

# MILESTONES



2016-2017 Annual Report

50  
1968 2018

Montessori  
ACADEMY OF LONDON

# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



"Milestone" – it's an important term in education and child development; milestones are experienced daily by our students as they develop the physical, cognitive, and social skills that mark the journey from childhood into adolescence. The school itself also celebrates milestones of the amazing faculty and staff who are committed to Montessori and the growth of our students. And in June we'll celebrate a big one – 50 years of providing world-class Montessori education in London!

The 2016-2017 school year marked many milestones for the school and the community, the biggest of which was the transition of school leadership in July 2017. The school welcomed Tina Sartori into the role of Executive Director. With her vast experience in the classroom and on the administration team, we're excited to watch her lead the school through many more milestones.

July 2017 marked the end of the Board's first official strategic plan; and with that, the Board and school leadership turned our focus to the next five-year plan. Thanks to the input of our parents and the hard work of our Strategic Planning Committee, we now have a clearly defined path to 2022; a PDF of "Building our Future Together" is available on the school's website: [www.montessori.on.ca/about/board-of-governors](http://www.montessori.on.ca/about/board-of-governors)

Throughout the 2016-2017 school year, the faculty, staff and students continued to bring the school's mission and vision to life. The school's "charitable giving" program supported several charities including Children's Health Foundation (please refer to page 4 for more on our 20-year partnership with CHF). October's 1000 Acts of Kindness saw each level of the school commit to helping a different charity. Last February, the school's new composting program saw the school reduce its landfill waste by 85% within weeks. In Upper Elementary, students formed the WE service club, a service-learning program whose members explored timely topics and social issues.

Also this year, the students participated in a bi-annual musical production at London's historic Palace Theatre last April: "Finn's Montessori Journey." Written by Upper Elementary teacher Meghan O'Brien, this original play shone a spotlight on Montessori education and the humour and heart that makes this school unique! For more highlights from 2016-2017, please see page 3.

The Board of Governors welcomed four new members in July: Andrew Botterell, Kevin Higgins, current parents; Suzanne Fratschko Elliott, community member; and George Rizkalla, an alumnus. We have expanded our Board as a reflection of good governance and the growing sophistication of the organization and its governance needs.

The Board thanks Deborah Ward as she completes three years of service as a Governor; her input as an alumni parent and expertise in Human Resource management and business has been a huge benefit to the school. And, of course, we thank Margaret Whitley for devoting 30 years to this school community as a teacher, administrator, and executive director of the school – not to mention her earliest years at the school as a student.

Finally, we thank the school's families and friends for your ongoing support of world-class, traditional Montessori education in London. We look forward to an exciting year ahead of us as the school celebrates 50 years – its Golden Anniversary – on June 1 & 2, 2018. We hope that you and all of our current and alumni families, our friends and our community partners save the date to join us! Visit our 50th anniversary site for information on our events: [sites.google.com/montessori.on.ca/mhcma50/](http://sites.google.com/montessori.on.ca/mhcma50/)

JULIE ELGIE, Board President

## BOARD OF GOVERNORS 2016-2017

### OFFICERS

Julie Elgie, *President, Parent*

Christine Haas, *Vice-President, Alumni Parent*

Rick Santos, *Treasurer, Community Member*

Sarah Kirshin-Neilans, *Secretary, Alumna*

### GOVERNORS

Sarah Harding, *Founding Member Representation*

Karen Conway, *Community Member*

Deborah Ward, *Alumni Parent*

Jim Middlemiss, *Current Parent*

Wilma McIntyre, *Community Member*

Geoff Connors, *Alumni Parent, Current Grandparent*

Margaret Whitley, *Executive Director, Ex-Officio*

Tina Sartori, *Admissions and Development Coordinator, Ex-Officio*

Kristen Crouse, *Academic Director, Ex-Officio*

David Pasquino, *Finance Director, Ex-Officio*

### BOARD CHANGES EFFECTIVE JULY 2017

Tina Sartori was welcomed into the role of school Executive Director and continues to serve as an Ex-Officio member of the Board. Wilma McIntyre was appointed Board Secretary.

### THE BOARD ALSO WELCOMED NEW MEMBERS:

Andrew Botterell, *Current Parent*

Kevin Higgins, *Current Parent*

Suzanne Fratschko Elliott, *Community Member*

George Rizkalla, *Alumnus*





## 2016-2017 HIGHLIGHTS

**Like any year, 2016-2017 was filled with excitement and flew by in the blink of an eye.**

The big event of the year was the school's bi-annual musical performance. The students celebrated their school last April in the performance of "Finn's Montessori Journey," an original play written by Meghan O'Brien, who is one of our Upper Elementary teachers. The children worked hard behind the scenes and on stage to bring to life this very special story, which did a fantastic job capturing the spirit, humour and uniqueness of an amazing school.

