



MAKING CONNECTIONS

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD & PRESIDENT



The idea of "connection" is important in Montessori. Through what Dr. Maria Montessori called "cosmic education," students learn and appreciate how everyone – and everything – is connected.

Part of the school's mission is to prepare "children and young adults to engage the world as active citizens and successful leaders," and so Montessori Academy instills in our students that they are connected to one another interpersonally, locally and globally. This year the community witnessed a prime example of that lesson in action when 12 of our senior students sprang into action shortly after their WE service trip to Ecuador, which we detail in the article **Making Connections Around the World** on page 5.

Connection also refers to how we interact as an organization. Although the Montessori approach is very particular about when technology is introduced with children and students, the Board and school acknowledge the need to stay current to support our day to day activities, including administration, governance and classroom activities. With the help of an independent IT consultant, the school implemented well-planned technology solutions in September 2015, including Google Chromebooks in Junior High and a full-time IT support person. This has greatly improved how the faculty, staff and students work and collaborate. Please see our article **We Are All Connected** on page 4 for more on our IT partnership with Craigwood Youth Services.

As the school year drew to a close, Executive Director Margaret Whitley announced that she would retire from her role at the end of June 2017. During the summer of 2016, the Board conducted a thorough evaluation and vetting process to select the next head of the school.

In September 2016, the Board named Tina Sartori as Montessori Academy of London's new Executive Director. Tina will take on this position effective July 1, 2017. We are excited to start the next chapter of the school's story, with Tina at the helm and our next five-year strategic plan on the horizon.

As current research continues to support Dr. Montessori's ideas and prove her approach to child development relevant in educating children for the 21st century, we feel very strongly that it is now, more than ever, important to provide Montessori as an education option.

We thank all of our families and friends for continuing to support Montessori education in London. Education that provides children and young adults a foundation of learning that includes compassion, engagement and interpersonal connection.

SINCERELY,

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

CHRISTINE HAAS

President, Board of Governors

BOARD OF GOVERNORS 2015-2016

OFFICERS

Christine Haas

President, Alumni Parent

Julie Elgie

Vice-President, Current Parent

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Treasurer, Community Member

David Pasquino

Finance Director, Ex-Officio

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Sarah Harding

Founding Member Representation

Karen Conway

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Deborah Ward

Alumni Parent

Sarah Kirshin-Neilans

Secretary, Alumna

Jim Middlemiss

Current Parent

Margaret Whitley

Executive Director, Ex-Officio

Kristen Crouse

Academic Director, Ex-Officio

Tina Sartori

Admissions and Development Coordinator, Ex-Officio

BOARD CHANGES EFFECTIVE JULY 2016

Julie Elgie was appointed Board President

Christine Haas was appointed Board Vice-President

Sarah Kirshin-Neilans was appointed Board Secretary

THE BOARD ALSO WELCOMED TWO NEW MEMBERS:

Wilma McIntyre, Community Member

Geoff Connors, Alumni Parent

TURNING A PLAN INTO REALITY

2015-2016 Highlights

Last year, our school community saw years of planning bear fruit. We continued to invest in our "Three P's": People, Places and Programs; and witnessed a great deal of support from our incredible community of families, friends and staff.

Our People

We had a number of new staff members join us in all areas of the school, including new members of the administration team and our Specialties faculty, all of whom bring expertise and experience to their roles. We also added a part-time Finance Clerk to our Admin team through a Fanshawe College job placement program.

Supporting our new Ministry of Education licensing, long-time Montessori Casa teacher and leader Christopher O. Ikeakhe joined us as the Toddler & Casa Coordinator; and we enhanced our already strong Casa teaching team with new staff members with experience in early childhood education.

Our Programs

The licensing of our Toddler and Casa programs took centre stage in 2015-2016, with not only new roles added to our staff, but a new, innovative daily lunch program, provided by Growing Chefs! Ontario. The new Toddler and Casa Lunch Program was a resounding success, with our children enjoying daily creative, nutritious and delicious meals.



We absolutely love the Casa Lunch program. It has exceeded all of our expectations. Our kids adapted very quickly to the food and the routine. They have become very confident in trying different foods.

- HELIA BREW, CASA PARENT

In Junior High, Google Chromebooks were introduced in September 2015 in response to an assessment of the school's IT resources. These tools for learning were made possible by our generous donors. The Chromebooks and Google Apps for Education provide the students a new tool to connect and collaborate. The new technology also provides teachers better control over what, when and how technology is used in the classroom.

