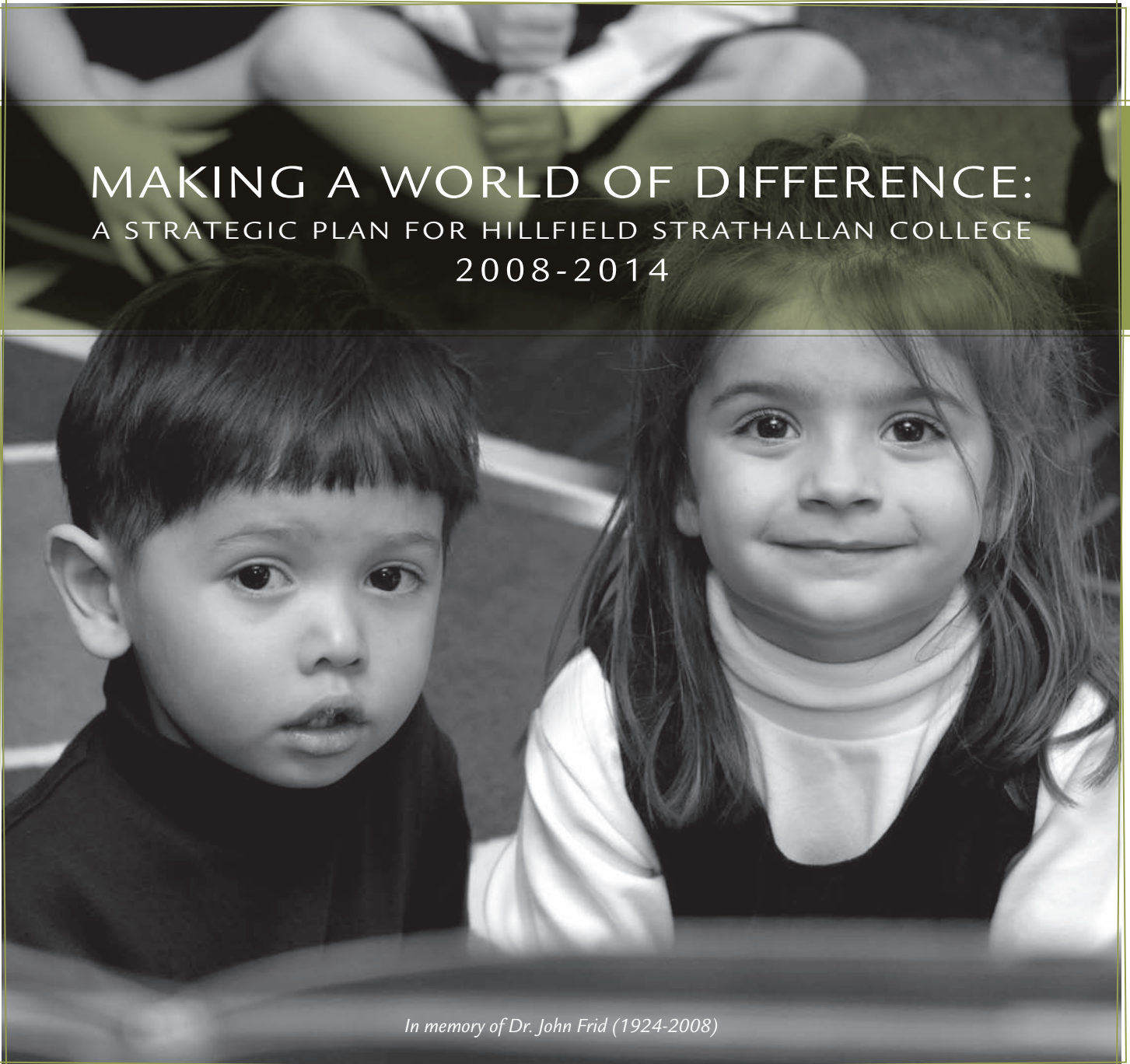


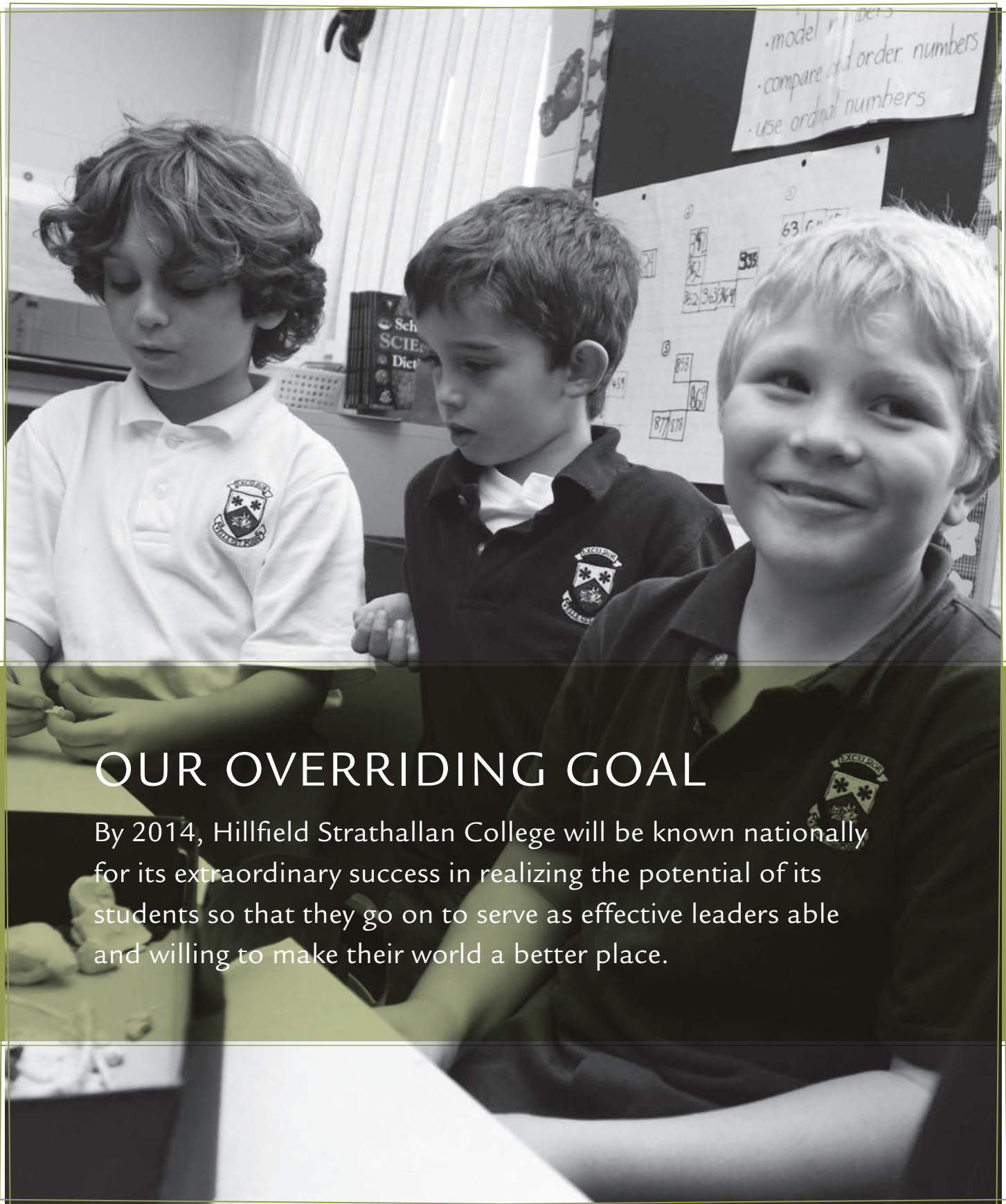


Hillfield Strathallan College
Here Excellence is a Way of Life

MAKING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE:
A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR HILLFIELD STRATHALLAN COLLEGE
2008-2014



In memory of Dr. John Frid (1924-2008)



OUR OVERRIDING GOAL

By 2014, Hillfield Strathallan College will be known nationally for its extraordinary success in realizing the potential of its students so that they go on to serve as effective leaders able and willing to make their world a better place.

THE CONTEXT

In the broadest sense, education should help human beings achieve “the most impressive capabilities of the most remarkable representatives of our species.” As it grapples with a bewildering array of challenges, our world needs, more than ever, leaders who are imaginative, empathetic, adaptable, innovative, big picture thinkers and problem solvers. Indeed, as Howard Gardner suggests, “the survival and thriving of our species will depend on our nurturing of potentials that are distinctly human.”

