

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021



President's Message 2020-2021

As the 2020-2021 school year drew to a close, and I reflected on the past school year, a few words came to mind – perseverance, resilience and hope. It was a year where we all needed to persevere to simply keep moving through to get beyond. Despite the many challenges we have faced, we have all demonstrated strength, agility and caring to help each other ‘move through’ in the hope that we will ‘get beyond’. Thank you to Tina Sartori, the school’s Executive Director, and the faculty and administration for doing an incredible job ensuring the school year was the best that it could possibly be for our students and the entire Montessori community. You all shine, and we are extremely grateful!

With the end of the 2020-2021 school year, so ended the fiscal year for the Board of Governors. As Governors, it is our responsibility to steward the school’s mission, vision, values and strategic goals, while establishing policies and procedures consistent with those objectives. The Board safeguards the assets of the school and supports the Executive Director to enhance the performance and reputation of the school overall.

Despite lower enrolment numbers in 2020-2021, our cash position was solid due to Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) support, and the capital renovation projects which were deferred last summer were completed this summer, thanks to the support of this community. All other areas of the school’s Strategic Plan – ‘Building Our Future Together’ are tracking to a successful completion as the Board begins work on developing the school’s next strategic plan throughout 2021-2022. We look forward to your valued participation in envisioning future possibilities for Montessori Academy of London.

This past year, Governors Jim Middlemiss and Carl Hallberg completed their terms serving on the Board, and it was with sadness that we received the resignation of Christina Mack. On behalf of the Board of Governors, I would like to extend my immense gratitude for their generous contributions of time and expertise. We also welcomed new Governors, Ted Middleton and Matt Grossi, while re-appointing Tyler Reavell and Andrea Dean. We are so fortunate to

have such creative and outstanding contributors on our Board. Thank you to all Governors. It is a privilege to serve among such a dedicated group of individuals.

Our future looks bright! We returned to in-class learning in September, allowing our Elementary and Junior High students and faculty to re-connect for the first time in months! Being back in the classroom has been wonderful for everyone in our community.

Most sincerely,

Suzanne Fratschko Elliott, President

Montessori Academy Board of Governors

Board of Governors 2020-2021

OFFICERS

- Suzanne Fratschko Elliott, President
- Jim Middlemiss, Vice President
- Wilma McIntyre, Secretary
- Carl Hallberg, Treasurer

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- Mark Whitley, Founding family representative
- Christina Mack , Current Parent
- Tyler Reavell, Treasurer
- Andrea Dean, Alumni Parent
- Julie Elgie, Alumni Parent
- Kevin Higgins, Current Parent
- Megan Komenda, Community Member
- Dharshi Lacey, Alumni Parent
- Rachael Noye, Alumni Parent
- Sarah Tattersall, Alumna, Current Parent
- Tina Sartori, Executive Director, Ex-Officio
- Kristen Crouse, Academic Director, Ex-Officio
- David Pasquino, Finance Director, Ex-Officio

As at September 2020

Highlights and What's Next

School Activities

The 2020-2021 school year was unlike any other. The big challenge - or rather, *opportunity* - was to create ways that we could navigate the pandemic without losing the essence of who we are. We drew upon the resilience and creativity of our MA-zing faculty and staff to do it.

It wasn't a matter of asking "Can we do it?" It was asking "HOW can we do it?" The Montessori classroom, or prepared environment, is such a significant part of Montessori education. Yet, through some innovative thinking and hard work, the faculty and staff were able to provide meaningful interactions, lessons and activities at a distance for our Elementary and Junior High communities from April through June. We also worked hard together to create video and online information as we weren't able to invite parents to join us in the classrooms and at events.



Video was used several times to help us connect with one another. Our Remembrance Day Assembly is a beloved annual tradition -- it's our first gathering and assembly of each school year. Because of COVID restrictions, the teachers were tasked with coming up with a solution to help us provide the children meaningful Remembrance Day lessons, and provide parents a taste of what was learned. To that end, a Remembrance Day video was created by Upper Elementary and Junior High coordinator Shawn Butler and the teachers to share with the community last November. [Here's a portion of that performance - the Junior High class's performance of "Gabriel's Oboe."](#)

Prior to the Winter Break, Elementary Music Teacher Marty Kolls showcased the Elementary and Junior High students in a lovely [student-led video performance of "The Scientist" by Coldplay](#).

Because we couldn't host our usual Moving Up Parent Sessions in person in January, Shawn also created a series of gorgeous videos of our Casa, Elementary and Junior High learning environments to [provide parents a peek inside the beautiful spaces](#) where their children will flourish on their Montessori journey. We now use these videos as part of our Admissions process to let prospective parents see how special the prepared environment is in Montessori education.

And, of course, the video of “The Lion King” performance was a spectacular showcase of dance and movement! Hours of preparation by the faculty, staff and students went into this video extravaganza. Even our Casa students were able to participate! It truly showed how committed the participants were in creating a fun, colourful performance!

One event we were able to host in person was an intimate yet physically-distanced Grade 8 Graduation in the Elementary Courtyard. It had been months since many of the Junior High students, staff, and families had seen one another in person, and it was a memorable and emotional gathering for everyone involved.

