



Montessori  
ACADEMY OF LONDON

2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT

# Raising Helping Hands



# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



It is a pleasure to write that our first year of the next 50 began the same way we closed the first 50: it was an excellent year for the school, and we were able to enhance the school's overall governance once again.

It began with our August 2018 planning workshop at which the Board of Governors met and defined our priorities for the coming year and then allocated the priorities to Committees and Working Groups. At that

point, we staffed the committees and began our work for the year. Our key priorities for 2018-2019 were: recruit four new members to the board; implement key recommendations from the Ivey Business School Project report; support the completion of the School's first Human Capital Plan; and explore other ways to increase revenues.

We were able to recruit four outstanding new Governors for the Board in 2019: Dharshi Lacey, Rachael Noye, Megan Komenda from the community at large; and Christina Mack from our parent community. These four have outstanding backgrounds and experiences and I am grateful for their willingness to support the school with their time and energy. I encourage you to visit the school's website and read their profiles: [montessori.on.ca/about/board-of-governors](http://montessori.on.ca/about/board-of-governors). We also said farewell to a long-serving Governor and past president Julie Elgie who served for eight years in a variety of roles. Julie's knowledge and contributions over the years were spectacular. So much so that we have invited her to be an Honorary Governor so that we can continue to access her talents at Board meetings. I look forward to the contributions she makes in this new role.

One of the key recommendations of the Ivey report was to convert one of our leased facilities to an asset owned by the school. We completed that transaction in January of this year and we will benefit from the operating savings for years to come.

With the tremendous support of Governor Sarah Tattersall, the school was able to complete the Human Capital Plan. There is nothing better for an organization to know than the skills and competencies it has in its people, and the skills and competencies that it will need for its future success. Many hours were put into this exercise; the result was a solid plan to help guide training and hiring practices to ensure we have the skills needed to continue to operate an outstanding school.

On the revenue side, we created a new Working Group called Alternative Revenue. The intent was to explore other ways the "business" of the school could generate revenues to reduce our almost total reliance on tuition. Many meetings were held and lots of ideas were poked and prodded. The work will continue to be part of the 2019-2020 priorities.

So now we begin year two of our second 50. It holds promise of continued excellence in providing 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.

I encourage parents and community members to learn more about the school and why Montessori education is so important to children and to the education landscape in this city; one excellent way to do that is to get involved, including volunteering. You can learn more about that on the school's website: [montessori.on.ca/get-involved](http://montessori.on.ca/get-involved)

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

KEVIN HIGGINS, Board President



## BOARD OF GOVERNORS 2018-2019

### OFFICERS

Kevin Higgins, *President*

Jim Middlemiss, *Vice-President*

Wilma McIntyre, *Secretary*

Carl Hallberg, *Treasurer*

### GOVERNORS

Sarah Harding

Tyler Reavell

Suzanne Fratschko Elliott

Andrea Dean

Sarah Tattersall

Julie Elgie

Tina Sartori, *Executive Director, Ex-Officio*

Kristen Crouse, *Academic Director, Ex-Officio*

David Pasquino, *Finance Director, Ex-Officio*

Learn more about our Board members on the school website: [montessori.on.ca/about/board-of-governors/](http://montessori.on.ca/about/board-of-governors/)

# 2018-2019 HIGHLIGHTS



Because the school is a long-time member of the Canadian Council of Montessori Administrators (CCMA), the big highlight of the 2018-2019 school year was the re-accreditation of our Casa and Elementary programs, and the accreditation of the Toddler program.

It is a very time-consuming activity, yet integral to providing our students the best Montessori education in the area; one that embodies Dr. Maria Montessori's original vision. We thank the incredible teachers and staff who supported this important activity last year. Re-accreditation also ensures that Toddler and Casa programs adhere to the province's Childcare and Early Years (CCEYA) legislation.

CCMA accreditation is THE benchmark against which Montessori programs in Canada are measured every five years. The school is regularly referenced as a model of what Montessori should look like, with visitors from other Montessori schools looking to MA for inspiration. We are also a destination for student teachers either

in ECE or teacher's college as part of their Alternative Placement Field program. In fact, over the years, several of our faculty have joined us after completing their placements right here!

