



**PAST,  
PRESENT  
& FUTURE**

# A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD & PRESIDENT



What a year it has been. We thank our families and staff for their continued support in a year that was full of changes and challenges. But it's easy to rally a community when our passion is shared. In our case, our passion is Montessori.

## **Past, present and future...**

Our community believes so strongly in the Montessori approach because it gets to the root of what all education should be: child-centred. It encompasses the tradition of Dr. Montessori's work, addressing the needs of each child as of today, while preparing them for the future.

Montessori promotes academic excellence without placing its emphasis solely on academics. Rather, it offers a holistic approach, addressing each child's social, emotional, intellectual and physical development.

Cursive writing, which has been phased out of the public education system curriculum, is a perfect example of that focus. Cursive will remain an important part of Montessori Academy's program because it benefits fine motor skills and brain development.

## **Steeped in tradition yet ahead of the curve**

Despite being more than 100 years old, the Montessori approach to learning is often praised as innovative, including its commitment to good citizenship. For many years, our school has re-invested in London-based initiatives, whether it's partnering with Growing Chefs! Ontario for a hot lunch program or purchasing aprons from a local social enterprise run by new Canadians. This social responsibility is woven into our curriculum and demonstrates to our children a commitment to community that reflects our vision of responsible action and collaboration to create a humane world.

As school leaders, the board continues to listen and respond to the needs of the students, the school and our families through strategic planning that keeps pace with an ever-changing world without losing our Montessori roots.

As we reflect on 2014-2015, we thank our amazing community of families, friends and partners who support our children, our school, and our commitment to Montessori. We also thank Ken Bowlby for his years of service. He completed his term with our board this year but continues to serve on the Finance Committee; we truly appreciate his enthusiasm and expertise.

With such a strong team of passionate educators and friends, the board looks forward to a bright future that continues to place our students' needs first.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christine Haas'.

**CHRISTINE HAAS**

President, Board of Governors

## **BOARD OF GOVERNORS 2014-2015**

### **OFFICERS**

#### **Christine Haas**

President, Alumni Parent

#### **Julie Elgie**

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#### **Megan Clements**

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#### **Karen Conway**

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#### **Ken Bowlby**

Community Member

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#### **Kristen Crouse**

Academic Director, Ex-Officio

# LOOKING BACK AND MOVING FORWARD

## 2014-2015 Highlights

Last year held plenty of excitement for the whole student community. This excitement culminated with our musical performance of *The Little Mermaid* in May at the Forest City Community Church. It was the first time the school held two performances; the matinee entertained members of London's senior citizens community, who absolutely loved the show, and the evening performance for family members and friends nearly sold out.

Our Annual Appeal raised more than \$70,000! The gala, *MA al fresco*, which was held at Goodwill's Edgar and Joe's Café in May, raised money for several initiatives, including improvements to the outdoor spaces at our Westmount location on Commissioners Road and Elementary location on Waterloo Street. The Westmount improvements were completed last spring on time and within budget, and helped that location meet requirements for licensing under the *Childcare & Early Years Act* (CCEYA), which was formerly called the *Day Nurseries Act* (DNA). The children absolutely love the refreshed outdoor space. These gifts will be combined with the upcoming Annual Appeal to help ensure we give the well-used Elementary courtyard the makeover it also deserves.

During the gala's paddle call, an incredible group of donors also raised more than \$10,000 for new Google Chromebooks technology for our Junior High program – all in a matter of minutes! We sincerely thank every donor and sponsor for their generous gifts over the past year.

The current school year marks substantial changes for our Toddler and Casa programs. Starting in January 2016, the Academy will be licensed under CCEYA.

Although CCEYA only comes into effect this school year, the Academy and board spent a lot of time and energy in 2014-2015 preparing for the legislation, on everything from reviewing new rules to packing up countless pieces of Montessori materials before renovations started at our Casa/Toddler locations. The Board of Governors acknowledges everyone who worked so hard to ensure our programming continues to reflect our Montessori roots, while making necessary changes that will ensure we have a solid future in this new, more-strictly regulated environment.

While our environment may look different to the adults involved, it's business as usual for our youngest students; they continue to enjoy the same safe and welcoming classrooms they're used to thanks to our Toddler and Casa teaching teams and the many physical upgrades.

As we take a deep breath and look around at the school community, we feel proud of what's been accomplished thanks to our tenacity and ability to prepare for a bright future, while staying true to the enduring legacy of Dr. Montessori.



**Our Vision is a community of confident, compassionate and engaged citizens who think globally, act responsibly and collaborate successfully to create a humane world.**



“Children  
LOVE  
giving. And  
a child who  
gives – gives  
with their  
heart!”

