

# One School for Generations of Learning:

## The VanBodegom Family's Journey With Hamlin Robinson School

Parents of children with dyslexia or with other language-related learning difficulties know the struggle that daily life can be for their child. For Margaret Ann VanBodegom watching her son, Chip, grapple with the traditional public school system in the face of his learning disability, was almost too much to bear. "We were told [he] had no good means of learning," remembers Margaret Ann. "I was panicking about what to do." That was when she found The Slingerland Institute, and, eventually, HRS.

### Discovering Hamlin Robinson School



Chip VanBodegom  
1983

In 1982, Chip VanBodegom, was seven years old and about to start Second Grade. "We wanted Chip to be in a school where he was considered normal, not challenging," says Margaret Ann. "But at that time, there just wasn't much out there."

Margaret Ann connected with the Slingerland Institute and knew she was on the right path. With persistence and dedication, she got Chip on the waiting list to be in a Hamlin Robinson School classroom. Things just got better from there.

When recalling her first impressions of HRS, Margaret Ann lets out a long breath, as if reliving the moment: "I felt so relieved," she says. "Chip's prior schools were not very accepting. But Hamlin Robinson School was so very kind to him. They also seemed to know this was a traumatic moment for both parent and child."

The learning successes that Chip and all HRS students experience are due in large part because of the environment of ac-

ceptance at the school. Students are not only taught ways to function academically, they are taught to consider and accept the unique qualities within every person. Being part of the Hamlin Robinson Community would be a life lesson that Chip would pass onto his son.

### From One Generation to the Next

When Schuyler VanBodegom, at age six, was struggling in public school kindergarten, his grandmother, Margaret Ann suggested he be tested for dyslexia. Like his father, Schuyler needed help with his learning difficulties. When the time came to choose the best place for Schuyler to attend school, Margaret Ann says, "There was nothing to consider: Hamlin Robinson School. We didn't have to think about it."

Schuyler is now in the Fifth Grade at HRS and he loves it. The diverse population of the students, the small class sizes and the well-trained, deeply empathetic teachers all contribute to a learning environment that truly benefits all. Margaret Ann says that one only needs to visit the morning assembly to witness the wonderful way HRS brings out the strengths and talents of each individual at the school.



Schuyler VanBodegom  
2007

With a sense of pride and happiness in her voice, Margaret Ann remarks, "Schuyler is very, very proud to be in the same school that his dad went to."

### Contributing to Robinson School's Future

Over the years Margaret Ann has continued to support HRS. One of the meaningful ways in which she contributes is to make a donation to the school in remembrance of a loved one's passing. "I just began to think *flowers don't last*," says Margaret Ann. "I wanted a way to express my condolences that would make a difference. Not only that, [the school] is worthy of the money—they know where best to use it to their advantage." Hamlin Robinson School sends a lovely card to the family, telling them that a gift has been given in their loved one's name.

Of course there's no crystal ball we can look into to know what the next twenty-five years will bring. But at Hamlin Robinson School, we're confident that children with dyslexia or other learning difficulties will be nurtured and inspired in our classrooms for many generations to come. When asked if she thought HRS would be around for another VanBodegom generation, Margaret Ann answered very seriously, "Oh yes. It's going to last."

# Legacy