

# Leaders & Learners



**CASSA-ACGCS**  
Promoting Quality Education for Our Students

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**CELEBRATING**  
**10 YEARS OF**  
**LEADERS &**  
**LEARNERS!**

## Message from the President: STEAM Continues to Gather Steam

WHEN THE CASSA board decided on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) as the theme for this year's conference, there was no way to know how this concept would catch on. STEAM continues to gather steam, if you will pardon the pun!

Over the last few months, I have learned about school STEAM-related projects, read about the power of STEAM on Twitter, and attended conferences that helped me realize this is a tool we can use to engage students and prepare them for the global village.

Last February, I was fortunate to be part of a delegation of educators who travelled to Texas to attend the 21st Annual Space Exploration Educators' Conference. Educators from all over the world gathered over three days at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston to learn about aeronautics and space travel through keynote addresses, workshop and visits to actual NASA facilities.

In recent years, the initial STEM focus of this conference has grown to include the arts. It was fascinating to



Cindy Finn  
President

attend workshops incorporating fine arts, drama, music, and literature into scientific topics like robotics, aerodynamics, and rocket launches!

As educational leaders, we look for ways to ignite a passion for learning that helps our students experience success. This

year's CASSA conference speakers and session leaders have been selected to inspire and inform. **Natalie Panek, John Malloy** and **Hall Davidson** will help us better understand the power of combining arts, science and technology in education. Presenters from the field will share their projects and initiatives that can be transplanted into our own schools.

As the finishing touches are made to the program for this year's summer conference, it is clear that this event will be another wonderful opportunity to meet new colleagues, exchange exciting ideas, meet with sponsors and reconnect with friends. We hope you are able to join us in beautiful Montreal to learn how dreams can take flight.

## OUR PURPOSE

CASSA is the Canadian organization of school system leaders that promotes and supports quality education for the success of all students.

## OUR MISSION

CASSA strengthens the capacity of school system leaders and influences the directions that impact education and student learning.

## Message from the Executive Director: Profiles of Our 2015 Xerox EXL Award Nominees

IN OUR MONTHLY board of director teleconferences, it is clear that publicly funded education is a challenging place to be these days.

In spite of these challenges, I am impressed with the resilience of our board members and the staff they work with to keep the focus on doing the best for each child.

I want to briefly highlight the four finalists for the Xerox EXL Award for exemplary school system leadership in Canada. These are four individuals who, in spite of the day-to-day challenges, have been able to make a difference and have been recognized by their provincial/territorial affiliate as worthy of local recognition. One of them will be recognized nationally as Canada's Superintendent of the Year.

**Steve Balleine** (Assistant Director General, Lester B. Pearson School Board, Quebec) received the Educational Leadership Award,

Award of Merit and Outstanding Achievement Award. He was the project coordinator of the English Language Education Resource Foundation.

**John Crocco** (Director, Niagara Catholic District School board, Ontario) received the International Education Business Partnership Award. He is a champion for social justice and student well-being. He works extensively with community partners to strengthen ties between church, schools and community.

**Terry Jaffray** (Superintendent, Dehcho Divisional Education Council, Northwest Territories) received the Northwest Territories Superintendents' Association Distinguished Service Award, Government of Northwest



Ken Bain  
Executive Director

Territories Long Service Award and Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence. Terry leads the development of the Teaching and Learning Centre to promote the Dene Zhatie language.

**Pieter Langstraat** (Superintendent of schools, Red Deer Public School District, Alberta) received the Alberta Excellence in Teaching Award and Alberta Teachers' Association Council on School Administration Distinguished Service Award. He is committed to engaging community partners to make sure students experience academic success and well-being.

We will honour these four outstanding educators on July 2 in Montreal. Visit [conference.cassa-acgs.ca](http://conference.cassa-acgs.ca) to learn more and register for the conference.

