



ALUMNI PROFILE

MEESHA TANNA '06

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—Meesha Tanna

When one Grade 5 student began attending tutoring sessions at alumna Meesha Tanna's Start Smart Learning Centre, she was so shy she could barely whisper her name. Seven months later, after weekly one-on-one sessions, she now bounds into Meesha's office each week proudly sharing news of her academic successes.

It is moments like this that confirm for 25-year-old Meesha that the learning community she has created is on the right track. The centre has been open for nine months and Meesha's positive attitude and determination have created an inclusive and respectful learning space where students of all ages can flourish.

The individualized approach to teaching and the strong feeling of community she experienced while attending The York School greatly influenced Meesha's philosophy for the learning centre. She believes that every student learns differently, and remembers how teachers at The York School spent time with her early in the morning and after school to make sure she not only understood the course material but also felt confident about her work.

The relationships Meesha formed with her teachers, many of whom she is still in contact with, strengthened the sense of community she felt and made her enjoy learning. She feels lucky to have had teachers who went above and beyond the call of duty, and who cared enough to help her do well and celebrate her successes. It is her hope that her students will feel as welcome and comfortable at the learning centre as she did during her six years at The York School.

After high school Meesha went to Wilfrid Laurier University and earned a degree in Communications Studies. Following that she attended Nipissing University and received a Bachelor of Education in the Primary/Junior Division. She has also completed her Special Education Additional Qualification Part I and her English as a Second Language Qualification Part I. Now, with 28 students enrolled, two teachers on staff and more calls coming in every day, Meesha is the director of a blossoming business where she tries to bring the skills she has learned and the sense of belonging she felt at The York School.

"No two students are the same and I try to differentiate all my lessons based on a student's need," she says.

Although Meesha individualizes lessons she makes sure there is always a communal and fun atmosphere at the learning centre. Displayed prominently on the wall is a colourful chart covered in shiny stickers. Each one is significant to individual students; Meesha awards them to students who attend a tutoring session, but also for other learning accomplishments. When students reach 20 stickers they receive a small prize. The friendly competition this incentive programme fosters is great to observe because it shows that students are engaged and care about improving, says Meesha.

"I think education is the most important aspect of life and I want to see my students succeed and improve. It's great to see them challenge themselves and progress," she says.

With each session Meesha becomes increasingly excited about the growth of her learning centre and is honoured to be a part of her students' educational journeys.