

## Message From the TODOS President October 2023

Colleagues,

I am writing this contribution on the day that nominations for a Director and Vice President for the TODOS Board of Directors close. I am also preparing to attend the 2023 NCTM Annual Meeting and Exposition. These two events have caused me to reflect on how I came to know about TODOS and the mentors that have crossed my path.

The first mentor was the first department chair that I had when I first started teaching. I started teaching in a small centre that was approximately a 5 hour drive from the provincial capital city. The school had a membership to the *Mathematics Teacher* and it was expected that the mathematics teachers in the department would read the journal and be prepared to talk about one thing they'd learned at the monthly department meeting. We were encouraged to try new ideas in our teaching and we were encouraged to share our professional learnings with one another. The department chair also encouraged each of us to attend the provincial mathematics teacher's conference. While the school could not afford for the entire department to attend - there was an opportunity for us to attend.

The second set of mentors were colleagues that I met when I moved to the capital city and became involved with the provincial council of mathematics teachers. The provincial council was an affiliate of NCTM, and through the colleagues I learned about the possibility of attending an NCTM annual meeting. It was so exciting to be able to attend such a big gathering of mathematics teachers - I'd been an avid reader of the *Mathematics Teacher* and purchased an individual membership to NCTM when I left the first school. My mentors were also in attendance at that annual meeting - it was exciting and I was thrilled to be able to learn so very much.

The third set of mentors were colleagues that I met by 'hanging out' with the second team of mentors at the NCTM and NCSM annual meetings. What I absolutely enjoyed were the diverse perspectives that I would hear as I attended sessions and 'hung out' with my mentors. The conversations, whether it was through the sessions I attended, or the visiting with each other after the conference sessions were done for the day, always helped me to frame my mathematics teaching practices.

These mentors invited me, from the beginning of my career, to be thoughtful about teaching and encouraged me to be courageous in my teaching. They also encouraged me to become involved in professional organizations. I learned that I continued to learn about mathematics teaching, learning, and leadership through this involvement. At first I did not understand how volunteering would contribute to my development as a mathematics educator. However, mathematics was always present - while there might be committee meetings about organizational goals and structures, there was always the opportunity to share with other mathematics educators about mathematics teaching and learning.

It was through these experiences that I came to learn about TODOS: Mathematics for ALL and finding like-minded humans who noticed that there were systemic barriers for some in accessing a high quality mathematics education. I know that when I first learned of TODOS I did not have the language to be able to talk about what I'd noticed in my teaching. By reading *TEEM* and by attending TODOS Live! Sessions, I slowly began to better understand how to talk about the inequities that I'd noticed.

As you prepare to attend professional learning opportunities for this academic year, I invite you to 'see' yourself as a mentor - inviting colleagues to join you in learning - learning more about mathematics teaching, learning, leadership, and the inequities that exist for some humans. In what ways do you invite colleagues to talk about the sessions they've attended or the articles that they've read?

One of my mentors always asked me... "what four ideas did you learn in the session?" or "what four ideas continue to linger with you from the session?" I remember replying one time that I learned nothing and that I did not like what the speaker had shared. My mentor then replied "I think you did learn something." That mentor was inviting me to articulate why I was troubled or dissatisfied with the session. As I learned to articulate these troubling or dissatisfying ideas; I realized I had learned.

So, respected colleagues, as you make sense of your living as a mathematics educator I invite you to adopt a stance of a learner - a learner of mathematics, a learner of mathematics teaching, a learner of mathematics learning, a learner of mathematics leadership, and a learner of systemic inequities. There is no straightforward path in this learning - it is a winding and iterative path that invites you to take courageous steps.

Florence Glanfield, President  
TODOS: Mathematics for ALL