

A close-up portrait of a woman with long, wavy reddish-brown hair, smiling slightly. She is wearing a dark, textured blazer and a necklace with green and brown beads. The background is a solid green color.

# Surgite

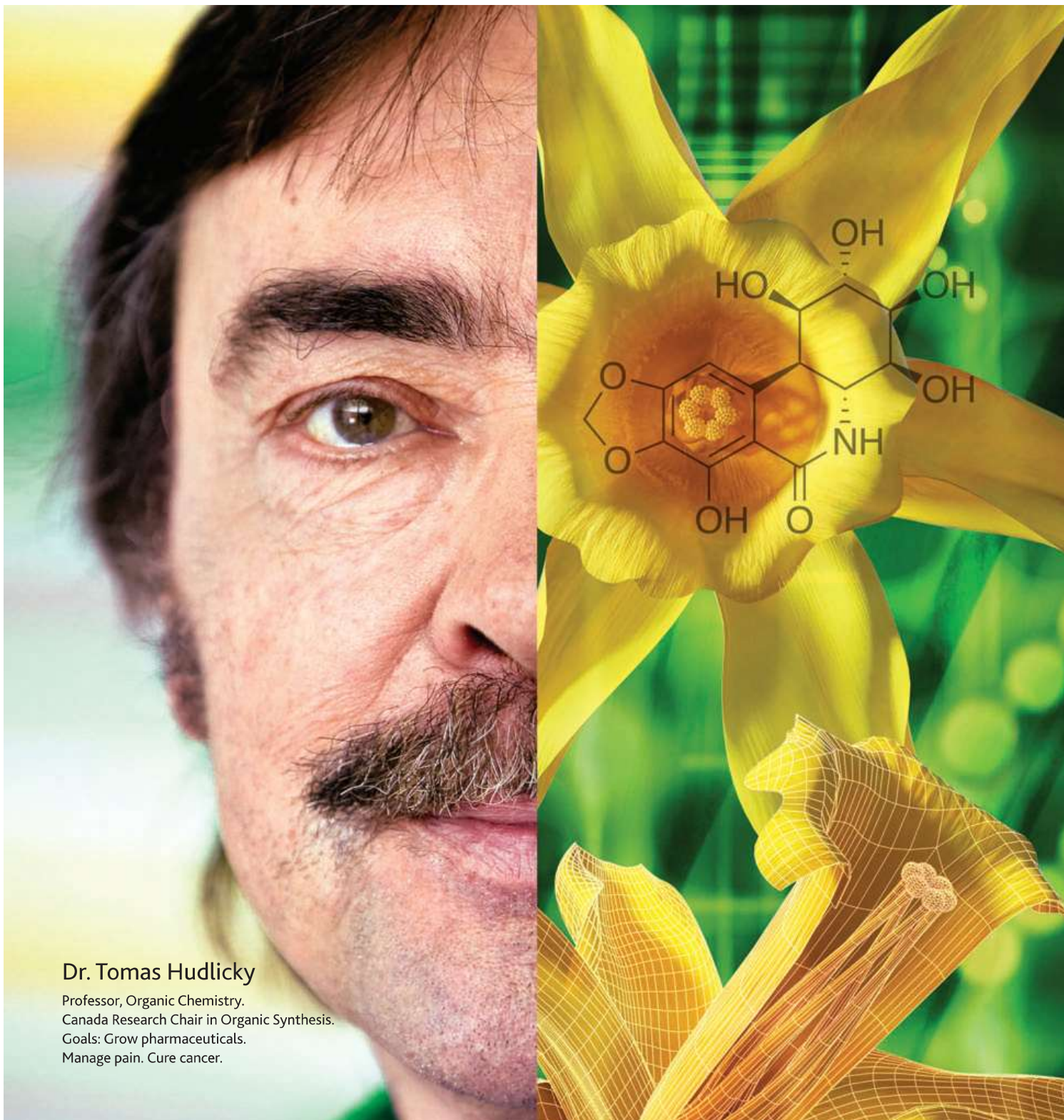
Vol. 2, No. 1, May 2010

## **From campus to Kurdistan:** Brock alumni reach out

Students head south  
to rebuild New Orleans

How Brock became  
a family affair

Playing for keeps —  
Badgers in the community



**Dr. Tomas Hudlicky**

Professor, Organic Chemistry.  
Canada Research Chair in Organic Synthesis.  
Goals: Grow pharmaceuticals.  
Manage pain. Cure cancer.

## For both sides of the brain.

Welcome to Brock. A university designed to develop well-rounded human beings. A place that not only recognizes but nurtures both sides of the brain. Where diverse passions are not only welcomed but celebrated, and students become better visions of themselves. And what could be more important than that?

Just ask Tomas Hudlicky. Where others see flowers, he sees sources of new cancer drugs and painkillers. An award-winning researcher and classic rock guitarist, his work has attracted other brilliant minds and worldwide attention. Flower power just got a whole new meaning. (Continued at [brocku.ca](http://brocku.ca), or visit us on campus in St. Catharines, Niagara, Ontario.)

**Brock**  
Both Sides of the Brain

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## Surgite

Surgite/sur-gi-tay/ Latin for "Push On"  
The inspiring last words of Maj.-Gen. Sir Isaac Brock

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Welcome to the Springtime issue of Surgite, the magazine that builds a bridge between those of us at Brock and our all-important alumni.

As I approach my own one-year anniversary of joining Brock, each day I see more evidence of why it holds a special place in the hearts of its grads. I see how the "Brock experience" shapes not just the minds and values of our students, but of our alumni throughout their lives.

For instance, read the article on Brock faculty and alumni striving to improve the lot of Kurds in Iraq, helping communities there deal with health care issues and post-traumatic stress.

Browsing through the pages of Surgite, you'll see more glimpses of the rich substance that makes a University — and its people — special.

Brock continues to focus on the student experience — an experience valued by our alumni. But we also cherish our responsibility to serve and engage with regional, national and international communities.