## Yes, It Actually IS Rocket Science: CASSA Conference Keynote Speakers



### **Natalie Panek: Rocket Scientist, Explorer and Advocate for Women in Tech**

Natalie Panek knows the value of multidisciplinary platforms when it comes to innovation. Whether learning to fly a plane, building and driving a solar-powered car across North America, designing a mission to Mars or building space robots, Natalie has learned the value in seeking contributions from an interdisciplinary team.

Working with a range of disciplines in each of these contexts fosters creative thinking across boundaries. By merging STEAM subjects, Natalie took advantage of learning opportunities from a diverse team to push beyond conceived limitations.

Success in each of these endeavours relied on collaboration with several schools of thought in the pursuit of a common goal: innovation. Natalie's stories and foundations for success emphasize that collaboration between numerous fields is a necessity to innovation and fundamental in developing novel solutions to difficult problems.

Natalie Panek will deliver the conference's opening keynote address at 7pm on Thursday, July 2.



### **Dr. John Malloy: An Experienced Educator and Leader, A Passionate and Committed Advocate for Public Education**

Over his 29-year career, Dr. John Malloy has been an English teacher, principal, guidance counsellor, superintendent and director of education. He is currently the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Leadership and Learning Environment Division at the Ontario Ministry of Education.

In his current role, he is responsible for strengthening the leadership abilities of board administrators and educators; for supporting effective school board governance structures; for promoting equity, inclusive, healthy and safe schools; and for developing teaching policy and standards.

Dr. Malloy believes strongly in the importance of working collaboratively with all partners to achieve shared goals in education. His priority is to provide equitable access and opportunity to learning environments that promote well-being and allow Ontario's learners to achieve success.

Dr. John Malloy will speak at 9am on Friday, July 3.



### **Hall Davidson: A Dynamic Speaker on STEM, STEAM and Today's Educational Challenges**

Hall Davidson has worked from think tanks in Turkey to classrooms in Tennessee. He has collaborated with

educational thought leaders including teachers, superintendents and staff at departments of education.

A former K-12 bilingual math teacher and college faculty member, he left the classroom to become part of an Emmy Award-winning team, creating math and technology integration programs. He helped create California's technology blueprint and now serves as a board member for the International Society for Technology in Education.

For 40 years, he worked with transformational industry groups and education ministries. He's also worked with thousands of students every year through his guidance of the nation's oldest student media festival.

Hall says right now is the most transformative and important time for teaching and learning.

Hall Davidson will deliver the conference's closing keynote address at 2:15pm on Saturday, July 4.

*Updates on breakout session topics and speakers will be posted on CASSA's website and in next month's newsletter.*

## What CASSA Means to Me: Perspectives from the Board of Directors

*Earlier this year, CASSA board members gathered at a strategic planning session. The facilitator had each board member complete an index card stating their own personal hope for CASSA as an organization. Leaders & Learners will share some of these statements in the issues leading up to this year's conference in Montreal. We hope they inspire you to think about what this national organization means to you.*

As a member of CASSA, I hope to learn, share and lead relative to student learning and national educational issues.

~ **Warren Kennedy**

As a member of CASSA, I hope to extend the national conversation on education issues that affect student achievement. I hope to network with educational leaders across the country on educational leaders across the country on educational best practices and shared learning.

~ **Anne O'Brien**

As a member of CASSA, I hope to further extend my education connections across the country and be a part of the continued advancement of becoming a strong national voice of education.

~ **Reg Klassen**

As a member of CASSA, I hope to learn from the best successes and concerns in other provinces. I hope to be able to connect the OCSOA members with the best learning across Canada. I hope to participate/facilitate OCSOA members in leading learning across Canada.

~ **Theresa Harris**

As a member of CASSA, I hope to network with colleagues across learning organizations in Canada. I hope to identify common goals in education across Canada. I hope to promote and advocate for strong supports for education systems.

~ **Simone Rose-Oliver**

As a member of CASSA, I hope to raise awareness of CASSA with our members in Alberta. I hope to contribute to an increasingly strong organization. I hope to assist in sharing of effective system policies.