One of our mandates is to share the many benefits of Montessori to the greater community, and the school's leadership and Casa teachers did just that with 25 local ECE educators through Strive SWO ([striveswo.ca](http://striveswo.ca)), who visited our Oxford location to learn more about Montessori. One educator said she was grateful to "see the WHY behind the work... Everything is appropriately sized for the children's independence and success." Several said they were impressed by what they saw, including one visitor who was astounded by how "open-minded and trusting [Montessori is] with what kids can do; and the amount of tiny breakable things."

Another highlight for the school community included the school musical in May. The students and staff put together a spectacular performance of "Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka," which was held at Wolf Performance Hall over two days. Our music and arts program is unique to our school — not all Montessori programs are fortunate to have such a robust program that encourages children to explore their artistic side.

The school also hosted an Artisan Bazaar in June, which showcased 20 local vendors plus a dozen of our students as participating artisans. More than 130 people from the neighbourhood and community joined us at the Junior High building for this event, which raised \$1,600 for our annual fundraising!

Another favourite school-wide activity, our Family & Friends Event at Storybook Gardens, was brought back to the school schedule as a year-end social and celebration in June. We could not have asked for better weather for this annual event!

## WHAT IS ACCREDITATION?

The CCMA states that its accreditation is a "rigorous process" set out more than 25 years ago that establishes "consistency of standards and accountability" among Montessori schools across Canada. The CCMA says its goal is to "make good Montessori schools better." We are proud to be among the first accredited programs in Canada, and one that is looked to as an example of high-quality, traditional Montessori.

*On the cover:* As part of the school's Charitable Giving, the students participate in PJ Day. Students are asked for a small donation to wear their cozy PJs to school. These activities are important for students to develop empathy and a sense of responsibility toward others.





## DONOR PROFILE

# SO MANY WAYS TO GIVE

An invaluable way that families and friends can support our school is to give their experience and expertise, including through board positions, on committees and, of course, in the classrooms.

Amanda and Dave Walton, freshly minted Alumni Parents, have been regular supporters of the school since their daughters, Hannah and Ashlyn, started in our Westmount Casa preschool program in 2007; Hannah graduated from Grade 8 in 2017, and Ashlyn graduated Grade 8 in June 2019. Over these last 12 years, Amanda and Dave have been involved in the school in different ways.

As many young families know, time and energy can be hard to spare. So, Amanda says the key was to seek chances to volunteer and then whenever they could, say ‘yes.’ “We let the teachers know that we were eager to participate but required a bit more notice.... While we certainly haven’t always been able to say yes to every opportunity, we made it a priority to do so as often as possible.”

Whether it’s helping out at a school-wide event, or presenting to the students about a family’s traditions during a Culture lesson, volunteer activities within the school let families give back in a way that’s meaningful to the parents and is invaluable to the students who learn from their experiences.

The Waltons learned about the school through their friends, and have paid it forward by being advocates for the school and Montessori education. Amanda’s involvement as a parent classroom representative, first when the girls were in Casa and then when they were in Junior High, was impactful for the family.

Dave and Amanda also participated in Moving Up Sessions that allow parents of older students to meet with parents of younger students to answer questions about what to expect next in their child’s Montessori education.

They’ve also lent their support by participating in the Board’s strategic planning process — twice. “When the school set out to create its first strategic plan that covered 2012-2017 (“[Our Path to 2017](#)”), the Board was very thoughtful in engaging parents; Dave and I were quick to volunteer to join a focus group to share our perspectives as parents and were very pleased to see our feedback reflected in the final plan.” They also leapt at the chance to provide feedback for the second Strategic Plan, [Building Our Future Together](#), which was developed in 2016-2017 and covers 2017-2022. “We appreciate that the school values the input of parents, so we made it a priority to provide open and honest feedback,” Amanda explains.

“Getting involved has allowed us the chance to support the school community and our children; to get to know their classmates; and, of course, to get to know their teachers even better. It gives us the opportunity to model giving back to our daughters and to encourage them to do the same.”