We want our grads to feel proud of the University they helped nurture and grow, and we owe it to them to keep building on their foundation, to continue to make Brock a symbol of excellence and one of Canada's premiere universities — where students, faculty and alumni epitomize a unique institution that develops Both Sides of the Brain.

Enjoy reading about your alma mater, the University that continues to evolve the student experience to prepare our graduates in addressing the needs of tomorrow.

Best wishes,



Murray Knuttila



Murray Knuttila, Provost  
and Vice-President,  
Academic

# From campus to Kurdistan

A group of psychologists and medical professionals, led by a Brock alumna, head to northern Iraq to lend a hand

By Hans Niedermair

When Kathy and Denis Belicki arrived in Kurdistan last October, they effectively doubled the number of psychologists in that region of Iraq.

That's not a lot of available help for an area where "virtually every adult is a trauma survivor," says Kathy Belicki, a Brock professor and graduate (BA '76). "It's an incredibly under-serviced area."

Belicki and her husband, a fellow psychologist and Brock alumnus (BA '77), were just two members of a recent delegation of the Friends of Kurdistan, a non-profit group formed by Brock alumna Amy Ball of St. Catharines (BA '95). The delegation assembled by Ball included a physician, nurse, physiotherapist, occupational therapist and social worker. Their goal was to assess needs and seek opportunities for projects that would improve the delivery of health care in the embattled Kurdistan region, which is home to eight million people.

In an area wracked by post-traumatic stress syndrome, there are only two psychologists and 18 psychiatrists working in all of Kurdistan, Belicki says.

"The original plan was to roll up our sleeves and get right in there with the professionals and work side by side with them," she says. "But the more we made contact with people, the more it became clear that we didn't know enough."

Belicki says getting organized to work alongside their Kurd colleagues was extremely difficult, due to the attention the Westerners attracted and trouble communicating their credentials with would-be patients. The team soon realized a change of plan was in order.

"We had to slow down and decide what was feasible," she says. "If we hadn't done that, it would have been disastrous. We performed needs assessments and talked to people on the ground so that we could better understand their system and what resources were available."

What they found was a system sorely lacking in mental-health care. "They don't have mental-health centres," she says. They also found a woefully inadequate record-keeping system, which might not be surprising given the turmoil the region has dealt with during its history.

Aspiring for independence since the end of the First World War when the British controlled the area, Iraqi Kurds have been killed, deported and ostracized for nearly a century. The persecution was rampant during the regime of Saddam Hussein. From 1986 to 1989, Hussein's al-Anfal Campaign saw between 100,000 and 200,000 Kurd civilians killed. In 1988, Iraqi aircraft dropping chemical bombs on the town of Halabja caused 15,000 mostly civilian casualties.



Dennis Belicki, far left, Kathy Belicki, second from left, and Amy Ball, fourth from left, meet with a widow and her family at the first site of Saddam Hussein's chemical attacks on civilian targets.

Most families in the region lost someone. There were gas attacks and systematic executions. People were routinely tortured and kidnapped.

But the Kurds are “remarkably resilient people,” says Belicki.

“They are showing much less symptomology than other cultures that have been through similar trauma. But they will talk about it. Most people tend to avoid discussing trauma, but this is a culture that talks a lot. They’ll sit down and have lunch and tell horror stories. That may be why they’re so resilient and I found that really inspiring.”

An improvement in mental-health care in Kurdistan could even make region more peaceful, she says.

“When people have been through trauma, they experience a lot of emotions, but one that we often overlook is anger. Much of the population is traumatized and angry. It makes it challenging for them to negotiate with one

another.

“I hadn’t fully realized that psychologists could be really useful for world peace. One high flashpoint is going to be Kurdistan versus central Iraq, and al-Qaida is trying to make that happen.”

Ball, a political science graduate, took her first trip to Kurdistan in January 2009. She travelled alone, though she hadn’t planned it that way. The colleagues with whom she was to travel — and who had convinced her to go — were rebuffed at the last minute due to issues with their passports.

But even though she went solo, the seeds for Friends of Kurdistan were sown during that trip.

Bell was disappointed to see how little support was being offered by Canada to the troubled region. One of her organization’s primary aims, she says, is to “build a relationship between Canadian professionals and institutions in Kurdistan.”

The organization also initiates micro-credit programs with women, many who lost their husbands during the Saddam regime, providing them with sewing machines, fabric and kits donated to Friends of Kurdistan. The equipment allows the women to possibly earn a living and provide clothing for themselves and their children.

Today, after taking four trips to Kurdistan, including the journey with the Belickis, Ball describes Kurdistan as a “stable, fledgling democracy, a ground-floor place to invest with plenty of opportunity.”

She says one of the pressing needs

is to help establish basic stability in day-to-day organization structure.

“They’re organizationally challenged” due to the tremendous brain drain that happened during the Saddam years, when many or most of their professionals and bureaucrats either left or were murdered.

“Now you have the people on top and the people at the bottom, with nothing in between.”

This legacy of lost human capital, along with the other deep challenges that burden the region, is why these Brock alums will continue to be involved with Kurdistan.



Amy Ball, left, meets with members of the Kurdish army.



Amy Ball looks over a scrapbook of her travels to Kurdistan.

They were still in North America, but when Brock students Mark Michalek and Kristen Harton arrived in New Orleans in late February, the term “culture shock” immediately sprang to both their minds.

Harton and Michalek were among 53 Brock students who spent reading week in New Orleans building a home for a family through Habitat for Humanity.

Five years after Louisiana’s largest city was devastated by hurricanes Katrina and then Rita, abandoned and rundown buildings are still common sights. Many have spray paint markers noting the date when rescuers reached the building. Other markings simply state “body found.”

Before the hurricanes hit, about half a million people lived in the Big Easy. Today the population is about 300,000, living in one of America’s poorest metropolitan areas.

The trip was organized by two of Brock’s residence life co-ordinators, Colin Ryrie (BA ’07) and Curtis Gadula. It was one of many

# Cleaning Up in the Big Easy

By Hans Niedermair

experiential learning with meaningful community service, encourages civic responsibility and engagement, and helps students become well rounded citizens beyond conventional academic measures.

