

## THE EVOLUTION OF FACEBOOK'S TH&VS ALUMNI COMMUNITY

by Hedy Graf

In 2014, the Toronto Star featured an article highlighting my volunteer English tutoring activities for young adults – mostly troubled students whose aim was to earn a GED certificate (equivalent to a high school diploma.) A former student posted this on FB, and as a result, I reconnected with several of my former students who lived in the Greater Toronto Area. We have kept in touch via individual emails and a few luncheons together.

Hedy Graf was a popular TH&VS teacher who taught English and Spanish from 1968 to 1997. She was active in a variety of extracurricular activities and instrumental in creating and developing a successful alternative education program (PACE).

In January 2019, **Sue Ellery** assisted me in creating a Facebook site (**Getting Alumni Together**) whose aim was to stay in touch and eventually work towards a mini-re-union and/or establishing a chapter of the TH&VS Alumni Association (THAA).

By the fall of 2019, I noticed the group included TH&VS grads who lived in Timmins, Canada, and other countries: USA, Mexico, Scotland, Britain, Japan, Korea, and New Zealand. **John Ansara** who had joined the group began to post **QUILL** pictures and invited discussions on a variety of topics.

By January 2021, there were 130 members and the focus was placed on reposting material taken from the **QUILL** and the **THAA** site. I thought that there should be a secondary objective - setting a goal to fund-raise and create a bursary for a TH&VS graduate.



Carsey Yee, Lois Hanks and Hedy Graf at lunch in Chinatown, Toronto. 2019/7/12

A willing **Steering Committee** was co-opted; it was comprised of **Al Youmans, Valerie Ferrier, Liz Michaud, Carsey Yee, Wendy Wyatt Donaldson, Nellie Hanuta, Kelly Pezzola, Maureen Bray,** and **Brian Jones**. Brian agreed to act as a Trustee of donated funds and provided ongoing guidance; Wendy suggested a name for the bursary the group planned to fund while Carsey kept our focus on granting the award to a student who is pursuing a career in the Health Sciences field – appropriate during this time of COVID-19. With the help of **Wendy Adams**, Chair of THAA, the Facebook page was renamed – **TH&VS Alumni Community** – to create a more inclusive group open to those who have been associated with our **Alma Mater**.

Our membership has now grown tenfold to **1,378** names of people ranging from the decade of the **1950s** to the **2020s**. The Facebook site is administered by **John Purificati** with **Alison Tilley, Sue Ellery,** and **Esther Young** offering assistance. On behalf of our site's Admin team, I say thanks for your appreciative comments and compliments re the site's existence; so many of you have expressed your gratitude for "**finding and reconnecting with lost trails.**"

Link to **TH&VS Alumni Community** FB site:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/12349>



**THAA mission: "The TH&VS Alumni Association is committed to advancing education through the provision of scholarships, teaching aids and equipment and by sponsoring educational programs at Timmins High & Vocational School."**

➤ Thanks to the generosity of alumni in the **TH&VS Alumni Community** on Facebook, 3 new bursaries were awarded to TH&VS graduates in June, 2021:

**a) TH&VS Staff Appreciation Bursary** - in honour of TH&VS teachers for fostering excellence in education and making a difference in the lives of students. Awarded to a college and/or university-bound graduate pursuing studies in the Health Sciences field and whose activities have contributed to both TH&VS and the community - 2 bursaries @\$1,500.

**b) Francis Michaud Memorial Bursary** - in memory of Francis (Frank) Michaud, former TH&VS Jr. & Sr. Basketball Player. Awarded to a college or university-bound graduate pursuing studies in the health sciences field and whose activities have contributed to both TH&VS and the community - 1 bursary @ \$1,000.

### What is the THAA?

The TH&VS Alumni Association (THAA) is a non-profit charitable organization that was established in 1999 by a group of alumni and former staff members of TH&VS. Currently there are 10 board members and the TH&VS principal who serves in an advisory role to the latter. The THAA:

- is responsible for the sustained growth and annual income disbursement of the funds it receives. In return, as a registered non-profit charity, it issues tax receipts for any donations.
- provides approximately **\$19,350** (June, 2021) annually in scholarships with input from the staff and administration.
- publishes an annual alumni newsletter,
- maintains a newly up-dated website for TH&VS alumni ([www.thvsalumni.ca](http://www.thvsalumni.ca)).

### CONTACT US:

**TH&VS Alumni Association**  
451 Theriault Blvd. Timmins ON P4N 8B2  
[www.thvsalumni.ca](http://www.thvsalumni.ca) [info@thvsalumni.ca](mailto:info@thvsalumni.ca)  
705-267-5319

### Scholarships invested with the THAA and awarded at June 2021 graduation:

Alumni Awards (2 watches)  
Bill Costiniuk Bursary  
Brent Read Memorial Scholarship  
Bruno Toffanello Memorial Scholarship  
Craig Beda Memorial Scholarship  
David Fong Photography Scholarship  
Doug Howie Memorial Scholarship  
Ed Collins Scholarship  
Elisabeth Johnson Bursary  
Eric Peterson Memorial Scholarship  
Evelyn Rymer Memorial Scholarship  
Frank Graf Scholarship  
Frank Michaud Memorial Bursary  
Hedy Baker-Graf Scholarship  
Helge Kleven Scholarship  
Lily Anderson Scholarship  
Lori-Ann Teixeira Memorial Scholarship  
Margaret Clausi Memorial Scholarship  
May Family Scholarship  
Polish White Eagle Society Bursary  
Rita Seccombe Art Scholarship  
Ryan Reid Bursary  
Sean Graf Scholarship  
Shania Twain Scholarships (2)  
Susan Hall Memorial Scholarship  
THAA scholarships (2)  
TH&VS Staff Appreciation Bursary (2)

### Want to Donate or Create a TH&VS scholarship?

The process for creating a scholarship for TH&VS students is an easy one. While there are several options depending on the size of the investment, most scholarships are based on the interest generated annually by the investment of funds with the THAA.

As a charitable organization registered with the Canada Revenue Agency, we will issue a tax receipt for the total donation. Contact us at [info@thvsalumni.ca](mailto:info@thvsalumni.ca) for more information. TH&VS Student Services is ready to assist the donor in establishing criteria for the award.

Note: If you no longer wish to receive the annual TH&VS Alumni News, reply to [info@thvsalumni.ca](mailto:info@thvsalumni.ca) with "Please Remove" in the subject line of the email.



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