Our Places

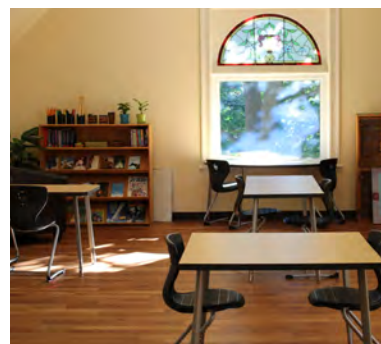
Last year saw the unveiling of the latest enhancements to our Toddler and Casa facilities to meet licensing requirements, which took effect in January 2016. Rooms were reconfigured, windows were enlarged, washroom facilities were enhanced and outdoor spaces were improved.

With those renovations completed, our focus last year turned to our Elementary facilities, including the well-worn Elementary Courtyard. Funds raised during our 2015-2016 Annual Appeal and a generous grant from The Walter J. Blackburn Foundation allowed us to renovate the outdoor learning and play area behind 711 Waterloo Street. Construction was completed over the summer of 2016, and the space has already been enjoyed by our entire school community.

This year we'll continue to focus on improving our Elementary facilities, which started over the summer with new flooring, desks and tables in our Upper Elementary classrooms. Please see the back page of this report for more on last year's Development efforts and the many connections our amazing supporters helped us make!

Other highlights from 2015-2016

- **ARTexpo 2016** – This bi-annual event took place at Museum London in May and was a fantastic showcase of our one-of-a-kind Art program.
- **Change in Leadership** – In June, **Margaret Whitley**, who has led the school for 12 years, announced she will retire June 2017. We are fortunate that Margaret has very thoughtfully given us a full year to make the transition to new leadership. **Tina Sartori**, who was selected for the position through the Board's thorough assessment, will assume the office July 2017.





Everything we do has a purpose. Through purchases and partnerships, we try to reflect our desire to do good

– MARGARET WHITLEY



WE ARE ALL CONNECTED

An innovative partnership with a local social enterprise supports not only IT needs, but a desire to “do good.”

“Everything we do has a purpose. Through purchases and partnerships, we try to reflect our desire to do good,” explains Montessori Academy of London’s Executive Director, Margaret Whitley. “It’s an underlying theme in Montessori, and we are determined to ‘walk our talk’ to show our students and community that we are committed to working with organizations that support children and youth.”

So, when it came time to implement an IT solution that would support an identified need for improved technical support at the school, that solution took a unique shape. The school contracted with Com-IT, an Information Technology service provider that is a social enterprise established to support Craigwood Youth Services, a local not-for-profit that serves youth and families in need.

It started with the Board of Governors’ five-year strategic plan, which identified a need for increased technical support for faculty and staff. In 2014-2015, the school worked closely with an independent IT consultant, Wilma McIntyre, who helped define technology needs over the long term and provided several recommendations.

MA is not unique in how technology has evolved in the organization, Wilma says. “Often in smaller organizations, technology is implemented to solve an immediate issue or to fill a specific need rather than as part of a long-term, strategic plan.” Such stop-gap fixes, she explains, can create holes and compatibility issues.

Based on Wilma’s recommendations, beginning in September 2015, Com-IT began working with the school to provide a contracted, full-time onsite IT tech specialist, Karl Ray. “This partnership has been tremendously successful,” says Margaret. “There’s someone there almost immediately when the teachers or admin staff require IT help. There are still challenges, but we’re working better and smarter through this partnership.”

The relationship with Com-IT not only makes life around the office and in the classroom easier, thanks to on-site support, it also reflects our desire to be socially responsible. By working with a local enterprise that puts purpose over profit, having Com-IT as an IT service provider fulfills the school’s aspiration to act responsibly and collaborate successfully as we support services that advocate for children and families.



COMMUNITY PARTNERS



MAKING CONNECTIONS AROUND THE WORLD!

In 2015-2016, a dozen of our senior students embarked on a WE Organization service trip to Ecuador. During the trip they helped build a school house for pre-school aged children in the village of Kanambu.

When the students learned of the devastating earthquake that struck Ecuador just weeks after their trip, they kick-started a fundraising drive to raise money for relief efforts to support their new friends in Ecuador. Through their initiative, these students raised \$1,000 for relief efforts - and in the process, brought our Vision and Mission to life!