“Service Learning projects have been gaining popularity,” Ryrie says, “and we thought it would be a great opportunity for students to help out and learn about themselves.”

Gadula, who also coaches Brock’s men’s and women’s cross-country teams, says he and Ryrie wanted students to visit a place where they would have a unique experience, and from where they could bring

something back. New Orleans was a natural.

“They’re in desperate need of help there,” says Gadula, “so we decided, why not?”

Even though students had to pay for the trip themselves, about 80 students hoped to go on the humanitarian journey, says Ryrie, but the bus only had room for 55 people.

“It’s great that they’d choose to do something like this rather than go somewhere to relax and enjoy the sun,” he says. “I was overwhelmed by the excitement and demand from the students here willing to give back.”

Service Learning projects underway at Brock this year.

Service Learning is essentially learning outside of the classroom. It typically combines



**Kristen Harton, left, and Meagan Buttler help build a home in New Orleans.**



**Fifty-three Brock students built a home during the week-long trip.**

In just four days, the students constructed a home from floor to roof, as well as doing some extra work on a few nearby houses. Ryrie was pleased about how much the students accomplished

for the family that will eventually live in that home.

"Everyone got a chance to do everything," says Harton, a first-year Biology student. "I built some floorboards and put up some walls, and we eventually got the tresses up for the roof."

"We all got to do a lot," says Michalek, who is in his fifth year of Business Communications. "I was surprised by how much responsibility they gave us."

The trip also saw plenty of new friendships forged between people who didn't know each other before the trip. "We spent a lot of time together," says Michalek, "and worked as a team toward a common goal."

But while Michalek says he "got to learn some real life skills and some practical construction stuff," he benefited most from the trip emotionally.

"Being in the city had a pretty profound effect on me. It is still a community in need. There were a number of times where we were explaining to the locals what we were doing there and they were very appreciative."

Ryrie says the trip allowed many of the students to put their lives into perspective as to how fortunate they are.

"It was a humbling experience for many of the students. It allowed them to appreciate what they have, being university students in Canada. They saw a lot of poor housing and poverty."

Every evening the group would reflect on the day's experiences and share their thoughts. The exercise "changed how they look at the world," Gadula says.

While they arrived too late for Mardi Gras, the students had no shortage of engagement in the Big Easy, sight-seeing and exploring the world-famous French Quarter.

But for most who took the trip, the most eye-opening part of their adventure was the trip to the Ninth Ward, the area that was smashed the hardest by Katrina, where every second or third house was deserted or in very poor shape.

The Brock entourage were startled by the sorry state of New Orleans caused not just by Katrina but also by years of grinding poverty.

"There was so much destruction," Gadula says. "What's it been, five years? Something's not adding up there."

But while it was sobering for the visitors to see so much poverty and hardship in a First World country, they left feeling good about what they had accomplished.

"One guy's shirt said, 'A small amount of work can make a great difference,'" Harton says. "We built a house in just four days, and I think we did make a difference. It was pretty amazing."



Mark Michalek: "We all got to do a lot."

# People at Brock

By Samantha Craggs

## “Dr. Freeze” steps into the national spotlight

It’s been quite a year for Stephen Cheung, associate professor of Physical Education and Kinesiology and the man known as Dr. Freeze.

A Canada Research Chair in Environmental Ergonomics, Cheung recently opened a lab that is the only one of its kind in North America. It has a specialized chamber that lets researchers simulate being trapped in Arctic tundra. It mimics the same conditions one would experience if he were dropped into freezing water, or in the military in extreme desert heat.

“This was part of what attracted me to take up the position here,” says Cheung, who was previously at Dalhousie University before coming to Brock in 2007. “I love the thrill of a new opportunity and a new idea.”

The specialized chamber in Cheung’s lab is one of only three in the world. It controls temperature, humidity and oxygen levels in varying degrees, which allows his team to study the impact on human physiology, either separately or in combined effects.

It simulates altitudes of up to 2,300 metres above sea level (the equivalent of Mexico City) and temperatures from -30 C to +50 C. His groundbreaking research findings will help develop safer protective clothing for firefighters, offshore oil workers, military personnel or those who work in Arctic environments.

Cheung has a personal interest in his research. His undergraduate degree was in oceanography, but it was his passion for cycling that brought him to Physical Education and Kinesiology. He often cycles to work, making the 17-kilometre ride from his home in Fonthill to the St. Catharines campus. He has a background in competitive racing, and has been science editor for [pezcyclingnews.com](http://pezcyclingnews.com) since 2002. He is writing a book on cycling science, tentatively titled *Cutting Edge Cycling*, scheduled for release during the Christmas season.

“It’s cycling that got me into this field,” he says, “and even more importantly, it’s how I met my wife.”

Cheung’s extreme climate lab was officially opened in October in a ceremony that involved several special guests, including Michèle Boutin, the new executive director of the Canada Research Chairs Secretariat, and Jac van Beek, vice-president, Programs and Planning, Canada Foundation for Innovation. But the greatest joy for him, he says, was getting to include his two young sons in the celebration.

A demonstration by his students during the event showed a large water tank in which the temperature can be adjusted from 8 C — “the temperature of the ocean on a very nice summer day” — to 46 C.

The lab drew broad media attention. He was interviewed on Canada AM where he was identified by his



Stephen Cheung, left, opened his St. Catharines campus lab with a ribbon cutting and this student-led demonstration.

Photo: Jerry Zolner



nickname, "Dr. Freeze"; featured on CTV National News; and was the subject of an episode of the Daily Planet program on Discovery Channel.

Cheung has also recently authored an environmental physiology textbook, *Advanced Environmental Exercise Physiology*, that was released in November 2009.

## Ian Brindle named as new Vice-President, Research

Ian Brindle (MSc '72), a renowned Brock scientist and scholar whose academic writing has appeared in more than 80 publications, has been named as the University's new Vice-President of Research.

Brindle, for years a driving force behind the increasing scope and stature of research at Brock, fills the vacancy left by Liette Vasseur, who is stepping down from the position to concentrate on her research work. She has an appointment as professor of Biological Sciences, and will teach and continue to do research.