## CHILDREN HELPING CHILDREN

Through our charitable giving, even the smallest acts of kindness have a huge impact on the children in our community...and our students.

"When the first group from Montessori Academy ever approached us, they asked 'What can we do?' Well, isn't that a beautiful message to receive?" recalls Carolyn Smale, Coordinator of Volunteer Services and Children's Programs at Women's Community House.

"The essence of a question like that is 'What is your need? We're going to attempt to meet it.' That's beautiful. So that was the initial partnership," she says with a warm smile. It's a partnership that started more than a decade ago.

Just like cursive writing, there are some things in traditional Montessori that may not be found elsewhere in education, such as our virtues lessons, which support our philosophy of "children helping children."

Carolyn adds that giving is so natural for children – you see it in their faces. "How did they know this is special? Because they're children! Children LOVE giving. And a child who gives – gives with their heart!" she enthuses.

Montessori's relationship with the family shelter demonstrates a commitment to serving our community – from clothing donations that support WCH's retail store, Mine IOI, to proceeds from our Junior High Micro-economy sales, to goodie bags created specially by students for the children staying at the shelter during various holidays.

Those goodie bags – so small in size – have a big impact. "When Montessori Academy comes in with boxes of gifts really tailored to a child staying at the shelter – that demonstrates to our children that other children care. I tell them, 'With every item that went into this goodie bag, they thought of you! Isn't that amazing?'"

The benefit is mutual. Each small act has a huge influence on our students, because each charitable act is designed to be meaningful and educational, and to develop a sense of social responsibility in our students. These acts breathe life into our Vision and Mission by inspiring children and young adults to engage the world as active citizens and successful leaders. Leaders in giving.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

## WHAT'S A MICRO-ECONOMY?

The Junior High Micro-economy is a social enterprise – a business that re-invests its profits into charitable causes. During the school year, the Junior High students make and sell goods to support local charities, including Women's Community House. During the 2014-2015 school year, proceeds from salsa sales at our school-wide Friends & Family Event in September and ticket sales to the annual pasta dinner were donated to WCH.

## LENDING ALL KINDS OF SUPPORT TO LONDON

The idea of investing in our community is woven into our curriculum through our virtue lessons. From Toddler through Junior High, Montessori Academy's programs teach about grace, courtesy and compassion – and how important it is to support community causes that are dear to us. Some of our other community partners include:

- **Children's Health Foundation** – Throughout the year, MA raises money to support the Children's Hospital's Child Life Programs through the Foundation. During the 2014-2015 school year, MA raised \$4,487.85 for CHF through our Charitable Giving events.
- **London Humane Society** – Our students learn grace and courtesy skills from an early age, as well as compassion and respect for all living things. Through pet food donations and fundraising, our students help this organization improve the lives of animals in our community.
- **Althouse education research project** – In 2014, the Academy was approached by Immaculate Namukasa, PhD, who will study how math is learned in Montessori – and how teachers learn to teach the Montessori approach to math. Working with researchers, Montessori Academy helps spread a greater understanding of the Montessori method within the educational community while reinforcing our own commitment to children, education and lifelong learning.



## FAST FACTS 2014-2015

- » Number of Students 2014-2015: 340
- » Number of graduates in June 2015: 19
- » Since 1968, 3,000+ children have been engaged in our programs and 400+ alumni
- » 100 per cent of alumni are accepted into post-secondary programs
- » First Montessori Junior High program in Canada
- » 100+ students in "The Little Mermaid"
- » 45 teaching staff
- » Barb Gerber celebrated 35 years teaching at MA
- » 12 Teachers are trained to teach different levels of Montessori
- » Registered not-for-profit charity since 2010
- » 15 per cent of families receive financial support for MA tuition
- » \$401,909 Financial support since 2010; 65 students benefitted

## LEVELS & AGES

Toddler – 18 months to 3 years

Casa – 3 to 6 years – pre-school, JK/SK

Elementary – 6 to 12 years

Lower Elementary 6 to 9 years

Upper Elementary 10 to 12 years

Junior High – 12 to 14 years

## LOCATIONS

Oxford Street location:  
Casa/pre-school programs

Waterloo Street locations:  
Junior High, Elementary, Toddler  
and Part-day Casa programs

Westmount (Commissioners Road) location:  
Part-day and Full-day Toddler and Casa programs

# PREPARED FOR THE FUTURE: WHAT'S NEXT FOR 2015-2016

Montessori Academy prepares children and young adults for the future. It's our mission to provide a world-class Montessori education that promotes academic excellence and prepares children and young adults to engage the world as active citizens and successful leaders. In keeping with that mission, our school community has rallied to prepare itself for what's next thanks to the collective efforts of our families, staff, board and community partners.

