



# CENTRAL OKANAGAN BURSARY AND SCHOLARSHIP SOCIETY

Newsletter 2023/24

Providing financial assistance to our local Grade 12 graduates in order that they may further their post secondary education



**Erika**  
Student, Immaculata Regional High School  
*Title, 2022*  
Acrylic

JUNE 2023

588

Student Applications

606

Awards

Total Value of Awards

\$575,165

## A Legacy of Excellence

### West Kelowna's Liquid Lightning Swim Club continues to give back

West Kelowna's Liquid Lightning Swim Club has a rich history within the local community. In 2017, the club joined forces with the Kelowna AquaJets, a strategic decision made to address various operational requirements. While the majority of their funds followed the swimmers, they prudently maintained a contingency reserve for several years.

The LLSC had diligently raised funds through various means, with the primary objective of benefiting swimmers in West Kelowna. When considering the best use of the remaining funds, the LLSC Board of Directors recognized the importance of supporting swimmers who had developed their skills at Johnson Bentley and were now heading off to post-secondary studies.

"When it comes to support youth in our community, COBSS does so much to help our graduating seniors to achieve their dreams," comments LLSC Board member Tina Pomponio, "Although Liquid Lightning Swim Club is no longer in existence, it has such a strong history that we wanted to ensure we created a legacy".

Through the bursary program with COBSS, Liquid Lightning will continue to be remembered, and will continue to support young adults for years to come.



## A Message from COBSS President Anne Pistawka

I am so proud to be part of The Central Okanagan Bursary & Scholarship Society (COBSS), a group of dedicated volunteers who have demonstrated that together we can weather any storm.

When faced with the pandemic three years ago, our members quickly went into action. With creativity and ingenuity, we made the necessary changes to fulfill our obligations to donors and students, allocating over 500 awards to high school graduates in the Central Okanagan.

COBSS is an example of a truly collaborative organization with many partners including students, donors, volunteers, school counsellors, school administrators, local foundations, and post-secondary institutions. We continue to keep students and counsellors top of mind, working towards improving our application system to be as up to date and streamlined as possible. Special thanks to the Central Okanagan School District for their continued support and guidance during this process.

During these tumultuous times, I would like to acknowledge the dedication of Bev Bourbonnais, our administrative assistant, who has steadfastly worked to improve our systems and keep everyone well informed. She has been a rock for us all. Sadly, she is resigning her post at end of the school year, however her passion for helping students continues and she will become a volunteer COBSS member moving forward. We welcome our new administrative assistant, Lisa Mayne, to the COBSS family.

COVID has challenged us all and the Central Okanagan Bursary & Scholarship Society has come out the other end stronger for it. I am reminded that the strength of this organization lies in its volunteer members and the relationships we have with our community partners. We share a mutual dedication to support the post-secondary dreams of local graduating students.

We were very pleased to host our first in-person event in three years - our Donor Appreciation Tea - on May 1st, 2023, at the Hollywood Road Education Centre, where we met to share stories, highlight student achievements, and celebrate the act of giving. Moving forward, COBSS remains committed to strengthening our ties with existing partners and building connections with new donors in the community. If you are not currently a COBSS donor, we encourage you to keep us in mind for the day when you are in a position to invest in a local student.

Kind Regards,

Anne Pistawka

COBSS President



**Teagan Savard-Cass**

Gr. 8 student, Immaculata Regional High School

*Could You Be Loved?*, 2022

Vinyl on canvas

## Students from the following schools may apply for COBSS awards:

Aberdeen Hall Preparatory School  
Central Programs School  
Ecole de l'Anse-au-sable  
eSchool 23  
Flex Academy

George Elliot Secondary School  
Heritage Christian Online School  
Immaculata Regional High School  
Kelowna Christian School  
Kelowna Secondary School

Mount Boucherie Secondary  
Okanagan Christian School  
Okanagan Mission Secondary  
Rutland Senior Secondary

# On the Shoulders of Giants

## History of Central Okanagan Bursary & Scholarship Society's Centenary Awards

In 1949, a group of Kelowna residents saw a need to help young people obtain education beyond high school. Established as the School District 23 Student Assistance Association, membership was set at \$5 per year (or \$50 lifetime) and a goal was set to raise funds to help young people seek higher education for the betterment of the community.

