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Media Release:

Toronto's Branksome Hall Receives Historic \$5-Million Gift

Landmark Gift Honours Outgoing Principal Karen Jurjevich's 26-Year Tenure and Supports State-of-the-Art iCAST Facility, Preparing Young Women for Entrepreneurial, STEM and Arts-Related Careers

TORONTO, ON (May 6, 2024) – [Branksome Hall](#), one of Toronto's leading girls' schools, has received a record-breaking \$5-million gift. This is the largest donation in the history of the 120-year-old institution and among the largest ever to a Canadian girls' school. The anonymous gift is in addition to \$1.5 million raised through a tribute campaign in honour of the school's seventh Principal, Karen Jurjevich, who is retiring in June after more than two decades as the school's Principal.

This transformative donation serves as both a recognition of Jurjevich's leadership at Branksome Hall and a substantial investment in the school's new Innovation Centre and Studio Theatre (iCAST). This [first-of-its-kind facility](#) will prepare Branksome Hall students for top careers in entrepreneurship, STEM and the Arts. Set to be completed in the fall of 2025, it will be named The Karen L. Jurjevich Innovation Centre and Studio Theatre (iCAST).

"We are deeply grateful for this historic donation in support of girls' education at Branksome Hall," says Mona Malone, Board Chair, Branksome Hall. "Naming iCAST after Karen is reflective of her trailblazing spirit and relentless pursuit of breaking barriers for girls, making it a fitting legacy for a building that will do the same."

Transformative and forward-thinking learning opportunities are the focus of the school's "[Make Way Campaign](#)," its largest ever fundraising initiative. "Girls' schools historically have received a disproportionately lower amount of philanthropic support compared to boys' and co-ed schools," says Malone. "We are determined to change this and level the playing field—opening opportunities for girls that align with their talents and ambitions."

A champion of girls' education both inside the school and out, Jurjevich will be honoured later this month with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Canadian Accredited Independent Schools. She leaves a legacy of leadership for the school as she introduced the International

Baccalaureate (IB) programme, opened a [sister school in South Korea](#) providing a reciprocal exchange program for students every year, and championed the building of an award-winning Athletics & Wellness Centre as well as the establishment of the [Chandaria Research Centre](#) and [Centre for Strategic Leadership](#). Jurjevich will be succeeded by Branksome Hall's 8th Principal Grace McCallum.

"I am deeply moved by these honours and immensely proud that this innovative building, which will empower our girls to break barriers as innovators and future-focused leaders, will carry my name," says Jurjevich. "iCAST represents more than just a building; it signifies our commitment to closing the gender gap and creating a more inclusive future. I am excited to witness the incredible achievements that lie ahead for our students."

The iCAST facility will also be accessible to the broader community through Branksome's new Slingshot Innovation Academy, offering camps as well as evening and weekend programs in specialized areas such as Design Technology, coding and entrepreneurship. Branksome is committed to providing scholarships to students in priority neighborhoods to access this transformative curriculum.

For more details about the Make Way Campaign, visit www.branksome.on.ca/makeway.

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About Branksome Hall:

Branksome Hall, a leading independent International Baccalaureate (IB) World School for girls, challenges and inspires students to love learning and to shape a better world. Through a unique combination of outstanding academics, well-being and international mindedness, students become impactful leaders who give back to their communities. Valuing Sense of Community, Inclusiveness, Creativity and Making a Difference, Branksome offers a liberal arts curriculum that develops critical thinking and inquiry skills.

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