In making the announcement, University President Jack Lightstone said Brindle's accomplishments and his reputation as a respected scientist make him an ideal leader for Brock's growing role in Canadian research.

"Ian has been one of the architects in bringing Brock to where it is today in terms of research capacity and leadership," said Lightstone, "so we are very pleased to have him accept the most senior role in research administration. We are also grateful for the effort Dr. Vasseur brought to the task during her time in the role."

In taking up the new post, Brindle will leave his position of Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Science, to which he was appointed in 2001. The Faculty's Associate Dean, Rick Cheel, has been appointed Interim Dean, and a decanal search will be initiated to fill the position.

Brindle's term will run through June 30, 2011.



Ian Brindle

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# Bricks and mortar: \$8.5 million

## Benefits to teaching and learning: priceless

By Joan Wiley

A bright and gleaming 20,000-square-foot extension of Robert S. K. Welch Hall, officially opened in January, has put a striking new public face on the home of Brock's Faculty of Education.

The new facility supports research at Brock by providing state-of-the-art learning facilities as well as informal spaces for students and faculty.

"The building's inspirational and innovative spaces, as well as its accessibility features, are all wonderful examples of a philosophy and plan being brought to life by many talented and committed individuals," said James Heap, Dean of the Faculty of Education, during the opening ceremonies.

The extension includes two faculty meeting rooms, a teaching assistants' office, a computer lab/suite for graduate students and 62 offices. A student lounge area is located at the lowest level along with new student spaces on each floor.

"The Faculty of Education now has a new visibility to those on campus, and to visitors," Heap says. "The building was designed to 'compel the mind, lift the spirit and touch the soul.' That is what education should do, and as a learning Faculty, I think that's part of our vision for instruction, scholarship and service. The extension motivates us to achieve what we value."

The new space also enhances the Faculty's graduate program, which is the largest

graduate program on campus.

The space "provides so many opportunities for better collaboration with other students and with faculty members for graduate students such as myself," said Danielle Beckett, PhD candidate in the Faculty of Education, during the opening ceremonies.

Final touches still need to be made on the extension. Artwork and display cases to house the creations of faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends will be added. Renovations in Welch Hall will provide a new science and math lab and music classroom, improve services from the instructional resource centre, enhance research capacity and improve offices so that they meet or exceed Facility Accessibility Design Standards.

The formal and informal learning spaces encourage students and faculty to interact and engage in the kind of conversations that lead to some of the best ideas and research discoveries, said Rudi Kroeker, Chair of Brock's Board of Trustees, during the official opening. Additional qualifications courses, he said, are also enhancing the skills of current teachers.

"This kind of support may not be visible to the broader community on a day-to-day basis," Kroeker said, "but I can tell you that they're making a difference to the front line of education right here in our community, in classrooms throughout the region."



James Heap

# New money arrives for grape and wine research

The federal government has injected \$1.45 million into Canada's grape and wine industry through research done by Brock's Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI) and the Grape Growers of Ontario.

Rick Dykstra (BA '97), Member of Parliament for St. Catharines, announced the funding Dec. 16 at a reception at Pond Inlet. The funding, which comes from the federal Developing Innovative Agri-Products program, will combine with funding from the grape and wine industry to form \$1.9 million in support of research at Brock.

"I think we'll see a return on this investment tenfold," Dykstra said.

The funding, gifted to the Grape Growers Marketing Board, will add two positions to CCOVI's research team. The scientists will work on priorities identified by the industry itself.

"Not only are we adding research expertise, but also much-needed outreach support for the grape and wine industry," CCOVI director Debbie Inglis told the audience.

A viticulturist will specialize in winter hardiness of grapes, and an oenologist will specialize in wine flavour chemistry, she said.

After some tough winters in recent years, winter hardiness is a major issue for growers, said Mattias Oppenlaender, chair of the Ontario Grape and Wine Research Inc. Solutions have implications for all cool-climate growers.

"By improving winter hardiness, we will be an economic driver across this country," he said.

The announcement, said President Jack Lightstone, is another example of the growing partnership between Brock and the community.

"This is an example of how we strive to take our knowledge and research out of the labs and into the fields and wineries."



Debbie Inglis

# Brock opens its wallets for Haiti relief

Haiti was devastated by an earthquake Jan. 12, and the Brock community responded by raising more than \$19,000 to help.

Students, staff and faculty held bake sales, samosa sales and silent auctions for the Canadian Red Cross. With the federal government's commitment to match money raised, that meant more than \$37,166.08 went to aid for the beleaguered Caribbean country.

In the capital of Port-au-Prince alone, more than 150,000 people were killed by the quake. The only appropriate response is compassion, and "to act on our compassion to the fullest degree," President Jack Lightstone said at a quiet memorial service at Brock on Jan. 26.

As part of the fundraising, professors Joffre Mercier, Fiona Hunter and Michael Bidochka (BSc '81) — all from Biological Sciences — played Irish music in the Schmon Tower lobby at noon. The performance raised more than \$400. Justice James Turnbull, a Hamilton-based Superior Court judge, also spoke at Brock as co-founder of The Joy and Hope of Haiti.

Overall, the month-long fundraiser was good on several levels, says John Kaethler (BA '74), director of International Services, which spearheaded campus efforts.

"In addition to fundraising, the group promoted awareness on campus of Haiti as a country rather than a crisis."

From left, Michael Bidochka, Fiona Hunter and Joffre Mercier



Expanding their horizons at Brock University has long been a family affair for the Schmid clan.

When Michael Schmid (BA '80) graduated, little did he know that his mother and daughter would also exam cram, make friends, walk the same grounds and get degrees on the same stage. The family is just one of many who choose Brock generation after generation.

Not that Michael was the first Schmid to attend Brock. His brother Dan (BA '71) started the tradition; brothers Leigh (BEd '81) and Glenn (BA '86) would follow.

# All in the family

By Lorie Murdoch

degree. A defining moment for all at the ceremony came when three-year old Christopher proudly exclaimed, "That's my mom!"