All of the activity that took place behind the scenes during 2014-2015 to prepare for licensing under the new *Childcare & Early Years Act* (CCEYA) is now taking shape in our three priorities: people, places and programs.

**It's our mission to provide a world-class Montessori education that promotes academic excellence and prepares children and young adults to engage the world as active citizens and successful leaders.**

- **People:** New roles were introduced this school year to support CCEYA requirements, including an ECE-educated Toddler & Casa Assistant, site supervisors and a Toddler & Casa Coordinator.
- **Places:** Renovated learning environments – both indoor and outdoor – were unveiled at all of our Toddler and Casa locations.
- **Programs:** Our youngest students now enjoy a daily Hot Lunch, provided by our good friends at Growing Chefs! Ontario, as required under CCEYA.

## Moving forward as a school

Now that we have completed these major CCEYA-related initiatives, it's easy to see why we love what we do; our teachers and staff are already deep into doing what we do best every year. Our goal is to turn our attention to some of the other priorities identified in our strategic plan.

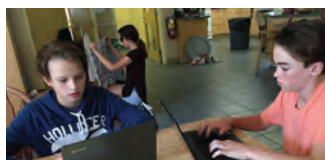
We know that families choose Montessori Academy of London because they're looking for a safe, caring place for their children. They stay because they see the value in a Montessori education, a 100-year-old approach that places the development of the whole child front and centre.

One of the school's strengths is its ability to balance the Montessori tradition with the evolving needs of the students. The Junior High program's adoption of Google for Education technology – made possible by our generous donors – is a perfect example of that commitment to new technology while maintaining the core philosophies of Montessori education.

## Planning and prioritizing

Because of the incredible effort spent in the changes to our Toddler and Casa facilities this summer to prepare for licensing under CCEYA, we had to put some projects that were outlined in our *Strategic Priorities (2012-2017)* on hold. Now, we will refocus on those priorities; at our Elementary location, the well-worn courtyard is in need of improvements, while new IT support and upgrades will help our Junior High students and whole school community. That's only the start.

As we inch closer to the end of our five-year strategic plan, we are beginning to look to the future – and the needs and activities that will take us through 2022. The board will be undertaking a new strategic plan over the upcoming two years and will keep the community involved and informed. We are also excited about planning for our upcoming 50th anniversary, and look forward to community participation in celebrating this milestone.



# FINANCIAL REPORT 2014-2015

Montessori Academy is mid-way through our five-year strategic plan. So this year, we wanted to reflect on our past, check in on last year's accomplishments, and touch on what we can expect moving forward.

## From the Past: As a Non-Profit/Charitable Organization

In 2010, Montessori Academy of London became a board-governed registered charity. Since that time, we've committed ourselves to growth and strengthening the stewardship of our resources to ensure the Academy's long-term success.

Our Three P's – People, Places and Programs – remain our priorities. We've focused on maintaining and improving our indoor and outdoor environments. Yet we've also continued to ensure our students receive the best education by steadily committing 69% of our budget to our people and their professional development.

As an independently funded school, we've done all of this without any government funding. This poses a challenge – but one we're ready to tackle thanks to the strength of our school community and the generosity of our donors.

## Today: A Year in Review

When we look back on the past year, we recognize the support of our parents as we had to take on some big financial challenges for the school to meet licensing requirements for our Toddler and Casa (preschool) programs under Ontario's new *Childcare & Early Years Act* (CCEYA). The changes were expensive, and the Board of Governors had to budget higher-than-usual tuition increases for the next few years. Our overall revenue, which included tuition and ancillary revenue was \$4,441,288.

The administration has worked extremely hard to manage ongoing projects. Our 2014-2015 operating expenditures came in approximately 2% under budget at \$4,481,938; over the last year, we managed to complete many necessary projects to prepare for CCEYA:

- Playground upgrade at our Westmount location
- Interior upgrades at our Westmount and Waterloo Central locations
- Renovations to create our new Casa classroom at Waterloo Central

Fundraising continued to be successful thanks to our incredible donors and sponsors. Funds raised this past year support tuition assistance for families, professional development, and materials and facilities. Fundraising activities brought in \$70,769, a portion of which is earmarked for our Elementary outdoor environment.

## Into the Future: Financial Sustainability for a World-Class Education

Moving forward, we expect to address many competing priorities... And we're off to a strong start! This school year, we have already implemented Google Chromebooks at Junior High; as well, we've completed major renovations to our Oxford Street location.