~ **Barry Litun**



## The Trip of a Lifetime: CASSA and EF Educational Tours In Holland

*This past May 5, 2015, marked a day of celebration all across the Netherlands. It was the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Holland—an event largely made possible by Canadian troops. EF Educational Tours was on the ground along with hundreds of Canadian veterans, students, cadets, educators and commanding officers who travelled with us to commemorate the occasion. A group of superintendents and directors of education also took part in the trip, including Kevin Andrea from Northern Gateway, who won last year's CASSA conference grand prize, and CASSA President-elect Anne O'Brien from Durham Catholic. What follows is an excerpt from an EF Educational Tours blog written during the once-in-a-lifetime trip.*

**May 3, 2015**

### Amsterdam and the Anne Frank House

After a journey overseas, the group had a walking tour through the beautiful streets of Amsterdam. Toward the end of the day, we had the opportunity to visit the Anne Frank House. **Anne Frank** was a Jewish girl who went into hiding during World War Two to avoid the Nazis. Together with seven others, she hid in the secret annex of her father's factory. After almost two years in hiding, they were discovered and deported to concentration camps. Anne's father, **Otto Frank**, was the only one of the eight people to survive. After her death, Anne became world famous because of the diary she wrote while in hiding.



Canadian students walking in the Wageningen Liberation Day parade.

**Morning of May 4, 2015**

### Ceremony at Holten Canadian War Cemetery

The group had the honour of attending the official ceremony at the Holten Canadian War Cemetery along with Prime Minister **Stephen Harper**, his wife **Laureen Harper**, the Dutch royal family and Minister of Veteran Affairs **Erin O'Toole**.

Prime Minister Harper addressed the youth in attendance, intent on drawing a parallel between generations:

“To the students here with us today, let me just say this: I know that when one is your age, it is easy to look at an older generation and to see simply the people from another time. But as we look at these veterans, see instead people who were once young like you and who desired to enjoy all the good things the life of our country has to offer. And who wanted no part of the terrible things happening elsewhere in the world.

“Today, we look at these veterans and we see the heroes who gave us the great country we have today. How do you want future generations to look at you? Only you can provide that answer. It's up to us, those of us who follow, to make sure their story and their example does not fade from memory but instead illuminates our future. For

## The Trip of a Lifetime: CASSA and EF Educational Tours In Holland, continued

history is the light that guides us into that future and if we forget it, we walk in shadow.”

### Afternoon of May 4, 2015

#### National Liberation Museum, Groesbeek

Interactive activities were on tap this afternoon, as travellers spent their time at the National Liberation Museum 1944–1945 where they signed commemorative notes to be hung on a Tree of Remembrance—a permanent display at the museum on behalf of EF Educational Tours.

A definite highlight of the day was being able to connect with some of the Canadian and Allied veterans who fought for freedom all those years ago. As you can imagine, a lot of emotionally charged stories were shared between generations. It was a humbling, enriching experience.

#### Silent March from Groesbeek Town Hall to Canadian War Cemetery

In the town of Groesbeek, Canadian students, educators and Dutch townspeople silently walked the 2.5 kilometre distance to the Canadian War Cemetery, where students then recited “In Flanders Fields” in English and French. At 8pm, a minute of silence was observed to pay respect to the 2,610 Commonwealth soldiers buried there.

### May 5, 2015

#### Liberation of Holland:

#### 70th Anniversary in Wageningen

Most of us know it’s pretty awesome to be a Canadian. That said, you don’t really understand just how amazing it is to be a Canadian in the Netherlands until you experience the deep gratitude that Dutch people express to us on *Bevrijdingsdag*, otherwise known as “Liberation Day” in Dutch. May 5, 1945, was the day that the First Canadian Army liberated Holland from Nazi occupation. Today in Holland, it’s a national holiday filled with festivals, parades and other celebrations.

On that day, we witnessed a great party in the streets of Wageningen alongside the 100,000 other revellers. As the



Canadian students walking in the Silent March from Groesbeek Town Hall to the Canadian War Cemetery.