For many decades, HSC has been defined by a tradition of service and leadership. During the two World Wars, for example, many of our alumni volunteered to serve overseas. Forty-seven of them lost their lives and are acknowledged every year at our Remembrance Day Service. More recently, students and alumni have continued to make a difference through substantial contributions to a wide range of service projects, both at home and abroad. Needs may have changed, but our commitment to bettering the world around us remains undiminished.

HSC has also been defined by a tradition of innovation. In the 1960s, for example, many years before other independent schools, we became co-educational and began to pay serious attention to the distinctive learning needs of both boys and girls. Furthermore, more than two decades ago, we established a Resource Program for students who learn differently. We also moved forward with a number of bold initiatives, including the SWAP Centre and the IDT Program, promoting experiential and problem-based learning.

Building on this tradition of innovation, HSC truly must inspire “its students to realize their full potential and to better the world around them.” That means that we must have a clear understanding of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will be required if our graduates are to succeed in a world that is increasingly flat, fast and fluid. During their time at HSC, students must hone their twenty-first century skills, with particular emphasis on the most important skills of all—creativity, critical thinking and learning how to learn. Moreover, as the late Dr. John Frid noted, when one thinks of the world our graduates are moving into, it is also evident that they “must be able to construct and own knowledge, rather than just memorizing information for tests.”

In order to deliver on this educational vision, the College’s programs, curricula and pedagogy will continue to be informed by the best of current brain research and educational studies, thereby recognizing the uniqueness of the individual learner and the importance of active engagement in the learning process. A renewed approach to professional development will support our teachers as they employ a wide repertoire of instructional strategies and assessment practices, and integrate educational technologies, in accordance with best practices. Similarly, an emphasis on student creativity and higher level thinking skills will become the hallmarks of an HSC education.

Beginning with the Transformation Project, consisting of a new Senior School and College-wide athletic complex, we must develop facilities that embrace sustainable design and allow us to realize this educational vision by supporting a breadth of programs and student-centred approaches to teaching and learning. A variety of teaching spaces, including state-of-the-art science labs and unfettered access to educational technologies, will support our faculty as they develop the innovative programs and practices that will establish HSC as a centre of instructional excellence.

During their time at HSC, students must hone their twenty-first century skills, with particular emphasis on the most important skills of all—creativity, critical thinking and learning how to learn.

Extending beyond academics, athletics and the arts, the HSC experience will provide meaningful leadership opportunities for all students as they develop a global perspective and a genuine sense of social and environmental responsibility. By nurturing their confidence and helping them find their voice, we will encourage our students to realize their potential and to establish their unique place, both within the HSC community and beyond.

The challenge for any great institution is to protect and nurture its legacy. HSC is blessed with a tradition of excellence in education, leadership and service. Building on this strong foundation, our graduates are poised to become twenty-first century leaders!

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PRIORITY A

We will embrace a student-centred approach to teaching and learning, emphasizing creativity and recognizing the unique potential of every student.

RATIONALE

Brain research confirms that every learner is unique. We all have different kinds of minds. We learn in different ways and at different rates. We have different strengths and encounter different challenges. Furthermore, we now know that human potential is not fixed; talents can be developed and great abilities can be built over time. Creativity transcends disciplines, and everyone has the potential to be creative.

Recognizing the uniqueness of the individual learner, our faculty will continue to grow as effective instructional practitioners, employing a wider repertoire of teaching and learning strategies. In doing so, they will foster inquiry, active engagement, creativity and higher level thinking skills, enabling their students to realize their full potential and to become life-long learners and effective problem solvers.

In order to develop a dynamic and collaborative faculty culture, our teachers must have sufficient time for professional interaction, curriculum planning and student conferencing. We must also enhance professional development, hiring practices and our faculty evaluation program so that they are more closely aligned with our academic priorities. In addition, the development of new facilities and the integration of educational technology will be instrumental in promoting active engagement and more varied instructional strategies.

