

TSAW WASSEN

LIVING

MEET AVIS GLAZE

leader, mentor, educator

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We are pleased to introduce you to this month's cover story featuring Avis Glaze!

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If you haven't yet had the pleasure, I am so pleased for you to meet Avis Glaze.

Avis Glaze was born in Jamaica, to a family of five and moved to Tsawwassen some 13 years ago, when she got married to her husband, Peter, a long-time Tsawwassen resident. "Tsawwassen is one of Canada's gems - friendly and welcoming. Many see Tsawwassen as an ideal place to live, work, raise children and retire - myself included". To know Avis, is to know her deep-rooted passion and life calling for education and mentorship.

"My early education was in Jamaica". At age 11, Avis went to a prestigious all-girls high school, then to Church Teacher's College, and later the University of the West Indies. "In retrospect, I do believe that my education in Jamaica can be described as a world-class education - preparing me with the academic, interpersonal and leadership skills, and the self-confidence

to compete anywhere in the world". She later came to the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto, where she completed not one, but two master of education programs and a doctorate in education. "I taught in Jamaica and later was a lecturer at Church Teacher's College before coming to Canada". In Ontario, Avis worked at all levels of the education system: as a classroom teacher, guidance counselor, special education teacher, school administrator, superintendent of schools and Director of Education. "When Premier McGuinty took over, he wanted a strong focus on education. I was appointed to establish the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat to drive change and improve student achievement".

"I also served as Education Commissioner and Senior Adviser to the Minister of Education. I have had the good fortune of working with educators in some 50 jurisdictions worldwide, serving as Adviser to New Zealand and International Adviser to Scotland, a position that I still hold".

"To be honest, my travels have been mostly job-related. I am morbidly afraid of flying. I can't believe I worked with educators and policy makers in over 50 jurisdictions worldwide. Even one Air Canada Captain came from the cockpit to convince me of how safe flying is. I thanked him and assured him I knew the statistics very well, but that the knowledge doesn't alter my fear of flying".

"Before beginning my consulting career after retirement from my

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full time job in Ontario, I did reviews of schools and education systems as well as serving as an International Education Adviser to countries. One highlight was to be invited to Norway by Queen Sonja to address her principals”.

When asked about her involvement in the community, personal hobbies she enjoys and organizations she holds close to heart, the list wasn't short! “I enjoy reading, writing, gardening and cooking, but am passionate about my volunteer work, such as serving on Beedie Luminaries Advisory Board and the Rotary Club of Ladner. Seeking out, mentoring and counseling students, and pointing them towards scholarship opportunities to help support further education. My philosophy in life is to “Lift others as you climb” and to “give back as much or more than you have received, recognizing that altruism, philanthropy and volunteerism are key to community building and development.” As citizens, we have a responsibility to ensure that Canada continues to be one of the best places in the world in which to live. As a mature democracy, we cannot rest on our laurels. We must each seek to replicate the democracy we enjoy”.

“I've had the privilege of living in Tsawwassen for thirteen years, my neighbors and considerate, caring, friendly, community-oriented and welcoming of newcomers. I remember when I moved here years ago, I was grocery shopping when the produce manager, welcomed me with a smile. “You are new here” he said. “Where are you from? If there is anything you want me to get for you, let me know.” I said, “What about plantain? He said, “Come back in two weeks and I will have



some for you.” I have been buying my plantain there since then.

I consider my family to include those I mentor - A few years ago, I went to a function in Toronto. A young Black student played the violin masterfully - and with such aplomb! I was so impressed I went backstage to seek him out and invited him to play at my wedding, which I was planning at the time. I invited him to come to my home with his violin so we could choose the music. I had the usual treats for him that students receive when they come to my home. As I walked with him to his car, he looked at me and said, “Miss Glaze, you don't seem to remember me.” “Remind me, where did we meet? I asked. “I received one of your scholarships years ago”. What a blessing.

“Let's continue to make Tsawwassen one of the best places to live. Let's continue to support our education system - our teachers, principals secretaries, custodians - all those engaged in this enterprise, remembering that democracy is strongest where education is strongest. Let's make every school a good school. Our children deserve the best possible education - one that provides the academic and social skills necessary to be successful in their chosen field and in life. Let's not forget that a good education includes, the importance of character development and the nurturing of qualities such as respect, kindness, empathy, perseverance and optimism”. ■

Do you know **A NEIGHBOUR WHO HAS A STORY**

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