A year later, they had a daughter, Michaella (BA '09), who followed her parents to Brock, as did two more brothers. Michaella's not finished; she plans to go to teacher's college when her newborn son is a little older.

The same year Therese graduated, the Schmid family custom of attending Brock got waved back a whole generation when Michael's mother, Charlotte (BA '94), headed to the lecture halls to study French and German. After seeing her own children graduate, it was her time.

"At the age of 72 she marched up onto the stage along with the rest of her peers and accepted her degree," says Michael. "This was certainly a lifetime dream that was achieved with her entire family watching. I still remember my father's look of pride as he watched her walk across the stage."

When his father Auguste E. Schmid, who had been a Brock employee in Facilities Management, died in 1995, Michael and his siblings set up a student bursary in his honour. "It's a gift that keeps on giving," says Michael.

Another story of multiple generations being lured to Brock starts with the University's associate director of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. For Charlotte Sheridan (BA '02; MEd '06), the learning experience was concurrent

In 1976, Michael left McMaster University for a more comfortable setting. "Brock was a smaller university and had a much more personal feel to it," says the life-long Niagara Falls resident.

"I liked the hands-on programs. It was the start of my accounting career, which led me to the Canada Revenue Agency where I've worked for the past 20 years.

"And my girlfriend was about to start there."

Schmid and his girlfriend, Therese Meehan (BA '86), were married in 1979. The year before, she had accepted a full-time job from her part-time employer and become an after-hours student. Eight years and two sons later, she got her



Three generations of the Schmid family — including, from left, Michaella, Charlotte, Michael and Therese — have attended Brock.

Photo: Bob Tymczyszyn

her youngest son Warren (BA '99; BA '00) and his wife, Marnie (BRLS '00; BEd '01).

"Warren, Marnie and I attended classes together," she says. "As an undergrad, I thought it was cool to attend lectures with my kids." And this was after her oldest son Michael (BA '95) and his wife Jennifer (BSc '95) had already graduated.

The ambitious mom applied to Brock in 1995 as a mature student while working for the Ontario government.

"I remember when I started," says Sheridan, "I had to take a math or computer science course as an elective. Thank goodness geography qualified, so I took that. I piled the books on the kitchen table and thought, 'Who am I kidding? I can't do this!'"

Warren stepped in: "Yes, you can, Mom. I will help you." By 2006, with the help of her family, she had a BA and a Masters under her belt.

Last year, Sheridan got her Certified Personal Trainer certification through Brock, and is a certified spinning instructor at the school.

"I am a life-long learner," says the Vineland resident. The 59-year-old grandmother plans to pass on the passion to her four grandsons. "You can say there are four more Brock students on the way," she laughs.

A zeal for Brock also runs in the family of Roelof Makken (BA '85), who is still associated with Brock as a Board of Trustee member and part-time professor.

He recalls a life-altering phone call he received from the University that set him on a path to his corporate and investment-banking career. He had run into trouble getting into a Canadian university with his diploma from a Dutch high school. Then Brock stepped up to the plate. Brock officials said they could process the file if he gave them 48 hours to review it, then "they did it within 24."

"Brock's registrar office was different," he says. "I vividly remember the call: I could start the next September."

His courses prepared him for grad school in Belgium. "Leuven is a demanding university and Brock provided me with the tools to succeed. Upon graduation, I got my dream job in corporate and investment banking," says the energetic and multilingual founding partner of Tern Analytics in Etobicoke.

His sister, Arendina (BA '92), took her cue from his experience and followed in his footsteps. "She loves to travel," says Makken, "and works for Tern when she's not at her job as an assistant flight director for Air Transat."

These three alumni families all cite similar attractions that drew them to Brock: its growth, its cutting-edge programs and the fact that it still offers camaraderie despite its expansion.

"The University is so much bigger," says Makken, "but fortunately it still has the warm, small-school feeling. There is a commitment to build on the strengths, intensify and invest in relatively small departments — the bioscience building comes to mind."

Sheridan agrees.

"In the early '90s, Brock became a real competitor," she says. "We now have world renowned research, and the (Niagara Health and Bioscience Research Complex) is going up."

Michael Schmid and his brothers chose Brock for its progressiveness.

"It was up-and-coming, developing a good reputation," he says. "It was an exciting time to be there. It adds programs as the need arises. They're recognized nationally, and it is located in one of the best areas of the entire country."



Charlotte Sheridan and her sons Warren, left, and Mike all attended Brock.

When 26-year-old Sociology major Michelle Kieda began her third year at Brock University this year, she was unsure of what came next.

What direction would her career take? What steps did she need to employ? The questions continued unabated. That is, until Kieda took part in Mentorship Plus, a new program jointly organized by Brock's Career Services and Alumni Relations. In its first year, the initiative proved a vital piece in Kieda's career puzzle.

An academic matchmaking service of sorts, Mentorship Plus aligns undergraduates with mentors from the alumni community. It helps students with life's transitions, says program co-ordinator Jackie Crawford (BA '98).

The years studying at Brock are "an important time of self-awareness and development," says Crawford.

Whether assisting with challenges of everyday student life or the shift from university to career and the age-old query "what am I going to do with my life", the program is a welcome respite.

For Kieda, it meant helping her see things more clearly.

"The experience has given me focus and helped me talk out

# Advice for life

## New program lets alums share their knowledge with Brock students

By Elisa Birnbaum

all the ideas I had floating in my head," Kieda says. "It gave me a sounding board, another person to give me insight."

Aside from career advice, her generous mentor also put her in touch with a number of important contacts. "It's been good," she says.

To get started on the path to mentorship, students choose from a list of available mentors. Each is described in detail, from their academic degrees to chosen careers and interests. The selections are based on a number of factors, says Crawford. Mentors with similar academic profiles are often the most compelling criteria, but others look to career paths hoping to learn from experiences in the field. Such was the case with Kieda.

"I was looking for someone working in the non-profit area because most of my interests lie there," she says.

