

# INSIDE BUSINESS

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For the Calgary Herald

The new addition to Master's Academy and College features big windows and wide-open classrooms.

## Master's Academy excels both inside and outside



**DAVID PARKER**  
AROUND TOWN

Master's Academy and College of Calgary has been developing its learning model called Profound Learning since 1997, a compelling vision for educational transformation developed under the leadership of founder **Tom Rudmik**.

In his book *Becoming Imaginal: Seeing and Creating the Future of Education*, Rudmik says: "Essentially Master's has invented a core structure that enables the shift from the factory model of education to a model that is personalized for every student. An experience through which students can track their personal development in who they are uniquely becoming."

It has proved to be very successful as the academy is ranked No. 4 in the province by the Fraser Institute. And Profound Learning has proved to be very beneficial in many other parts of the world where Rudmik has been invited to share his vision; he has partnered with school districts in Nigeria, Brazil, the U.S. and Australia.

He recognizes that although there are many caring people in the current system who try to improve it, students are still expected to conform, comply, meet the standards and pass the tests. When he founded Master's, Rudmik was more interested in not only helping them reach a top academic performance but also to think, create and be innovators.

In 1997, Master's Academy and College purchased the former

elementary school at the military base on the east side of Crowchild Trail from Canada Lands. Two years later, it built an addition which Rudmik admits was poorly designed.

It recently completed another addition but this one was designed with new learning experiences in mind. Before Riddell Kurczaba Architecture put pen to paper, senior associate **Peter Schulz** spent a good deal of time at the school and with Rudmik and the teachers to gain an understanding of the expectations.

The result of looking at teaching spaces differently has provided large classrooms where on my tour I watched some 60 students together, under the guidance of three teachers, eagerly working in small clusters of half-dozen on projects that took all of their attention. They were all engrossed in a learning adventure.

Walls were blown out, open common areas built and the new two-storey structure has plenty of large windows that allow for lots of light. No little wooden desks are to be found in the classrooms; instead they are furnished with round tables and chairs — although in the classrooms I slipped into most of the kids were sitting on the carpeted floor with laptops on their laps.

From the outside, the original building of red brick and small windows contrasts to the new glass-faced structure.

Schulz says he was asked to make it inviting and an exciting influence on students, a design that carries throughout the interiors with colourful paints, wide hallways and inter-connecting classrooms.

Rudmik is passionate about his new learning model and says he is encouraged by governments

opening the door to new high school design.

Currently he has a visiting educator from Nigeria who has enrolled her daughter in a classroom environment like the real world she will face. Interest in the learner-centric model whose signature is innovation and creativity has made Master's Academy and College an internationally acclaimed school.

**Jhamily Estrada** moved to Calgary from Winnipeg in 2009 and worked with KPMG and as a controller with an oil and gas service company before accepting a contract position with the YMCA.

She became a full-time staffer in March of this year in the position of controller and now has been elevated to the role of chief financial officer at the YMCA, overseeing a team of eight.

Currently YMCA Calgary, under the leadership of president and CEO **Helene Weir**, runs four city facilities plus Camp Chief Hector, requiring around 800 full- and part-time staff. Three new facilities are to be added before 2020.

Rotary Club of Calgary is moving to the Bank & Baron Pub on Stephen Avenue Walk for its Oct. 29 fundraising event in support of its international programs that include providing food, shelter, clothing and education to more than 500 AIDS orphans in Uganda.

The dinner and auction is open to all Calgarians.

DAVID PARKER APPEARS TUESDAY, THURSDAY AND FRIDAY. READ HIS COLUMNS ONLINE AT CALGARYHERALD.COM/BUSINESS. HE CAN BE REACHED AT 403-830-4622 OR E-MAIL INFO@DAVIDPARKER.CA