



### **MICHAEL HOLDEN**

Michael Holden, father of Jake (grade 6) and Luke (grade 4) at St. Bon's, husband of Barbara, is a Swiss-Newfoundlander that moved back to St. John's in February 2018 with his family. Originally from Kilbride and the oldest of 4 siblings, he attended Beaconsfield from K to 12, and furthered his education at Memorial University where he completed a Bachelor of Arts Honours in German and in History in 1994. He spent his summers during his undergrad in Germany and Switzerland, finally moving to Lucerne, Switzerland full time in 1996, the Swiss tourism capital.

Michael worked in tourism in Switzerland during his 22 years there. He started in gastronomy for the first 5 years and managed a restaurant in the center of Lucerne where he met his wife, Barbara. He then worked for a hotel booking engine website managing the sales team there for 2 years. From 2003 to 2018, Michael's career blossomed at EF Education, a global education company with 50 000 employees in over 50 countries. He was part of the EF Cultural Tours family which specialized in student tours where he worked in the Operations Team, negotiating, sourcing and contracting hotels, restaurants, guides, bus companies and entrance fees. His areas at EF over his 15 years there were the UK and Ireland, the Benelux, Scandinavia, Germany, Austria and Switzerland and Eastern Europe. He was regarded as one of EF's best negotiators and relationship managers and through all his roles he has contacts all over Europe. Michael lived and breathed the EF core values of innovation, nothing is impossible and attention to detail. He was the go-to person in the office for anyone who had a problem or needed help with something. He managed numerous staff at EF over the years and mentored many of them into successful roles all over the EF world. Michael has transitioned to a regional sales role for Atlantic Canada so that he can be based in St. John's and works out of the EF Toronto head office. Michael is a big advocate for international travel and has seen first-hand at EF how many young lives have been changed by overseas travel. He could easily write a book about all his travel experiences and characters he has met on his journey at EF, but his all-time favourite and proudest travel moment is when he

was the Event Manager for EF in 2016 for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for Beaumont Hamel with thousands of Newfoundlanders attending and the following year for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Vimy Ridge where he personally welcomed over 10 000 Canadian Students and teachers at Beaumont Hamel. Another EF highlight, he was invited to Buckingham Palace in 2009 to the Queen's Garden Party and got to see the royal family.

In Lucerne, Michael was also a leader in the community and a very active volunteer. He founded and presided over the Lucerne and Central Switzerland Ex-Pats with over 2800 members. They held various events throughout the year culminating in an Ex-Pat Christmas Gala with over 250 members attending with various sponsors with all profits going to various charities, No More Walking being one of them which helped refugee arrivals in Greece. He was also President of the Board for Living-in-Lucerne, and non-profit organization whose mission was to provide international residents with the opportunity to thrive socially and professionally. He spearheaded the founding of the Living-in-Lucerne community center needed for all the events and courses of the international community which had over 5000 members across central Switzerland – German classes, job seeking seminars, play afternoons for new moms and dads, International Cuisine evenings. He was also appointed to the Integration commission (a municipal body) by the city of Lucerne from 2014 to 2017 to represent expats and to find new ways to integrate the various international groups with the local population and was the welcoming English speaker at 2 events per year to all new arrivals speaking alongside the mayor of Lucerne. Michael was well known for hosting an Ex-pat Christmas dinner, every Christmas Day, for all the lonely ex-pats from around the world who were alone at Christmastime where everyone was invited. Michael is an avid fundraiser. He launched charity soccer matches, and dinner evenings to raise thousands of pounds for the QEF, a British charity for people with brain injuries in the UK, in memory of a dear ex-pat friend Tom Lamb.

Michael is extremely happy to be back in Newfoundland with his family. He is glad to be part of the supportive St. Bon's community through having his boys attend the school. He is currently the class representative for Ms. Samuelson's grade 6 class. In his spare time, he is an avid historical reader, loves great oral story-telling which abounds in Newfoundland and can be found on weekends on the East Coast Trail regardless of the weather. He treasures Newfoundland built heritage and loves that he and his wife rescued a heritage home from 1879 on Monkstown road, walking distance to St. Bon's. He loves watching his boys play hockey and you can find him at the rink during hockey season. Michael has offered to teach German as an extra-curricular activity during the next school year at St. Bon's for the afterschool program. Michael's signature themes on the Gallup Strength's finder scale are Includer, Woo, Developer, Connectness and Adaptability. It would be an honour for him to serve on the St. Bon's Board of Governors.