

Who is Doing What

VWS Alumni Corner

Interview with Joseph Chouinard
Class of 1993



VWS: Tell me about your work and education after graduating from the VWS. (post-secondary schooling, travel, work experience, family, etc)

JC: After graduation I did four years of music studies at VCC, majoring in Classical Voice. Following that I moved to Hamburg to study Werbeck singing with Holger Lampson (For those who were around the school in the 1980s that is Olaf's little brother). I completed my studies in 2002 with a singing coach diploma, moved to the UK with Amy and started a family. I did 8 years of sales, starting out selling CDs out of a bag and ending up working for a global leader selling sophisticated psychometric solutions to international clients.

VWS: What kind of work/study are you involved in now?

With our move to Vancouver in 2010 and the arrival of our third daughter, I have gone back to university to get my Bachelor of Commerce. Having studied orchard management at the Kwantlen Farm School in Richmond, combined with a passion for fruit trees, I am creating a business producing pears for the growing local cider industry (keep your eyes peeled in the next three to four years).

VWS: What do you enjoy most about your work?

JC: The study is fascinating and engaging. Fruit is delicious (no one who has had one of Martin Rothe's peaches would deny that) and working with fruit trees is an exercise in reading the future. Interacting with something which can live and be productive when one's grandchildren are old is a reminder to me of the transient nature of my existence and that the impact of my actions will long survive me and ripple out into the world to places I cannot imagine.

VWS: What do you think are your greatest successes in life?

JC: My beautiful family.

VWS: How did Waldorf education affect your life, and your choice of career?

JC: The biggest gift that the Waldorf education gave me was the ability to fearlessly turn my hand to anything. From singing the lead role in an opera, selling CDs out of a bag in London (UK, not Ontario!) to managing large corporate clients to pruning trees in the pouring rain and delighting in making composts. As of yet I have not been an iron monger, a mathematician, or a commercial banker, but I am still young.

VWS: What are your fondest memories of your time at the VWS?

JC: Hiking the Stein Valley in the high school, doing Eurythmy with Mr. Down, counting up to 99 with my fingers (yup, I can do that), making an egg in woodworking with Mr. Schneider and Chemistry with Olaf Lampson. And, more recently, this past Christmas, I got to play Muckel this year – the best shepherd in the Shepherd's Play! That was a highlight check mark on my bucket list!!

*Michelle Gibson, for Development
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Editor's Note: Joseph and Amy Chouinard have two children in the VWS. Joseph is currently obtaining his Bachelor in Business Administration at Capilano University.