We wrapped up the school year with a successful Fundraising campaign - raising \$91,308, part of which supported our Special Project: upgrades to the Elementary Lunch Kitchen! The finished kitchen in the main Elementary home looks fantastic! Over the summer we also updated cabinetry and storage space at our Westmount location; and the beautiful refurbished Oxford Outdoor Learning Environment also received an upgrade.

Please see the Development & Fundraising update below for more about our fundraising efforts during 2020-2021.

What's Next

Families who have been with us for a while will remember that the school had big dreams of a large renovation project within our Elementary homes. Over the years we have completed renovations in different sections of Upper and Lower Elementary that were part of this plan. The large centre section, however, had to be put on hold and broken into two projects due to various unknowns with the pandemic. The Elementary Lunch kitchen and new flooring for the Elementary Music Room we finished this summer, but we still have a large section to finish that includes the main floor Library, the Lower Level French room and cubby area, as well as a small part of Lower EI 1 classroom. This final section is a priority, and the Administration along with the Board Finance Committee, will be taking the time to look at how we can bring this final section of the project to completion in the future.

As well, this year marks the end of our strategic plan, and the start of our next five-year plan. We will look to our community for input on our strategic priorities that will guide us from 2023 through 2028. We invite MA parents to watch for upcoming messages from the Board and school about getting involved in this process!

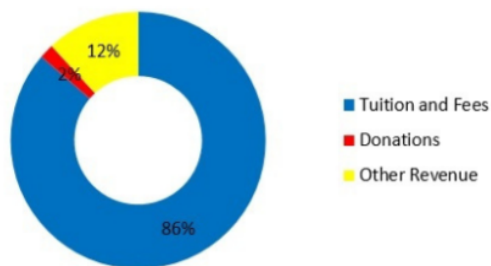
The board and administration of the school are so very grateful to our families and friends for their continued support as we've navigated the tricky waters of this global pandemic. The resilience shown in students, staff and family community has been truly inspiring. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel and it is brighter because of your support.

Financial Report 2020-2021

We learned from the first shutdown, from March to June 2020, the financial impact the closure can cost a school as we realized over \$800,000 in refunds. We didn't want to be in that position again, so we are grateful for the opportunity to apply for any of the government grants, such as the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy ("CEWS"), that were available, in order to be in a financial stable position if the worst (ie. shutdown) should happen again. Due to the uncertainty of how the pandemic would unfold, it was paramount that we apply for funding as long as we are eligible.

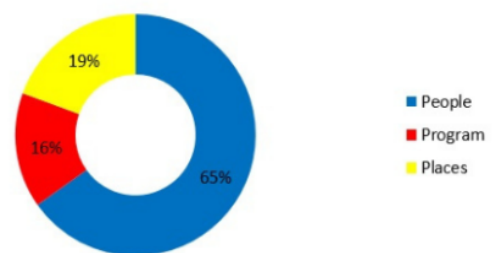
Our 2020-2021 year had our lowest enrolment in over a decade – 309 students versus 333 in the previous year – and we were projecting a deficit for the year. We prepared for the start of school and the return of students by putting into place all of the required protocols, and even went further – investing over \$50,000 in "Air Sniper" units that use UV to sanitize the air in all the classrooms. Our Toddler and Casa classes remained open and operating for the entire school year, but unfortunately, our Elementary and Junior High classrooms were closed after the winter break for the month of January, and again after the Spring break in April until the end of the school year. Elementary and Junior High programming moved online using Zoom. As a result of these closures, we refunded our Elementary and Junior High parents nearly \$130,000 for activity and lunch fees. Fortunately, the school continued to be eligible for the CEWS, and we were able to subsidize the salaries of teachers and staff with these funds. We also benefited from surprise donations at the end of year that pushed us over our fundraising goal and allowed us to complete the Elementary Kitchen renovations this summer. As a direct result, the school ended the year in a strong positive financial position; if we had not received the CEWS we would have been in a deficit. The plan for this excess is to use it towards capital improvements for the school.

FY 2021 Revenue



Revenue: \$5,126,283

FY 2021 Expenses



Expenses: \$4,613,897

The school's financial statements can be found by searching for "Montessori Academy of London" [on the Canada Revenue Agency website's List of Charities.](#)

Development & Fundraising

Montessori Academy of London is so fortunate to have a strong community rallying behind our school.

Thanks to the generosity of our families, donors, Board of Directors, Private Foundations, our partners, and the innovation and dedication of our teachers, we were able to exceed our fundraising goal.

Our partnership with Growing Chefs! Ontario on our “What’s for Dinner?” fundraisers was vital in helping us achieve our fundraising goal, with the cancellation of many other fundraising events. “What’s for Dinner?” created an additional revenue stream of support for both of our organizations.

The school’s Annual Appeal Letter raised the majority of our fundraising revenue this year with a total of \$47,736. The focus of our Appeal was on renovations to the Elementary Hot Lunch Kitchen. Thanks to the generosity of our loyal supporters, we were able to complete our Elementary Hot Lunch Kitchen project and increased our Elementary lunch program to five days a week!

Total Funds Raised 2020-2021 was \$91,308!

Thank you Donors! Your ongoing support allows us to augment our Montessori programs, improve our services (like lunch!) and continue to create welcoming environments for our students.

Charitable Registration Number: 105229124 RR 0001