As we build a more student-centred approach to teaching and learning, we will reinforce our commitment to a broad program including academics, athletics and the arts, as well as to the solid academic foundation that will ensure our students continued success in their future studies.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Enhance student learning by focusing on individual learning needs
2. Build 'best practices' and establish HSC as a centre of instructional excellence
3. Foster innovation and creativity throughout the academic program
4. Broaden the role of IT in building an innovative academic program and in promoting student-centred learning
5. Prepare students for the technology-rich environment they will encounter in their post-secondary studies
6. Provide faculty with the time necessary to work with students and to collaborate with one another
7. Create learning environments, academic, artistic and athletic, that facilitate each student's growth

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PRIORITY B

We will ensure that all of our students are able to develop and ultimately fulfill their leadership potential.

RATIONALE

Since its inception early in the last century, HSC has prided itself on producing students who are motivated by a strong sense of service and who go on to become leaders. We currently provide outstanding formal and informal leadership opportunities to many of our students. However, there is more that could be done to address the leadership potential within each and every student.

Leadership involvement, therefore, must become a broader expectation, and students must be encouraged to develop their own leadership profile and potential in accordance with their unique abilities, interests, talents and needs. They also must be encouraged to pay attention to their own wellness and to the wellness of the school community. As well, in order to become effective leaders, our students must acquire key life skills, such as empathy and respect, through sustained and focused community service opportunities connecting them to the wider world outside our gates.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Involve every student in meaningful community service as a way of broadening his or her world view
2. Enrich traditional leadership models to provide students at all grade levels with the opportunity to realize their leadership potential
3. Institute a College-wide instructional program attending to the development of personal and school wellness



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PRIORITY C

We will establish HSC as a leader in sustainability and environmental responsibility.

RATIONALE

One of the key challenges of the twenty-first century is environmental. We therefore have an ethical responsibility to lead by example. We must empower our students by connecting them more fully to the natural world and by providing them with the opportunity to develop innovative ideas and solutions to existing global challenges. The College also must become a model of sustainability and environmental responsibility both through our academic program and our operational decision-making. In addition, beginning with the Transformation Project, all new facilities will embrace sustainable design. Much can be done to conserve resources and reduce waste, and to ensure that our curricula adequately prepares our students to become environmental stewards.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Implement a comprehensive plan to align all aspects of College operations with broadly held ideals of environmental stewardship, responsibility and sustainability
2. Develop powerful learning opportunities to connect students to the natural world and to equip them with the skills required to grapple with global challenges



PROCESS

Developed over the course of a year, this Plan embodies the collaborative work of hundreds of members of the HSC community. Using both online surveys and focus group discussions, we secured input from all stakeholder groups, including alumni, alumni parents, community leaders, faculty and staff, Governors and Trustees, parents, senior management, and students.

In addition to the College's Mission, Vision and Values, as well as its Guiding Educational Principles, the planning process was informed by the growing body of literature detailing how education must evolve in order to ensure that future generations of young people are adequately prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century.

The following sources proved to be particularly informative and thought provoking:

Dweck, Carol. *Mindset: The Psychology of Success*. New York: Random House, 2006.

Friedman, Thomas. *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.

Gardner, Howard. *Five Minds for the Future*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2007.

Levine, Mel. *A Mind at a Time*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002.

Louv, Richard. *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2008.

Pink, Daniel. *A Whole New Mind: Moving from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2005.

Robinson, Ken. *Out of Our Minds: Learning to Be Creative*. Oxford: Capstone Books, 2001.

www.21stcenturyskills.org

www.microsoft.com/education/sof (School of the Future)

www.edutopia.org (George Lucas Foundation)

www.creativeclass.com (Dr. Richard Florida)

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the greatness of Hillfield Strathallan College rests on its role in the lives of its students, faculty and staff, alumni, past and present parents, and friends. HSC is a place that invites all of us to be hopeful and to be engaged. As we anticipate the world our graduates will be entering, we must ensure that they are truly inspired to realize their full potential and to better the world around them. United in a common commitment to Mission, Vision and Values, we will continue to teach the life of learning, the life of respect, and the life of responsibility.

Thank you for inspiring this vision for the future. Together, we are making a world of difference!

Hillfield Strathallan College | 299 Fennell Avenue West, Hamilton, ON L9C 1G3 | P. 905-389-1367 | F. 905-389-6399 | www.hsc.on.ca



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