FAST FACTS 2015-2016

- » Number of Students 2015-2016: 333
- » Number of graduates in June 2016: 28
- » 1st Montessori Junior High program in Canada
- » Registered not-for-profit charity since 2010
- » Member of Pillar Nonprofit Network since 2011
- » Toddler and Casa programs licensed in January 2016
- » Hot lunches prepared for Toddler and Casa students in 2015-2016: 24,975
 - Number of Casa students: 108
 - Number of Toddler students: 27

FUNDRAISING PARTICIPATION

- » 100% of Board members
- » 100% of Staff and Faculty
- » More than 70% of Families
- » 1st Big 10 Raffle

For more on Fundraising, see the back page.

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

OUR JOURNEY CONTINUES: WHAT'S NEXT FOR 2016-2017

It has been a busy few years! As we approach the end of our first five-year strategic plan in 2017, the Board and school will look to the future to develop the next strategic priorities and initiatives, which will take us through 2023.

We expect to continue to build upon our current strategic priorities to ensure the longevity of the school; this will include ongoing investments into infrastructure, programs, and our faculty and staff. Our goal is to ensure we are able to respond to significant change – whether that's legislation, technological needs or other challenges – while remaining true to our Montessori roots.

During the development of the next strategic plan, the Board will seek input from our school community to gauge their priorities and ensure we're on target.

As well, the Board welcomes Julie Elgie into a new role, Board President, which took effect in July 2016. Julie is a current parent of two Junior High students and most recently served as the Board's Vice President. Her experience in the not-for-profit sector and fundraising has served our community well over the past several years, and we look forward to having her lead the Board over her term as President.

On the Administrative side, with Margaret Whitley's retirement at the end of the current school year, Tina Sartori will step into the Executive Director role beginning July 1, 2017. Throughout her career, Tina has demonstrated a passion for education and child development – starting with an Honours Bachelor of Science degree in Child Studies from the University of Guelph and an AMI diploma from the Foundation for Montessori Education in Toronto.

Tina also brings to the role more than 15 years of experience with Montessori Academy through progressive roles at the school – as a Casa Directress and Lower Elementary teacher, and then our Admissions and Development Coordinator. As a result, Tina has well-rounded experience in both Montessori teaching and school administration, and most recently has been instrumental in establishing a strong Development program. Over the past few years, she's led the school's first fundraising programs, successfully raising over \$350,000 since 2012.

Also, this year, we will present the musical Finn's Montessori Journey, written by our Elementary teacher Meghan O'Brien. Meghan is not only a trained Montessori teacher but a theatre graduate and playwright! We are thrilled to share this special story. This bi-annual performance is always a wonderful opportunity to showcase our talented student community and our incredible music program.

We are also gearing up for the school's 50th anniversary in 2017-2018. Initial planning is under way, and more information will be shared with our families and friends over the next few months. We hope you join us as we celebrate this significant milestone in the London community, and as we continue our journey.

VISION

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

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.

JULIE ELGIE & FAMILY



TINA SARTORI



FINANCIAL REPORT 2015-2016

As Montessori Academy and its board approach the end of their first-ever five-year strategic plan in 2017, the school has experienced a successful transition to a not-for-profit organization.

Sound planning for a bright future

First registered as a charity and not-for-profit organization in 2010, we've since experienced growth and strength in the stewardship of our resources thanks to the diligence and sound planning of our Board of Governors.

Despite increasing costs due to regulatory compliance, the Board and school continue to maintain quality in all areas, balancing increasing costs against a finite revenue source. This support of our "Three P's" – people, places and programs – continues with no government funding.

Because of that, we are truly thankful for our families and supporters who, through tuition and generous donations, continue to help us provide traditional Montessori education for their children and, ultimately, the London community.

The Year in Review

Overall, revenue was marginally higher than budgeted (less than 1% variance), and expenses were slightly higher than budgeted (by approximately 1.1%), which resulted in a net loss for the year. This was expected, because of the many expenses associated with our licensing under the Ministry of Education's *Childcare and Early Years Act* (CCEYA) and implementing an innovative new lunch program at the Toddler and Casa level. We also saw increases in field trip costs and facilities.

This year, we accomplished many initiatives that benefit student learning today and will enhance their Montessori education in the future. Some of the projects completed include:

- Renovating our Oxford Casa location for CCEYA compliance, and facility improvements to our older buildings, including the Westmount playground upgrade and Westmount and Waterloo Central interior improvements.
- Fundraising for the outdoor playground behind our Elementary location at 711 Waterloo St. Thanks to our incredible donors and a grant from The Walter J. Blackburn Foundation, the playground was completed at the start of the 2017 Fiscal year. Other fundraising initiatives continue to support financial support, faculty and staff professional development, and the purchase of Montessori materials.
- Introducing Google Chromebooks at Junior High in September 2015. This technology has enhanced the learning experience for our students in Years 7 and 8 by making connection and collaboration among students and teachers easier than ever.

