



| Maria Artuso and her niece Sabrina Artuso explore the Barrie campus in Oct. 2022.

The power of paying it forward

For Maria Artuso, a proud Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) program graduate (class of 2001), her time at Georgian earned her more than just a diploma. It invited her into a tight-knit community of like-minded future leaders, granted her invaluable job-ready skills, and was the launchpad for her successful career upon graduation.

Now, as an award-winning financial services professional and change-making community volunteer, she's paying it forward for future generations by giving back – in more ways than one.

"Georgian reinforced my passions for learning, leadership, business and community, and I am proud to consider myself part of the family," shared Maria. "Though my career has taken me far and wide, I remain grateful to Georgian for everything it has given me — and that gratitude inspires me to stay connected to this incredible community."

Looking back, Maria recalls several memories that solidified her long-standing connection to the college – from opportunities to apply her learning in unconventional fields, to co-op placements where she gained real-world experience, to cherished professors she still speaks to today. However, the defining moment didn't come until the end of her program in 2001.

"Walking across the graduation stage with my family cheering me on was special enough as is, but to be honoured with awards for my volunteerism at school and in the community filled my heart to no end. The donors who supported these awards were paying it forward for me, and I knew I wanted to do the same."

As she built a thriving career in financial services at RBC, Maria also expanded her impact beyond the 9-to-5 day job, serving as a mentor, board member, advisor, and donor to countless causes close to her heart – including Big Brothers Big Sisters, Junior Achievement of Canada,

and of course, Georgian College. She even volunteers with the Georgian College Alumni Association, helping to support and mentor more than 95,000 graduates worldwide.

Maria recently cemented her legacy at her alma mater by creating the Maria Artuso Award of Empowerment in 2022. Inspired by the Women's inTUTION initiative, the award recognizes female students with financial need who contribute to their communities and excel academically.

"Whether through time or money, giving back is so important. Georgian is where I first honed my skills, and there is no better way to show my appreciation than by supporting today's youth as they become tomorrow's leaders. Everyone should seize the opportunity to give back however they can because every bit of support makes a difference for Georgian students."

One such student is Maria's niece, Sabrina Artuso, who followed in her footsteps by joining the Honours Bachelor of Business Administration (Management and Leadership) degree program last year. And though she has left an inspirational roadmap for her to follow, Maria is confident Sabrina – like all Georgian students ready to make an impact – will become a trailblazer in her own right.

"My time at Georgian was unforgettable, and I know Sabrina will use hers to make memories and leave a legacy for others to experience. Georgian is special; it stands above many other schools with a rich culture and spirit of excellence. I'm proud that my family will forever remain an active part of the Georgian family."

While deciding which school to attend can be daunting for any young student, Sabrina felt confident that Georgian was right for her thanks to her aunt's encouragement and inspirational legacy.

"My aunt has always been passionate about her time at Georgian, and she had hoped that I would one day also find myself here," recalls Sabrina, who is entering second year of Georgian's business degree program. "She is my role model, academically and personally, and it means a lot for us to share this amazing experience."

With small class sizes, a campus close to home, and a supportive learning environment where she has developed strong connections to both her peers and professors, Sabrina says Georgian has more than lived up to the expectations. And as she continues her studies and looks ahead to co-op placements and other exciting opportunities, she always remembers her aunt's advice.

"She said to be myself, and Georgian is where I can do that. I never wanted to feel like just a number, and this community has made me feel comfortable, capable and important as I prepare to start my career."

Alumni: tell us how you're doing

Your career success and satisfaction as a Georgian graduate are important to us.

All Ontario colleges participate in a government-led graduate satisfaction survey for recent graduates. Six months after you graduate, and again two years later, you'll be contacted by Forum Research Inc. to share your thoughts.

Please know that all your responses and information provided to Forum Research will be kept strictly confidential and only shared with Georgian College.

You can keep your alumni contact information up to date at [GeorgianCollege.ca/alumni](https://www.GeorgianCollege.ca/alumni).

Your feedback can help shape Georgian's future, so we can continue to meet the needs of our students and alumni.

Our Institutional Research team is here to answer any questions or concerns that you have. Email feedback@georgiancollege.ca.



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