Sending requests for donations to local firms, service clubs and individuals, the hope was to encourage support for their vision. It certainly worked, because by September of that same year, SD 23 SAA had raised \$1095, allowing for the very first loan of \$200 to be made to a student named Ronald Haskins. This enabled him to attend "normal" school. As testament to their initial vision, young Ronald not only graduated but went on to become a teacher, working in our own SD 23 for 25 years.

The success continued, as more than 73 individual loans were given out by 1962 alone. Eventually, financial assistance vehicles like Canada Student Loans, provincial assistance (and even our own COBSS!) came on the scene, ensuring that funds were not only available from more sources, but became easier for students to access. Making the hard decision to pass the torch, the board

decided to collapse the association and donate their remaining funds to COBSS, setting up Centenary Bursaries - which continue to this day! Thank you to the pioneers of financial assistance for students. We are proud to carry your legacy forward.

*We thank Jim Oakes & Bill Drinkwater, long time members of Student Assistance Association, for providing the history of this organization.*

Since 2005, ten Centenary Bursaries of \$500 each are given to graduating students of SD 23. Over the past 18 years, a total of \$85,000 has been given to 170 students.

The founders of the Student Assistance Association of Kelowna can rest assured that their wish to directly help students pursue post-secondary education continues to this day with the cooperation and leadership of the COBSS organization.

In 1971 our founders,



Mr. Harry Dewar Mr. Ken Harding



Mr. Lou Dedinsky Ms. Rosemary King

created COBSS.  
We honour and thank  
them for their vision.

## Did you know...

...there are three ways you can help students through COBSS?

- Bursaries are allocated to students with financial need;
- Scholarships are distributed to those with outstanding achievement;
- Awards are given based on a variety of criteria specified by the donor.

So many people assist COBSS in doing our work. Sincerest gratitude goes out to...

**Central Okanagan Public Schools | RBC Dominion Securities**

**FH & P Lawyers | KPMG | Paul Leinemann Construction Ltd.**



## COBSS Awards Help Mt. Boucherie Dancer Pursue Her Dreams

In 2021 I graduated from Mount Boucherie Senior Secondary School and was awarded bursaries and scholarships through COBSS. What I love about COBSS is the variety of awards students can apply for. This variety allowed me to receive awards based on my grades, community involvement, and dance. Without these awards from COBSS, I wouldn't have felt so secure to follow my dreams. After high school graduation, I moved across the country to attend Toronto Metropolitan University's Dance Performance Program. This

four-year Bachelor of Fine Arts program is one-of-a-kind and is a sought-after institution for Canadian dancers. COBSS relieved some of the financial stress off me and my family that comes with not only university, but moving out of province, so we could focus on celebrating achieving my dream of furthering my dance career in Toronto. As I am now halfway through my program, I know I made the right decision and this is where I am meant to be. I am forever grateful to all the donors at COBSS for helping young artists like me further their studies to pursue their passion.

*Maya Collie*

*Mt. Boucherie Grad, 2021*



COBSS proudly partners with the Central Okanagan Foundation to find just the right students for their awards.

**The Kelowna Lululemon on Bernard Avenue supports COBSS through its Return-It Container Recycling Account.**

ALL bottles, cans and milk containers are refunded weekly, and the money goes towards supporting local students with bursaries and scholarships.

It's convenient. It's eco-friendly. It's a great partnership.

Please contact the COBSS team if you would like our account number to be a Return-It partner.

**THANK YOU LULULEMON!**



**Visit us on Facebook and Twitter @okCOBSS**

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