During the school year, parents were invited to monthly "Coffee With Margaret" chat sessions. Executive Director Margaret Whitley sat down with parents to discuss a given topic or book in parenting, education or child development. As a lifelong Montessorian – she's a Montessori child, parent, teacher and administrator – Margaret has been a wealth of expertise on Montessori and parenting.

In keeping with Montessori's care of the environment, the school's environmental stewardship took on a bigger role as the school introduced a school-wide composting program. Starting in February, the school reduced its landfill waste by 85% in a matter of weeks! Students embraced the new system and can proudly say they are reducing their environmental impact on the earth – locally and globally.

Other highlights from the year included the grand opening of our Elementary courtyard and the unveiling of our Upper Elementary classrooms – with new flooring, chairs and tables – in September.

Montessori Academy continues to be a leader in providing high-quality Montessori education. The school achieves this through investments in our faculty and staff, including ongoing training and education of the faculty that supports world-class Montessori with complementary philosophies that will enhance the education experience of our students. The special training and expertise of our faculty made such an impact on one Montessori Academy family during the 2016-2017 school year, that they designated a generous gift to our Faculty Development fund to support professional development and a day-long workshop for our teachers.

Outside of our walls, the school's leadership and accrediting body, the Canadian Council of Montessori Administrators, brought Montessori to the table to ensure that Ministry of Education's *Childcare and Early Years Act* (CCEYA) acknowledges accredited Montessori and the specialized training our teachers receive.

Seeing the need to update our strategic priorities and initiatives to take us through the next five years, the Board and school engaged parents through an online survey and subsequent focus groups. In a community of 240 families, we received more than 150 responses and almost 200 comments, which showed us that our parents are engaged and invested in the strategic direction of the school. These voices echoed that the pillars of our Strategic Plan are solid, and helped to update our initiatives moving forward to 2022. For a PDF copy of **Building our Future Together: Strategic Plan 2017-2022**, visit our website: [www.montessori.on.ca/about/board-of-governors/](http://www.montessori.on.ca/about/board-of-governors/)

### OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- Junior High introduced Perspective Magazine – Written, edited and designed by the students; proceeds from the sale of this glossy print magazine supported the Junior High micro-economy, a social enterprise that benefits local charities, and also funds in-class activities.
- The school successfully piloted Growing Chefs lunches provided by The Beet Café for Elementary students at the end of the school year, providing the same high quality and healthy meal options as the Casa and Toddler students enjoy.
- The school welcomed Tonya Dendrinos as Development Director; she will be responsible for seeking alternative funding resources through fundraising, sponsorship and grant writing.



## COMMUNITY PARTNER HELPING CHILDREN SEE THE VALUE IN HELPING OTHERS

For 20 years, Montessori Academy of London (Montessori House of Children) has supported Children's Health Foundation (CHF) as part of the school's "charitable giving" program – including several Charitable Giving/CHF events throughout the year. As of June 2017, the school has raised a lifetime total of \$150,170 for Children's Health Foundation.

The school feels strongly that showing children from an early age how they can make a difference in people's lives is invaluable. Every charitable giving activity at the school is meaningful and educational, and helps to develop a sense of responsibility and appreciation in our students.

Explains Bradyn, a Junior High student and CHF committee representative at the school: "Although I have only helped lead the fundraising for the Children's Health Foundation for about two years, it has taught me that there is so much more you can do with your life by helping people in the world and even in your own community. I feel it is great that the students at Montessori Academy can donate to such a good cause at a young age and I always like to think that even a loonie or a toonie can make such a big difference in someone else's life."

Over the years, the Charitable Giving Events have supported various programs for young patients at Children's Hospital in London, including art and music therapy, and the students have spent time creating hand-crafted get well cards and small gifts for children in hospital.