Once the match-up is complete, an agreement is arranged outlining such terms as how often they'll meet (typically twice a month), when they'll communicate over email (usually once a week) and the focus of the mentorship.

As for Kieda, it was immediately obvious her chosen mentor, Angie Kerr (BSc '94, BA '96), was the right fit. Turns out, the feeling was mutual.

"The match worked," Kerr says. "She's looking for a career in an area I know a lot about and I hope she's finding it helpful to hear how it works in the real world."

Kerr has worked for more than 10 years at the Heart and Stroke Foundation, where she is currently regional manager. "My main priority is to coach others to success," she says.

But coaching with Mentorship Plus is distinct.

"I have the opportunity to practice coaching skills in a different way that I think helps me be a better coach in my job and be a better friend and mom," she says.

Of course, even mentors need guidance and alums receive their fair share. Mentorship Plus begins with training



Angie Kerr, left, guides Michelle Kieda through career advice and job interviews.

sessions and participants receive orientation materials, including a list of probing questions to ask their prodigies.

"Students don't always know what they want out of the program," says Kerr, "and questions help." The support has proven valuable, thanks to a dedicated Mentorship Plus team and fellow alum, Rena Posteraro (BA '98, MEd '05).

Posteraro's Brock ties run deep, having received an undergraduate and graduate degree from Brock and a seat on the Brock University Alumni Association board of directors. She wrote her Master's thesis on mentoring, a topic close to her heart. In her day-to-day job at Niagara College, she helps entrepreneurs launch new businesses.

Posteraro agreed to use her skills and knowledge to get Mentorship Plus up and running. Having developed a mentor-training module for her thesis, she implemented a similar process for Brock. Looking back at the program's evolution, Posteraro is proud of its accomplishments.

"It's really a great program," she says. "It keeps graduates connected to alumni and the community, which helps further their careers."

She has taken on three of her own mentees since the program's pilot year in 2008. Her current prodigy is 22-year-old Julia Kropelit, a fourth-year-student in a dual degree business program in co-operation with European Business School in Oestrich-Winkel, Germany. Considering Posteraro's background in business and mentorship, choosing her as a mentor was a no-brainer, Kropelit says.

Learning from other people's experience is essential to being a mentee, Kropelit explains.

"It's about receiving constructive feedback, someone saying, 'Why don't you try this or that?'"

The relationship soon evolved into a unique opportunity. Rather than focus strictly on academic concerns, Posteraro helped her mentee organize Brock's run at the

Harvard World Model United Nations Conference in Taipei this March. Providing Kropelit with fundraising contacts, planning advice and other assistance, Posteraro is an invaluable asset.

Kropelit is thankful for her mentor's flexibility — "She saw what was most important to me now and helps me there" — and says her experience tells her that there's something in Mentorship Plus for everyone.

Posteraro agrees.

"It's nice the University sees value in helping students connect with their alumni," she says. "It's an honour to be a part of it."



Photo: Bob Tymczyshyn

**Want to join the growing roster of mentors? Fill out the online application form at [brocku.ca/career-services](http://brocku.ca/career-services) or email Jackie Crawford at [mentoring@brocku.ca](mailto:mentoring@brocku.ca). Group mentoring is also available. And for those who enjoy online mentoring, new software will allow for a better electronic experience.**

**The time commitment is two to four hours per month from September to April, plus training during the Summer/Fall semester. Volunteers also attend two or three Mentorship Plus events throughout the year.**

# Revisiting the art of the essay

By Kevin Grout (BA '96)

Essay. The very word can strike fear in the hearts of students from every discipline.

Much to the relief of those students, a group of Brock alums have devised a program to assist with the process of tackling the oft-dreaded assignment.

Essay-Zone has been developed by staff in Brock's Student Development Centre (SDC) to teach students to write essays that are well organized, researched and effective.

It uses techniques that students already embrace – flashy graphics, interactive cut-and-paste options, and fun prompts – to assist them with the process.

"We developed the program to work with advantages only provided by an electronic medium," says Jill Brindle, learning skills manager.

"The result is a fun, engaging tool that is directed at a higher learning level. Students and faculty members, from first-year to the graduate level, love it."

Brindle (BA '72, BEd '78) developed Essay Zone with fellow alums and SDC staffers Margaret Groombridge (BA '06, BEd '07) and Philipp Lesmana (BSc '01, BBA '04, MBA '06). Jesse Barraza (BSc '06) assists with licensing and outreach, since the program is now garnering so much interest from institutions outside of Brock. After a demonstration of Essay-Zone in a webinar for North American academics in 2009, inquiries started flooding in.

"The program has been wildly successful at Brock for several months," says Barraza. "However, we've recently been in touch with schools across Canada and the U.S. and just reached our first agreement with City University of Hong Kong."

Brindle points out two key benefits of the online tool – its self-directed nature, and the ease of access. "There is lots of personalization" within the program, allowing "shy students to engage and be self-driven, where they might not normally participate in a classroom setting," Brindle says. Because the tool is

online, it also allows students to access it wherever — and perhaps more importantly, whenever — they want it.

Faculty members have also hailed the program.

"The opportunity this has afforded my students and myself has been unbelievable," said one professor. "I teach first-year students, and the use of the online tutorial along with the quizzes has allowed them to have a reality check regarding their needed skills and competencies in writing at the university level."



From left, student Jessica McDowall, Jill Brindle, Margaret Groombridge, Philipp Lesmana and Jesse Barraza check out Essay Zone.

The success of Essay-Zone, which is primarily geared for undergraduate students, has led the team to start looking at creating a high-school version.

"The feedback we've been getting is that this is very beneficial for first-year students. Imagine if we can provide a resource for high-school students that would better prepare them for the rigors of university life?" says Groombridge, a learning skills instructor in the SDC.

In fact, the group is planning on a number of resources to accompany Essay-Zone, all under the umbrella of a collective called Academic-Zone.

"You'll just have to wait and see what we come up with next," says Brindle.

If the success of Essay-Zone has been any indication, the hits should keep on coming.