Through their involvement, Amanda adds that she has seen the school live and breathe its vision and mission. “The school gives parents the opportunity to model good citizenship, and the school has clearly implemented this value through several school-based activities. The vision related to building a humane world is also



woven into the many opportunities that students have to give back to their community ... and parents have to give back to the school."

And we are grateful to our many families for the wealth of gifts they've offered our school in every shape and form over the past half-century.

To learn more about how to support London's only traditional, accredited Montessori program, visit: [montessori.on.ca/get-involved/ways-to-give](https://montessori.on.ca/get-involved/ways-to-give)

### GIVING: SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

As a registered charity and not-for-profit organization, Montessori Academy is committed to continuously re-investing in our school for the benefit of our children, families and greater community. We rely on gifts from friends and families of the school to help cover the many expenses of running an independent program and to continue to offer London families something very valuable: education choice.

Throughout the school year, there are a variety of opportunities to support the school, so that our families and friends can find a way to give that works for them. There is no expectation that our families will give every time we introduce a new event or activity. Instead, we wish for them to give when and if they are moved to, and in a way that is meaningful to them. Each and every gift — whether time, talent or treasure — is greatly appreciated by the school and is used to enhance the learning experience of our students.

## FAST FACTS 2018-2019

Number of families = Approx. 250 families

Number of Students in 2018-2019 = 336

» 35 Toddler students

» 104 Casa students

» 153 Elementary students Years 1-6

» 23 Year 7 students

» 20 Year 8 Graduates in June 2019

### OTHER NUMBERS

» 130 visitors helped us raise \$1,600 during our ARTISAN Bazaar in June 2019

» 6,500 tiles used to create the Elementary Medicine Wheel

### WAYS WE GAVE BY THE NUMBERS IN 2018-2019...

#### TODDLER & CASA

» 4 vans filled with supplies for Merrymount Family Support Centre

#### ELEMENTARY

» Lower Elementary: students delivered "a mountain of supplies" for Another Chance Wildlife Rehabilitation in November 2018.

» Upper Elementary: 240 pounds of food donated to the London Food Bank in November 2018

» WE Group: provided 104 people in developing countries with clean water for life over 2018 & 2019.

#### JUNIOR HIGH

» 200+ meals were prepared by students for Men's Mission

» \$2,920.20 raised for Children's Health Foundation

» 8 bags of pre-loved clothing donated to Mine 101 in support of Anova

### 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

Upper Elementary 10 to 12 years

Junior High - 12 to 14 years

### LOCATIONS

Oxford Street location:

Casa (pre-school JK/SK) 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 2018-2019

# OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The school's strategic priorities are set by the Board of Governors with the input of faculty, staff and parent volunteers. Over the next year we will continue to build upon the initiatives within the current priorities that will guide the school through 2022. Among the key initiatives we'll address in 2019-2020:

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 1: EDUCATING STUDENTS, FOSTERING CITIZENS

We continue to provide high-quality Montessori education to our students and serve as a model of strong traditional Montessori for other schools in Canada and beyond.



Now that Montessori Academy's Casa and Elementary programs have been re-accredited, and our Toddler program has successfully been accredited for the first time, our Junior High program accreditation is on the horizon. Our accrediting body, The Canadian Council of Montessori Administrators (CCMA), is in the process of developing its Adolescent Program accreditation standards. As one of the very first Montessori programs to be accredited in Canada, our school's academic leaders hope to participate in the development of those standards. We expect the Junior High program to be part of the accreditation process during the next CCMA accreditation visit in 2023.

Enrolment for the 2019-2020 school year remains steady with 330 students, which was our target for budgeting; such consistent re-enrolment and admissions numbers support the long-term fiscal health of the school. We thank our parents for their commitment to our program; through their continued support, Montessori Academy is able to continue to provide London families education choice — and high-quality, traditional Montessori.

### STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: BUILDING SCHOOL COMMUNITY, SUPPORTING OUR FAMILIES

The school is continually looking at new ways to support parents and families during their children's time at our school. In 2019-2020, we are revamping our Moving Up Sessions to provide more consistency in these information sessions through all levels of our program. We're also introducing a Volunteer Action Plan to help parents better navigate the many ways they can give their time to the school. We streamlined our application process with an online sign-up and created more direct roles for volunteers that really exemplify their skills and passion, while ultimately supporting the school and students' learning through their involvement.