Some of our families benefit regularly from the partnership. One Montessori Academy mom, whose child visits the hospital regularly, speaks highly of the impact the programs at the hospital have on the health and comfort of her child. "The magical team at Children's Hospital makes my daughter's every visit there an experience, such that when it is time to leave she has forgotten about the pokes and tests and looks forward to seeing the Child Life Specialist again. She gets her nails painted after an exam; she draws while the adults discuss the next course of action; she makes crafts on special occasions, collects bravery beads (one for every test and exam that she endures) for her new necklace. This doesn't mean there aren't any tears, or she isn't angry or hesitant at times, but it does mean that she is able to overcome what she has to do there to keep her healthy and able to go back to do it again. Most of all she believes she is getting better! What an incredible thing as this process will be a long haul."

She adds, "It wasn't until I saw the programs they support at the hospital in action that I truly understood how important the school's charitable giving donations are!"

Adds R. Scott Fortnum, President & CEO of the Children's Health Foundation: "Montessori is a valued partner of Children's Health Foundation and we are so proud to have worked with them for 20 years. This partnership is particularly special to us because it helps to build a future generation of philanthropists through kids helping kids. Their generosity throughout the years is incredible, significantly contributing to healthier, more involved kids in our community."

And isn't it comforting to know that "kids helping kids" goes both ways – that the children in the care of Children's Hospital are helping our students see the amazingly positive impact they can have in the world!





### OTHER COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

**WE Club:** Last year the Upper Elementary students established the **WE Club**. Together the students chose to support **LUSO – London Urban Services Organization**, a local organization that offers programs and services for children, youth and families of diverse backgrounds, including literacy programs, settlement services for immigrants, recreational and social programs for youth, and multicultural outreach programs.

In October, the school celebrates **1000 Acts of Kindness**, an annual event that shows what we can accomplish when we all work together. Every level participated in their own way. At our Toddler and Casa locations, the students collected donations of food and animal supplies for the **London Humane Society**. **Salthaven Animal Rehabilitation Centre** was thrilled with the two vans full of donations for the animals and offices that our Lower Elementary students collected. Our Upper Elementary students and families contributed a sizable donation of food to the **London Food Bank**. The Junior High students coordinated several activities throughout the year that help raise money for **Women's Community House** (now part of Anova) and the children and women who use their services. These efforts speak to Montessori's goal of caring for all living things and our vision of engaged citizens who act responsibly and collaborate to create a humane world.

**Growing Chefs** lunch program: The school piloted the Growing Chefs lunch program one day a week to its Elementary students at the end of the school year; like the Toddler and Casa Growing Chefs lunch program at Montessori Academy, it supports the Beet Café training and in turn other Growing Chefs food education programs in and around London.

## FAST FACTS 2016-2017

- » Number of Students in 2016-2017 = 327
- » Year 8 graduates in June 2017 = 16
- » Number of staff who have children in the school 2016-2017 = 19
- » Number of families in 2016-2017 = approx. 240 families

## STRATEGIC PLANNING SURVEY

- » 150+ parent responses
- » 200+ parent comments

## COMPOSTING IMPACT

- » Landfill waste: -85 per cent
- » Weekly curbside recycling: -80 per cent

## FUNDRAISING PARTICIPATION

- » 100% of Board members, Staff and Faculty
- » More than 70% of families

## FINN'S MONTESSORI JOURNEY

- » 100+ student actors, singers, dancers, musicians, backstage helpers

## 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 Casa programs

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



## WHAT'S NEXT FOR 2017-2018

# CONNECTING AND CELEBRATING

In Montessori, senior students who are “moving up” to the next three-year level of the program – such as Grade 3 in Lower Elementary to Grade 4 in Upper Elementary – experience “phasing in” at the end of the school year; they visit their new classroom and work alongside their older classmates for a day prior to the summer as an introduction to the expectations of their new program.

Now that Tina Sartori’s “phasing in” with Margaret Whitley is complete, she has very comfortably taken over the Executive Director role at the school. With an eye on the future, she is ready to lead the faculty and staff forward – fully committed to providing our students a high-quality, world-class Montessori education.

### CONNECTING PARENTS – TO THE SCHOOL AND ONE ANOTHER

Montessori Academy’s community is a truly special one. Our students are often at our school for as many as 12 years! With three-year age groupings, the connection between our faculty and families is like few other schools, and we are committed to building strong relationships with our families.

Starting this year – 2017-2018 – the school introduced several new ways to support that connection with our parents. Parent sessions at all levels were introduced in late August, allowing teachers and parents to connect prior to the first day of school. Parent Reps welcomed new families with phone calls, which helped ease the first-day jitters for our newest parents. To kick off the school year, instead of one big school-wide gathering, the teachers hosted smaller socials for our families; the school also hosted a pub night in October that allowed parents to gather and chat in a casual environment.