Canadian contingent to the events, educators joined the students in a march down the city’s streets, cheered on by the locals. Many of the student travellers handed out Canadian flag pins to the Dutch while they also proudly marched alongside revered veterans and their procession of military vehicles.

It’s an indescribable feeling to experience the gratitude of the Dutch people, even after so many decades have passed. With so many students, cadets, veterans, teachers

## The Trip of a Lifetime: CASSA and EF Educational Tours In Holland, continued

and local Dutch townspeople coming together, from the young to those who could remember events 70 years ago firsthand, this event was so special. It's days like this that you remember for years and years to come.

**May 6, 2015**

### **Amsterdam: Auschwitz Memorial and the Jewish Historical Museum**

The next stop on the journey was the beautiful city of Amsterdam. After a guided tour, we visited the Auschwitz Memorial/National Holocaust Museum as well as the Jewish Historical Museum.

At the Jewish Historical Museum, we had a chance to nosh on traditional Jewish dishes including butter cake, matzo, fish cake and potato latkes.

### **Connecting with others**

Seeing history with your own eyes and letting it come alive before you—this is what travelling on an educational history tour is all about. To be there, walking in the footsteps of those whose actions shaped the world we live in today. To remember those who never made it back home.

On such a milestone anniversary, it was truly moving to be present in Europe for VE Day so many years after the fact. But it wasn't just the remarkable history that made the trip worthwhile. It was also the people we met along the way.

Imagine connecting with other students and cadets who care so deeply about Canada's past. During the tour, so many connections were made between travellers. Whether it was a shared experience, bonding over the sights and sounds of these incredible events or truly understanding history after hearing from those who lived through it, it was all incredible.

Imagine returning a smile from a Dutch villager, so eager to thank you just for being Canadian and to acknowledge how Canadians just like yourself made such a wonderful and lasting impression on a stranger who now considers you a friend. On a trip like this, beautiful moments can happen when you least expect them to.

It wasn't just the remarkable history that made the trip worthwhile. It was also the people we met along the way.



Members of the tour at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek, including CASSA president-elect Anne O'Brien (third to the left) and last year's conference grand prize winner Kevin Andrea (second to the right) from Northern Gateway Public Schools.





## Montreal 2015: Amazing Conference Tours

### SOS Labyrinthe

**10am, July 2**

Explore the world's largest indoor maze made up of twisted pathways loaded with obstacles, dead-ends and traps. Minimum of 10 participants.

### Ghost Walk

**1pm, July 2**

See a completely different Old Montreal while discovering some of the city's more morbid legends and stories. Minimum of 20 participants.

### Flavours and Aromas Walking Tour of Old Montreal

**10am, July 3**

Discover the delicious cultural and historic culinary charms of the oldest district of Montreal. Visit four specialty shops and boutiques. Minimum of 6 participants.

### Science Centre

**2pm, July 3**

Explore and learn about science through interactive displays. Minimum of 15 participants.

### Montreal Rafting

**10am, July 4**

Explore a calm(er) section of the Lachine Rapids. An ideal introduction to whitewater excursions for both kids and adults. Minimum of 20 participants.

### Progressive Dinner

**6pm, July 4**

Let a professional foodie guide you through Montreal's most charming district while you explore its culinary pleasures, cultural influences and historical character. Minimum of 30 participants.

### A Day in Quebec City and Montmorency Falls

**8am-9pm, July 5**

Highlights include Old Quebec, the Citadel, Plains of Abraham, the Old Port and Montmorency Falls Park. Book directly through grayline.com.

Be sure to sign up for your choice of tours today. More details can be found at [conference.cassa-acgcs.ca](http://conference.cassa-acgcs.ca).

## CONTACT CASSA

1123 Glenashton Drive  
Oakville, ON  
L6H 5M1  
Canada

T: (905) 845-2345

F: (905) 845-2044

[ken\\_bain@cassa-acgcs.ca](mailto:ken_bain@cassa-acgcs.ca)

[www.cassa-acgcs.ca](http://www.cassa-acgcs.ca)

### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Tara Lee Wittchen

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