The Administration team is in the process of upgrading the student database, and expects that the new version will improve parent interactions with the school, from the online re-enrolment process to enhanced communication tools, including better urgent message communication tools, and a secure parent portal.



### STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: PREPARING THE ENVIRONMENT, UPGRADING FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE



The school continues to invest in its learning environments, making improvements that are meaningful and support traditional Montessori and academic excellence. Now that the massive renovations to our Junior High building have been realized, we're turning our attention back to Elementary. Planned upgrades to one of our Elementary buildings were put on hold a few years ago as the school tackled renovations to our three Casa preschool locations in support of licensing under the Childcare and Early Years Act (CCEYA). We hope to complete significant renovations to the centre part of our Elementary building during the summer of 2020; the school's fundraising efforts during 2019-2020 will focus on these upgrades.

Whether it's upgrades to facilities or the re-accreditation of our programs, all of these activities ultimately support our strategic priorities AND our students, by providing them not only beautiful well-planned environments in which to flourish, but an exceptional Montessori education that guides them on their journey of discovery.

# FINANCIAL REPORT 2017-2018

## Stable enrolment and surprise grants help improve school's fiscal footing!

Montessori Academy of London is a registered charity dedicated to offering traditional, accredited Montessori education to Toddler (ages 18-23 months), Casa (preschool/Kindergarten), Elementary (Grades 1-6) and Junior High Students (Grades 7 & 8). Since 1968, our mission has been to provide a world-class education that promotes academic excellence and prepares students to engage the world as active citizens and successful leaders.

The school's Board of Governors is responsible for the financial health of the school. Through sound financial planning and fiscal responsibility, as well as unanticipated grants that came through the city, stable enrolment and fundraising in 2018-2019, the school improved its overall fiscal footing which will assist in providing better flexibility to meet present and future plans, including unforeseen challenges.

### A YEAR IN REVIEW

Our fiscal year started as usual in July 2018, with many projects taking place in July and August to update and refresh many parts of our school; Upper Elementary had new kitchens and cubbies installed, the Junior High Parking lot was re-finished, and Waterloo Casa's outdoor learning environment was updated, along with much painting (inside and out) and new flooring installed in various buildings. The new school truck purchased at the end of last year proved its worth throughout the summer, and the rest of the year.

The School received a number of unanticipated grants from the provincial government, via the City of London, that included an Affordability Pilot where we refunded a portion of tuition to families of Toddler and preschool age students, a one-time operating grant that allowed us to purchase many items on teachers' wish lists for the Toddler and Casa classes and more. Special Needs Resource funding was used to purchase resources and materials for Toddler and Casa students with special needs.

At the end of 2018, the school made the decision to implement a recommendation from the Ivey research project and, with the success of the 2017-2018 fiscal year, was able to purchase the Junior High building at 742 Waterloo Street, one year before the lease for that location was due to expire. With the purchase of this building, the school is able to create a positive cash flow compared to renting.

Enrolment was stable with 336 students in 2018-2019, and fundraising was focused on improvements to the Junior High building, including new floors, paint and kitchen renovations. In 2019-2020 fundraising will be focused on the final portion of the renovations plans that was started in 2013 and will see significant improvements to our 711 Waterloo Street building on all floors, including upgrades to the Library, kitchen renovations on the 2nd floor, and improvements to the Upper Elementary classrooms.