Also new this September, the school introduced a week-long Junior High Odyssey trip. Thanks to generous donations from our 2017 graduating Class Gift (formerly the “Legacy Gift”), the Year 7 and 8 students spent a transformative week with Alive Outdoors, which they – and their teachers – say was a “life changing experience.”

## *Golden Anniversary Gala*

### CELEBRATING – 50 YEARS OF MONTESSORI IN LONDON JUNE 1 & 2!

Join us for our Golden Anniversary celebrations on June 1 & 2, 2018! We invite our families, alumni and friends of our school to help us celebrate a major milestone – our 50th anniversary!

#### Friday, June 1

- Drop by Brescia College’s Mercato Room at Clare Hall for our ARTexpo Reception to view some fantastic artwork made by our Casa, Elementary and Junior High students, and to help us launch our 50th Anniversary celebrations!

#### Saturday, June 2

- OPEN HOUSE & FAMILY FUN DAY: Join us from 10 am-2 pm on Saturday as we open the doors to 709-719 Waterloo St. for an Open House and a Family Fun Day in Piccadilly Park right next door.
- GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY GALA: Saturday evening, parents and alumni are invited to our Golden Anniversary Gala back at Brescia’s Mercato Room! Gala tickets are on sale starting in late January through our school website, [www.montessori.on.ca/gala](http://www.montessori.on.ca/gala), or the Main Office.

For details, visit our 50th Anniversary website:  
[sites.google.com/montessori.on.ca/mhcma50/](https://sites.google.com/montessori.on.ca/mhcma50/)  
or follow us on social media...

Facebook: @MontessoriAcademyofLondon

Twitter: @MAofLondon

#mhcmaLDN50



Photo Credit: Alive Outdoors



# FINANCIAL REPORT 2016-2017

## Sound stewardship and planning for success

With the focus on licensing of our Toddler and Casa programs throughout 2015 and 2016 under the Ministry of Education's *Childcare and Early Years Act* (CCEYA), we turned our attention to improvements at our Elementary location in 2016-2017. This past year, we experienced increasing costs to our indoor and outdoor environments, yet made it a priority to maintain our support for the professional development of our faculty; our people are our greatest asset in making our Mission and Vision come to life.

As an independently funded school, we receive no government funding, and therefore rely on sound financial stewardship and governance of our resources to ensure the school continues to experience financial growth and strength.

The school has been a registered charity since 2010. We rely on development and fundraising to support our people, places and programs, and we are truly thankful for the generosity of our many donors and sponsors, who help support the school.

### A YEAR IN REVIEW

As a not-for profit organization, our school, under the guidance of the Board of Governors, works hard to manage expenses, capital, and infrastructure projects within a limited budget. We are always mindful of ensuring the integrity of our programs, first and foremost. This year, we put some projects on hold, and expect to complete them within the next few years.

That said, we unveiled a number of exciting facilities upgrades that will greatly enhance the student experience for years to come. Our upgraded Elementary Courtyard at 711 Waterloo was entirely funded by donations. Also new in 2016-2017, the floors in our Upper Elementary classrooms were replaced, and the finishing touches were completed on our 311 Oxford Street Casa location to ensure compliance with CCEYA requirements. We also moved forward with a number of technology initiatives to improve security and connectivity within the school.

### INTO THE FUTURE: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR A WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION

We anticipate that the future will continue to present us with competing priorities, and as an organization we will focus on meeting government compliance (i.e. CCEYA) and managing the increased costs around the support of our people, upgrading our places, and providing innovative programs. We will also continue to look for other sources of revenue beyond tuition.

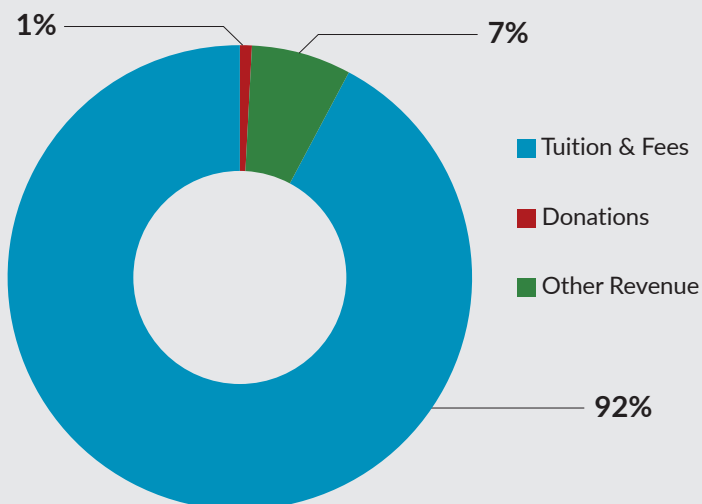
Over the next year, the school and its Board will work together to integrate our program budget, long-term capital plan and IT strategic plan with our overall school budgeting process to shape our future financial sustainability to support world-class education.