See more at [academic-zone.com](http://academic-zone.com)



# Isaac Brock Wants You

## Save these 2010 dates

- Alumni Association Annual Golf Tournament – Saturday, Sept. 11
- Alumni Reunion Weekend – Sept. 17-19
  - Alumni Pub Night – Friday, Sept. 17
  - Reunion Station – Saturday, Sept. 18
  - Cameo Club Reception and Dinner – Saturday, Sept. 18
- Visit [brockpeople.ca](http://brockpeople.ca) for details

## Networking events

Brock alumni networks are gathering across the country. Check out [brockpeople.ca](http://brockpeople.ca) for upcoming events in Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver, Victoria and more.



Beer Tasting event at The Labatt Pub



Brock alumni reunite at Reunion Station



Day at the Races at Woodbine Racetrack

17

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**Brock**

# Game on: Athletes build a reputation, and a community

By Bill Potrecz

When men's basketball coach Ken Murray (BPhEd '76) began his coaching career at Brock University more than two decades ago, he often used a standard opening line when recruiting athletes.

"I used to tell them who I was and then asked them if they knew where Brock was," says Murray, who began his career behind the bench in 1989.

Even as recently as 20 years ago, Brock athletics were confined to the athletes who played them and a handful of faithful followers.

All that changed in 1991-92, when both the men's basketball team and men's wrestling teams won Canadian championships within a two-week span. Suddenly, Brock athletics were on the map.

"I think our former president David Atkinson said it best when he said the best thing that ever happened to Brock was when we won the national championship in 1992," says Murray, who also led the Badgers to a second national title in 2007-08. "It raised the whole visibility of the University. We were now known nation-wide."

Lorne Adams, director of athletics, makes no bones about it. Winning championships buys Brock attention it could never afford to pay for.

"Winning national championships increases our coverage," Adams says. "If you look in our gym, I think we have 80 (championship) banners and we are ranked fifth in Ontario in the number of championships won in the last decade.

"I think they portray a sense of excellence and universities are about excellence."

Winning championships are great, but to increase visibility long-term, an institution must also become partners within the community. On this count as well, Brock has hit a home run.

Through a variety of programs and hard work by coaches and athletes from all 25 varsity sports teams, the Badgers are well known throughout Niagara.



Photo: Bob Tymczyszyn

Coach Ken Murray, left, and Lorne Adams: With the University's athletic success, people no longer ask where Brock is located.

Brock athletes participate in a variety of programs, such as the Winning For Life Program at high school and elementary schools and the Impact Program where athletes work with at-risk youths.

Many volunteer their time at school-sponsored summer and sports camps. For the last two Christmases, Brock athletes have adopted a family from Gillian's Place, a shelter for women and children who have fled abusive relationships.

One way for alumni to hop on the athletics bandwagon is to participate in the Adopt a Badger program.

Athletes can be sponsored — family and friends often donate in the name of their favourite athlete — with 100 per cent of the money going to the respective sport.

The Brock cheerleading squad has raised \$20,000 through the program, while another team has raised \$10,000.

Adams, who clearly takes pride in the leadership shown by Brock's athletic ambassadors, is amazed at how well they interact with the community, particularly the children.

"Those kids look up to our athletes," says Adams. "I'm not sure what it is about Brock athletes that catch their eye.

"There are really significant life changes from those at-risk youth just from being around our athletes once a week."

## Walker and Nay named 2009-10 Brock Athletes of the Year

The 2009-10 Brock University Male and Female Athletes of the Year are baseball player Mike Walker and women's rower Kaitlin Nay.

Walker and Nay join an elite group as Walker becomes just the second baseball player in school history to be named Athlete of the Year, while Nay becomes the third women's rower in the program's history to receive this honour.

Walker, a fifth-year Financial Economics major, had one of the best offensive seasons in OUA baseball history during the 2009-10 season.

He led the OUA in four offensive categories including hitting (.468; 29-for-62), on-base percentage (.620), slugging percentage (.580) and triples (two). He tied the OUA record for consecutive hit streak registering a hit in 16 of 18 regular season contests. He also scored 12 times and drove in 10 runs.

Walker became the fourth Brock player to receive the OUA most valuable hitter award. He was also named an OUA first-team all-star for the second time in his career.

Over his five-year career with the Badgers, Walker batted .325 (138-for-425) with 33 doubles, five triples and three homeruns. He also registered 76 RBI and 26 stolen bases. In the Brock career record books he ranks in the Top 10 in six offensive categories.

He was also the president of the Brock University Athlete Council in 2009-10 where the council doubled the Dallas Beaton Award Scholarship and helped raise over \$2,000 for Breast Cancer Awareness.

Nay, a fourth-year Business Communications major, stroked the Brock Lightweight women's 8+ and Lightweight women's 4+ crews during the 2009-10 season.

At the 2009 OUA Championships, she led her team to a silver-medal finish, the best in school history. She was selected as an OUA first team All-Star after leading her crews to double gold in the lightweight women's 8+ and lightweight women's 4+.

At the 2009 Canadian University Rowing Championships she was selected as a first team All-Canadian after leading the Lightweight Women's 4+ to gold.

At the 127th Royal Canadian Henley Regatta last August, Nay also captured a career best five gold medals. The "Quest for Gold" carded athlete was a member of the 2009 Rowing Canada Crew of the Year.

## Social media steps out at Brock

For Brock to really reach students and alumni, it has to go where the new generation is spending its time. These days, that is the world of social media.

Facebook, YouTube and Twitter are buzzwords around Brock this year. The University hired its first-ever social media co-ordinator, James Cooper (BSc '01), in the fall. Video of University events is regularly uploaded to Brock's official YouTube channel. Photos are promptly uploaded to Flickr.

"Social media allows us to have two-way communication with students and alums," Cooper says. "The opportunities are limitless."

### Ways to connect with Brock:

- [facebook.com/brockuniversity](https://facebook.com/brockuniversity)
- [bit.ly/brockalumni-facebook](https://bit.ly/brockalumni-facebook)
- [twitter.com/brockuniversity](https://twitter.com/brockuniversity)
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- [linkedin.com/companies/brock-university](https://linkedin.com/companies/brock-university)

## Brock launches new online news site

Brock has launched an interactive news site that allows alumni, employees and the world to know the latest news at the University.