Looking forward

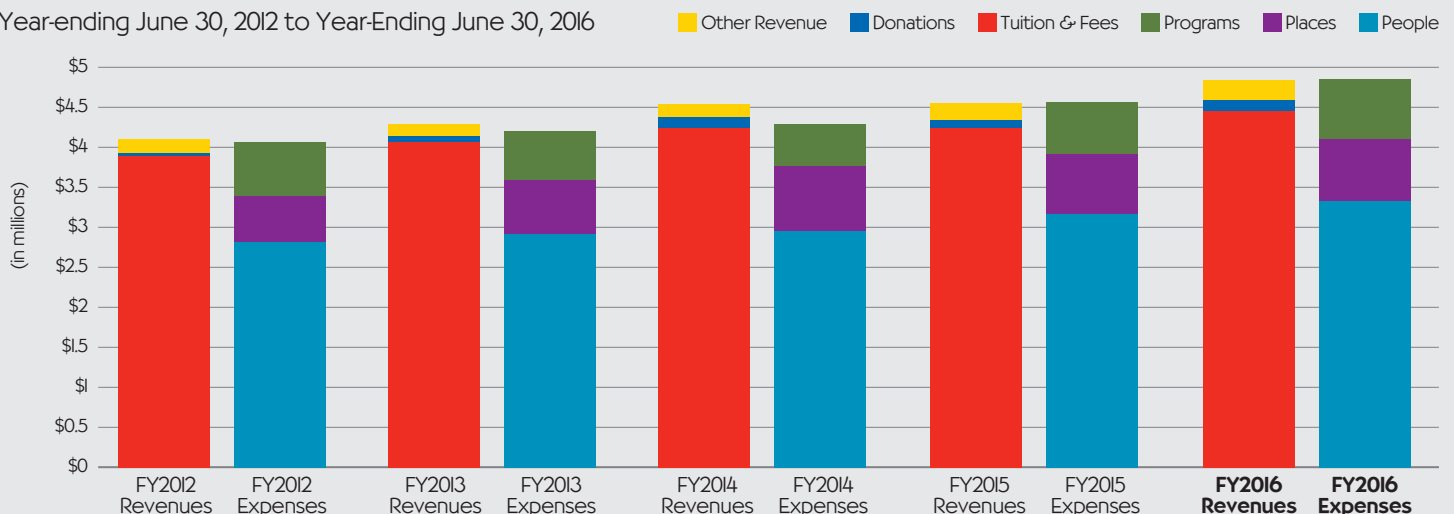
We expect that the future will continue to present us with competing priorities; our goal is to continue to meet increased government compliance and manage the increased costs to support our people, upgrade our places and continue to provide excellent programs. To help do so, the Board will continue to explore opportunities for revenue diversification.

The Board's strategic planning continues and it looks forward to defining the next strategic priorities that will take us from 2018-2023. The Board and school's Administration will work together to integrate a program budget, long-term capital plan and IT strategy with our overall school budgeting process to shape our future financial sustainability, so we can continue to provide a world-class Montessori education in London.

For more details on the Academy's past finances, our CRA charitable returns can be found at: www.charitydata.ca

COMPARISON OF REVENUES TO EXPENSES

Year-ending June 30, 2012 to Year-Ending June 30, 2016



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.



YOU, our Donors, Sponsors, Parents, Community Members, Alumni, Grandparents, Volunteers, Alumni Parents, Local Businesses and Board Members...

- ...Raised more than \$104,000 during our Annual Campaign!
- ...Donated more than \$57,000 to our Annual Appeal.
- ...Raised over \$17,000 with the first ever Big Ten Raffle.
- ...Helped one more MA student continue their Montessori journey by giving to our Financial Support fund.
- ...Gave our MA faculty valuable opportunities for Professional Development so they feel more empowered with the current scope of knowledge.
- ...Included 12 sponsors – local businesses and families that brought "ARTexpo 2016" to life.
- ...Implemented a new audio-visual projection system at Junior High that will help our community present and collaborate easily.

- ...Built a beautiful outdoor environment at our Elementary location that gives our community a place to play, learn, collaborate, share experiences and connect. Thanks to additional support from The Walter J. Blackburn Foundation, in this space, we can come together as a community and learn in our new Outdoor Classroom.

It is because of **YOU**, our generous donors, sponsors and volunteers, that we are able to provide our students the best traditional Montessori education possible.

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

www.montessori.on.ca/ThankYou



Montessori
ACADEMY OF LONDON

Making Connections

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