For more details on Montessori Academy's past finances, our CRA charitable returns can be found online: [www.charitydata.ca](http://www.charitydata.ca) or [www.canada.ca/en/services/taxes/charities.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/services/taxes/charities.html)

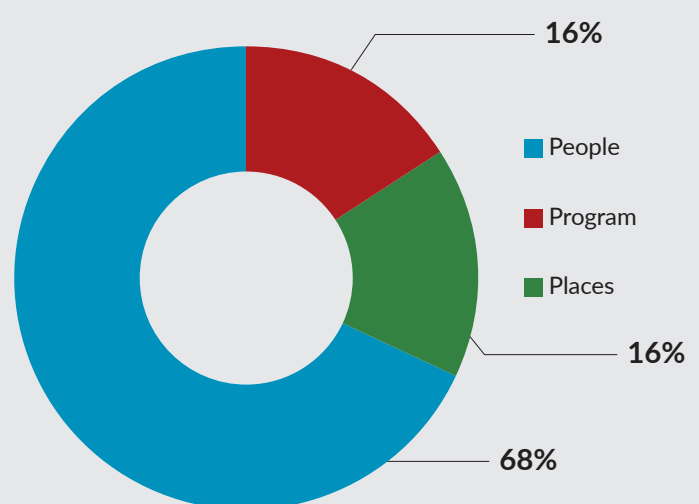
## COMPARISON OF REVENUES TO EXPENSES

Year-ending June 30, 2016 to Year-ending June 30, 2017

FY2017 REVENUES



FY2017 EXPENSES



## YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK

Our community has once again come together to make an incredible impact in our school – Thank you! We are thrilled to say we had yet another wonderful year with 100% participation by our Board of Governors and Staff in Fundraising.

### Here are just a few highlights of your donations at work:

- You raised \$15,000 through our Big Ten Raffle which was used for technology improvements throughout the school.
- The Class of 2017 donated almost \$3,000 which was used to launch our first ever Odyssey trip with Alive Outdoors in September 2017. The Class gifts are donations from graduating families that leave behind a legacy for future students every year. Without the Class of 2017's support, the program would not have launched in time to register with Alive Outdoors – a much sought-after outdoor adventure program. Thank you Class of 2017!
- Sponsors raised \$5,200 to support the musical production of Finn's Montessori Journey Musical at the Palace Theatre!
- The Annual Campaign raised over \$73,000! This allowed us to complete various capital improvements throughout the school over the summer. The biggest impact was new upgrades to the Junior 3 classroom – new flooring, new washroom and kitchen!

- A \$5,000 donation to our Faculty Development fund from Nancy Branscombe and Ken Kalopsis allowed us to invite Amy Kelton to visit and speak at our school. The donation covers the expense of Amy conducting an evening workshop for Parents on "Helping Children Navigate Self-Esteem and Social Struggles" as well as a full-day training for our entire faculty on classroom management for children with a learning differences.

- Our faculty raised \$5,400 through Teacher Parties which helped the school's capital projects over the summer.

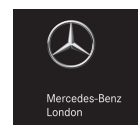
- Your donations to the Margaret Whitley Tribute Fund came to \$10,000! These donations were made in honour of Margaret Whitley's Lifetime achievements. Stay tuned to see what will happen with this fund!

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

### Thank you to our incredible sponsors: \$1,000 +



Canadian Commercial Development



Mercedes-Benz London



Panago Pizza

### \$500 - \$999

Andrew Martens – Hollis Wealth  
Libro Credit Union  
Murphy Bus Lines

### \$250 - \$499

London International Airport  
The Ryan Family

### \$100 - \$249

The Arcese Family  
J.B. Enterprises

For a detailed listing of our broad community support, please visit our website:  
[www.montessori.on.ca/ThankYou](http://www.montessori.on.ca/ThankYou)

Join our 50th Anniversary Leadership Circle or 50th Anniversary Club:  
[montessori.on.ca/get-involved/take-the-pledge/](http://montessori.on.ca/get-involved/take-the-pledge/)

### 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.