator

Nicole is a first-year student in the Vancouver Fraser Medical Program at the University of British Columbia. She was born and raised in North Vancouver and completed her BSc in Behavioural Neuroscience at the University of British Columbia in May 2019. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, skiing, and coaching gymnastics. Nicole is joining the RBS as a volunteer and will manage the RBS social media platforms.

# News

## RBS Features

Dr. Jennifer Ji (MD/PhD 2022) wrote an article in the Hobbies & Interests section of the September 2020 issue of *Pathology, Department of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine Magazine* titled [Dr. Bear Visit - Learning Through the Visual Arts](#). Jennifer is the creative mind behind the beautiful illustrations in *A Visit to Dr. Bear* and *My Bear Book* for the buddy reading program. Thank you, Jennifer, for sharing your work with the Reading Bear with the medical community!



## Congratulations

A huge congratulations to our two graduates, **Drs. Amy Plessis** and **Victoria Baronas**. Victoria serves as RBS Director and was Chapter Chair 2016-17. Victoria is entering the surgical residency program in Vancouver and Amy is entering Pediatrics in Victoria. All the best for your upcoming residency programs!



Click to [here](#) to watch Victoria Baronas describe what the Reading Bear means to her.



Congratulations to **Dr. Rozlyn Boutin** on receiving her PhD from the MD/PhD program at UBC. Dr. Boutin is now entering her third year of medical school and served as Vancouver Chapter Chair 2018-19.



Congrats to **Mariam Manna** on her wedding this year! Mariam is the RBS Coordinator for the Canuck Place Hospice for Children and a second-year medical student. From everyone at the RBS, congratulations and best wishes for a happy journey ahead.



## Thank You!

*Our successes are achieved only because of the hard work and dedication of our generous supporters. On behalf of everyone at the RBS, we thank you for your commitment to our youth and organization.*

A huge thank you for the ongoing support from **Z Gallery Arts** and **Café Crêpe**.

Thank you to **Maison Cote** for a financial donation.

Thank you to **Westside Montessori School** for your yearly donation of books.





## The Reading Bear Society



The next edition of the Reading Bear Newsletter will be sent in February 2021. Please email [rbs.coms@gmail.com](mailto:rbs.coms@gmail.com) if you have any stories or photos you would like to share with us!

In the meantime, please follow us on our social media accounts to stay up to date with all the Reading Bear activities:

[www.facebook.com/thereadingbear](https://www.facebook.com/thereadingbear)

[www.instagram.com/thereadingbearsociety](https://www.instagram.com/thereadingbearsociety)

[www.thereadingbear.ca](http://www.thereadingbear.ca)