For more details on Montessori Academy's past finances, our CRA charitable returns can be found at: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/menu-eng.html>

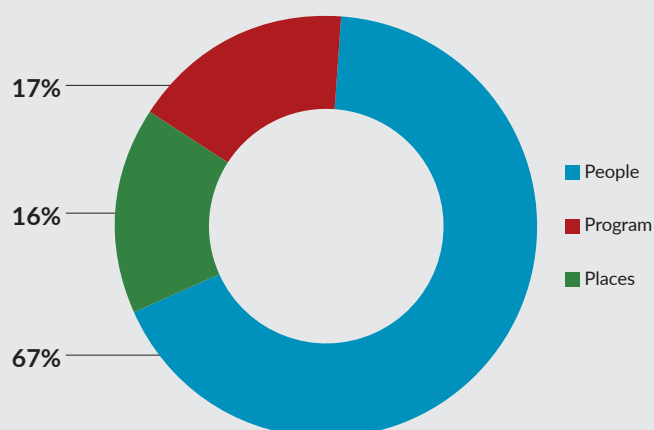
## COMPARISON OF REVENUES TO EXPENSES

JULY 1, 2018 TO YEAR-ENDING JUNE 30, 2019

**FY2019 GROSS REVENUES:**  
\$5,707,884



**FY2019 GROSS EXPENSES:**  
\$5,245,946



# THANK YOU

Montessori Academy of London is an independently funded school with not-for-profit charity status. Our school relies on the support of our families, the business community, foundations and other charitable organizations to reduce our reliance on tuition and supplement the school's revenues in order to meet the expense of delivering high-quality, traditional Montessori education to families in and around London.

Throughout each school year, there are a variety of opportunities to give and support Montessori Academy. Families are welcomed to participate in any way that works best for you, whether that's participation in our fundraising events, a direct donation, sponsorship, or a combination of ways to give. Just like our students experience choice in a Montessori classroom, you, our donors, can choose how you would like to get involved in giving to the school.

Your generosity and foresight ensures that we meet our goals each year and continue to bring our vision and mission to life. Contributions to our Annual Campaign surpassed our fundraising goal of \$85,000 for the year, to bring in a total of \$95,650!

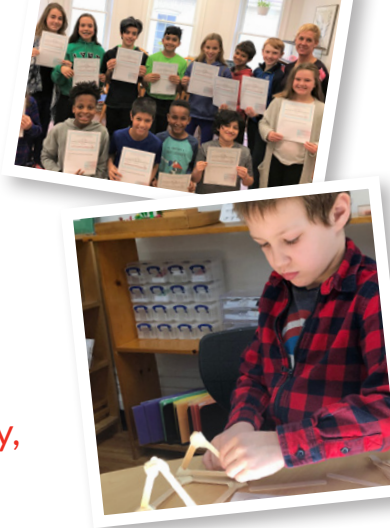
## YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS SUPPORT

- Special Projects
- Financial Aid
- Programs
- Faculty Development
- Capital Improvements

## YOUR IMPACT THIS YEAR

- The April Matching Gift campaign with a goal of \$10,000 brought in \$18,375!
- The Artisan Bazaar held in June brought out more than 130 people from the community and raised \$1,600 for the school.
- Thanks to a \$3,000 donation from Lutheran Social Services London, we were able to purchase our first Automated External Defibrillator for the school.
- The school musical, Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka, in May received \$4,750 in sponsorship from:
  - Mercedes-Benz London
  - HollisWealth
  - Seychelles Swimwear
  - Libro Credit Union
  - Canadian Commercial Management
  - Pizza Projekt
  - Murphy Bus Lines
  - The Ryan Family
- School wide events such as the London Lightning game, trip to Boler Mountain and Halloween Family Boo-wling at Palasud South helped to encourage a sense of community and brought in \$4,275 for the school.
- Participation in Teacher Parties raised \$4,555 and provided TONS of fun throughout the year with 13 original themes.
- The Big 10 Raffle hosted some incredible prize packages and brought in \$9,420 for our general fundraising endeavours.
- The Class of 2019 donated \$6,800 which purchased new cooking supplies for the kitchens, microscopes for the science area, and classroom tables for Junior High.

Please visit the school's website to see a list of our current donors: [montessori.on.ca/thankyou](http://montessori.on.ca/thankyou)



## 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.



A PROUD MEMBER OF



711 Waterloo Street, London, Ontario N6A 3W1  
519.433.9121 [montessori.on.ca](http://montessori.on.ca)  
Facebook @MontessoriAcademyofLondon  
Twitter @MAofLondon

CHARITABLE REGISTRATION #105229124RR001