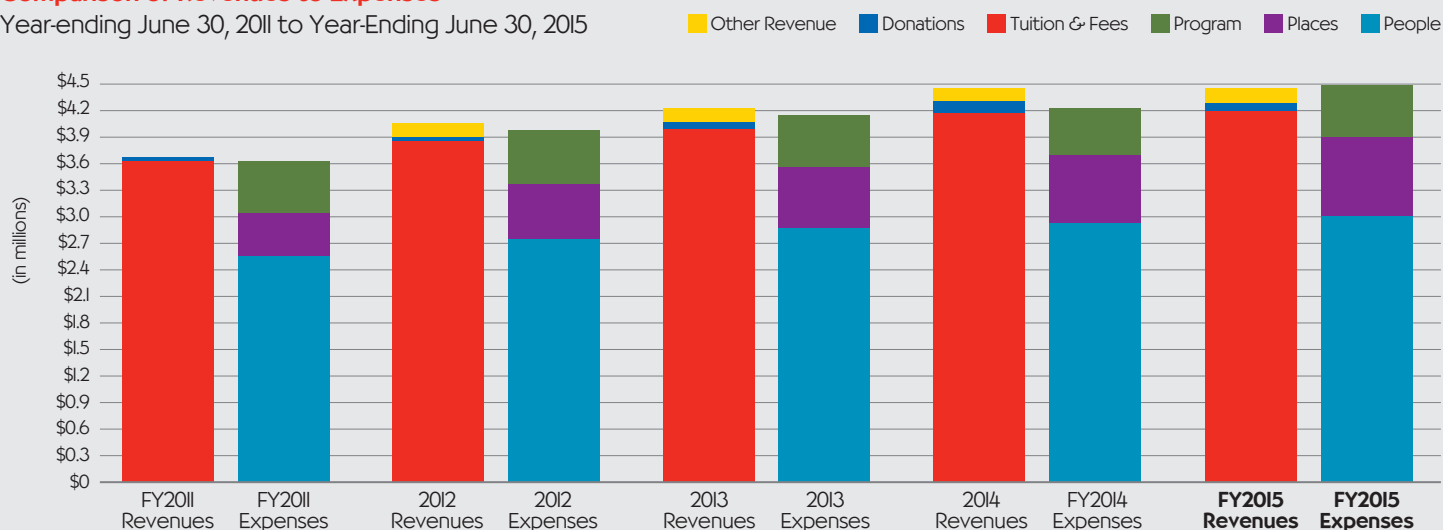
Other priorities include ongoing CCEYA compliance, possibly introducing the Ontario Registered Pension Plan (ORPP), and managing the ever-increasing costs to support our people, places and programs. Because of these expenses, we will continue to look for other sources of revenue beyond tuition.

As always, Montessori Academy's board and administration will collaborate to shape our future financial sustainability – and ultimately support world-class Montessori education here in London.

*For more details on the Academy's past finances, find our CRA charitable returns on the Canada Revenue Agency's website: [www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng)*

## Comparison of Revenues to Expenses

Year-ending June 30, 2011 to Year-Ending June 30, 2015



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS GIFTS!

Through your gifts, we continue to offer an education that provides our greater community a constant stream of confident, compassionate and engaged citizens.



**DONORS** **BOARD MEMBERS** **LOCAL BUSINESSES**  
**SPONSORS** **PARENTS** **GRANDPARENTS**  
**3 8 5**  
**ALUMNI PARENTS** **ALUMNI** **COMMUNITY MEMBERS** **VOLUNTEERS**



## YOU

- ...Raised more than \$70,000 during our Fundraising Campaign! WOW!
- ...Donated more than \$30,000 to our Annual Appeal.
- ...Implemented a new technology platform at Junior High with 45 Chromebooks, enabled with Google Apps for Education, and brought innovation and collaboration to a new level among students and faculty.
- ...Built a beautiful outdoor environment at our Westmount location that gives the students the opportunity to engage in active outdoor play, which supports the development of resilience and self-regulation. A space where they can come together as a community and learn in a natural setting.
- ...Gave our MA faculty opportunities for Professional Development so they feel more empowered with the current scope of knowledge—whether it's about teaching practices, assisting with learning differences, or how to support students with challenges in their home lives, socially or with academics.
- ...Helped one more MA student continue their Montessori journey by giving to our Financial Support fund.
- ...Include 14 sponsors – local businesses and families that brought "The Little Mermaid" to life on stage and made the Annual FUNraiser a success.



It is because of you, our generous donors and volunteers, that we are able to provide our students the best world-class Montessori education possible. We will continue to promote academic excellence to prepare children and young adults to engage the world as active citizens and successful leaders.

For a detailed listing of our broad community support, please visit our website:

[www.montessori.on.ca/ThankYou](http://www.montessori.on.ca/ThankYou)



**Montessori**  
ACADEMY OF LONDON