*The Brock News*, located at [brocku.ca/brocknews](http://brocku.ca/brocknews), is updated daily with news about research, funding announcements, fundraising events and other stories of interest to Brock readers. Recent items include an

interview with a Brock alumna who participated in the 2010 Olympic Games, and the University's selection as the host of a Fulbright scholarship.

For about 40 years, *The Brock News* was a print publication distributed twice monthly to Brock faculty and staff. Moving it online was greener, less expensive and more timely, says Kevin Cavanagh, associate director of Communications and Public Affairs. Increasingly, he says, people prefer to get their news online.

"The need to relate significant information in a timely manner dictates that we communicate it more often than twice a month," he says.

To get email update of *The Brock News*, visit the site and click "subscribe by email" in the top left-hand corner.

## Surgit-E! keeps alumni informed

Brock's bi-monthly alumni electronic newsletter, *Surgit-E!*, also continues to keep alumni up to date on what's happening at the University.

Each edition features University news stories, alumni news and updates, and year-round alumni event information. The Business@Brock edition of *Surgit-E!* is available for Brock

Business graduates. In addition to University news stories, Business@Brock features Faculty of Business alumni news and updates and Faculty-specific news stories and networking opportunities.

Subscribe to *Surgit-E!* or the Business@Brock edition of *Surgit-E!* to keep in touch with your alma mater. If you would like to subscribe to *Surgit-E!* or Business@Brock, or if you have an interesting story idea or content suggestion, please email [alumni@brocku.ca](mailto:alumni@brocku.ca)



James Cooper



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Dates: November 4–18, 2010  
Price: estimated from \$3695 U.S. per person based on double occupancy

For information contact the Edutavel office at 905-688-5550 x4769 or email [edutavel@brocku.ca](mailto:edutavel@brocku.ca)

# The last word

Brock students and alumni experienced the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver in February. Here are two stories from the frontlines.

## Keesha Dorosz-Rosario (BA '99)

I absolutely fell more in love with Canada during those two weeks. As a Vancouverite for the last 8+ years, I was blown away by the amount of spirit, energy, heartfelt compassion and true patriotism that surrounded me from different events, from the events to the pavilions to the city streets.

It shed light on the fact that we truly need to act with good faith and hearts to everyone all the time, not just on special occasions. The city of Vancouver will be forever changed and transformed after this historical moment in history.

As a spectator in every capacity, I was able to enjoy the Olympics in so many situations with diverse groups of people. I watched Olympic events with other non-profit board members at the Price Waterhouse Coopers Executive Lounge, took my senior Rotarian friend Des to experience Pavilions and learned more about our West Coast culture and our Four Host Nations. With free concerts, including Our Lady Peace, and parties in the Heineken and Irish houses, communities from all over the world collaborated in friendship.

In two weeks, I met hundreds of people from different walks of life. I attended the ING Direct Café with our sustainability-minded individuals, shared in the spirit with friends, with children, with seniors, with my local Rotary club, with city councils, and attended community events with organizations that support the areas in which we live.

It was a feeling similar to the warm gathering of friends at Brock University. The Vancouver 2010 Olympics took this to a whole new level.

I am a Brock Badger. And - I am one PROUD Vancouver Canadian!

## Scott Jones (BRLS '98)

I was working in Venue Management at Whistler Olympic Park in Whistler, B.C. Whistler Olympic Park is our Nordic Sports Venue and served as the host for biathlon, cross country skiing, ski jump, and Nordic combined. It is located in the Callaghan Valley just south of Whistler Village. Just five years ago, it was nothing more than a heavily wooded area where you had to bushwack with leather gloves through thick vegetation just to try and get near where today's venue is currently situated.

For more than a year, it was a bustling construction site with more than 300 people per day on venue preparing to welcome the world. And now, with the Olympics, we have three full stadiums built with impressive bleachers that will welcome more than 15,000 spectators each day to take in the excitement. Now that the Olympic and Paralympic Games are over, the venue will transform and become both a training facility for future Olympians, as well as serve as recreational trails for the public to use.

The very first gold medal of the Vancouver Games was awarded on our venue in the ski jump before the opening ceremonies even took place. Whistler Olympic Park is also the only venue that hosted some sort of competition every day of the Games.

I got to work with people from all over the world. Our Venue general manager was a two-time Olympian in cross country from Norway. There were also several former World Cup athletes serving as sport managers. Staff hailing from Switzerland, Italy, England, Finland, U.S.A., Australia, Tazmania, Scotland, and Sweden were all a vital part of our daily operations which makes from some great stories, a wealth of experience, and fun times.



Keesha Dorosz-Rosario, left, with friends at the Vancouver Olympics

How did I get here you might wonder? Well, after I graduated from Brock, I continued on to get my graduate degree in the U.S.A. in Sport Management. I stayed down there for 10 years, working in the recreation and sports industry before returning to Canada in 2008. I served as the Director of Sport for the 2009 World Police and Fire Games, hosted in Vancouver and Whistler this past summer, which eventually led to my position with Vancouver Olympic Committee at Whistler Olympic Park as the Venue Operations Co-ordinator. I was lucky enough to have the opportunity in my position to work with all the different functional areas on the venue: Everything from overlay to logistics, technology, security, transportation, broadcast, snow clearing, avalanche crew, results and timing, and sport production. It has

been a tremendous learning experience and a wonderful opportunity to get an inside look at how such a massive operation moves towards its goal. It's unbelievable to think about the amount of planning and co-ordination that went into hosting these Games over the last several years. And it was very exciting when the Games started and everyone got to see the results of their efforts.

If any fellow Badgers are coming out to enjoy B.C., I hope you have a wonderful experience. Vancouver and Whistler are both great places to visit.

I haven't been back to campus since I graduated, but I have checked in online every so often and I bet I wouldn't even recognize the place any more. Thankfully I still carry hundreds of great memories of my four years at Brock.



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