

2015-2016

# Annual Report



# Letter From The Head of School

Dear Friends:

School year 2015-2016 was the 49th year of Austin Montessori School's commitment to providing an authentic Montessori education to children. Our school continued its steadfast pursuit of fulfilling its important mission by increasing enrollment, enhancing our partnership with our families, continuing to enhance programming, nurturing professional development and improving our facilities. Evidence for this lies herein with the report of our school's healthy financials, but as those who are part of our family know, the story runs much deeper than just the numbers.

This year saw our preparation for our new All-Day/All-Year Children's House program in Magnolia Cottage based on the program's needs. We also built our staff team for the program. Angela Eagle, former Guide from Laurel Cottage, has been tapped to serve as Lead Guide with support from one of our most experienced Guides, Valerie Pheasant, formerly of Pomegranate Cottage. Socorro Aguilar, longtime assistant in Laurel Cottage, will serve as full-time assistant for the program. The team was completed by new Guide, Alejandra Garcia, who joins AMS fresh out of her Primary training at the Montessori Institute of San Diego (MISD). Alejandra will serve as full-time support substitute during other team members' time off.

We renovated our Gaines Creek campus with the help of funds from our parent community to enhance our Creative Expression program for the adolescents. With these generously donated funds, we were able to remodel an existing space and are purchasing instruments and other materials for arts in the program.

This year was bittersweet in that we bid a fond farewell to longtime Early Elementary Guide, Mary Long Geil. Mary served children at Austin Montessori School for 39 years, as both a Children's House and Early Elementary Guide. We thank Mary for all of her years of her service to the children of Austin and to our school and we wish her a happy and fulfilling retirement.

Our commitment towards our staff's personal and professional development continued through our Staff Enrichment Grants and our teacher training sponsorship program. We welcome back Jessenia Giron from completing her Primary training at MISD and are excited for her to begin her tenure as a Guide in Pomegranate Cottage. Kate Hearne continues her Primary training at the Houston Montessori Institute, completing her second of three summer sessions.

Next year marks Austin Montessori School's golden anniversary as we celebrate fifty years of serving children. Planning for our celebration is already underway and we look forward to reconnecting with each of you over the course of the year. I'm happy to report the healthy state of our school. We are energized for the future!

Grae Baker  
Head of School



# Our Mission

The mission of Austin Montessori School is to guide the intellectual and character development of each child along a path towards his full and unknown potential. We strive to cultivate compassion and respect, independence and belonging, and freedom and self-discipline, in rich academic and social environments that are designed for each plane of development and honor the complementary needs of the individual and the group. We value an educational setting that is inclusive and responsive to the authentic nature of the child and reverent of the organic order of the universe.

Through parent and staff education, we work to develop a school and family culture that preserves and protects a healthy childhood. Our aim is to serve children possessing an ample range of temperaments and a variety of learning styles and rates. At the same time we seek to avoid labeling as pathological the normal range of children's behaviors and differences in learning. We are dedicated to Montessori's mission of world peace through human development.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Clara Serrano**  
President

**Christina Pesoli**  
Vice President

**Maggie Walsh**  
Secretary

**Chris Howard**  
Treasurer

**Michele Sweeten**

**Donald C. Goertz**

**Grae Baker, Ex Officio**

**Dawn Michal, Ex Officio**





# Children & Staff

## Our Community

### PARENT and INFANT COMMUNITY

Ages 3 months - 3 years  
28 Students

### YOUNGEST CHILDREN'S COMMUNITIES

Ages 18 months - 3 years  
Butterfly & Hummingbird Gardens  
24 Students

### CHILDREN'S HOUSE COMMUNITIES

Ages 3 - 6 years  
Cypress, Laurel, Redbud, Magnolia, Pomegranate & Persimmon Cottages  
151 Students

### EARLY ELEMENTARY COMMUNITIES

Ages 6 - 9 years  
Birdsong, Heartsong & Windsong  
87 Students

### UPPER ELEMENTARY COMMUNITIES

Ages 9 - 12 years  
Nova & Terra  
50 Students

### ADOLESCENT COMMUNITY

Ages 12 - 15 years  
Gaines Creek  
46 Students

386 Total Students in 2015-2016

344 Total Students in 2014-2015

335 Total Students in 2013-2014

325 Total Students in 2012-2013

333 Total Students in 2011-2012

\*Has received an AMI diploma

## ADMINISTRATIVE & SUPPORT STAFF

Donna Bryant Goertz\*  
Founder/Director Emerita

Donald C. Goertz  
Director Emeritus

Grae Baker\*  
Head of School

Dawn Michal  
Director of Operations

Amber Miller  
Director of Admissions

Joseph Aken\*  
Elementary Coordinator

Charlotte Kruger\*  
Children's House Mentor

Lois O'Brien  
Office Manager

Cheryl McGee\*  
Admissions Assistant

Amanda Brown  
Great Northern Campus Operations

Johnna Shelton  
South Campus Support

Sonal Bowness  
Librarian/Communications  
Coordinator

Lucinda Castillo  
Shuttle Bus Driver

Robbie Burnett  
Office Support

Jerry Pippins  
Maintenance Support

Mary Collins  
Substitute

Patricia Oriti\*  
Consultant

Brooks Whitmore  
Piano

Debra Groves  
Piano

Esther Sanders  
Strings

Juan and Francesca Tejada  
Caretakers

**COMMONS**  
Lynn Hunt  
Casita Leader

Chris Long  
Casita Assistant

Lee Ann Perry  
Casita Leader

Mandy Weeks  
Clubhouse Leader

Mick Westerman  
Clubhouse Assistant

Kat Hartley  
Clubhouse Leader

Emily St. Amand-Poliakoff  
Club Mundi

## GUIDES & ASSISTANTS

### PARENT and INFANT COMMUNITY

Gwen Logan\*  
Parent Infant Education

### YOUNGEST CHILDREN'S COMMUNITIES

Margarita Ruiz\*, Guide  
Adriane Pippins, Assistant  
Paije Long\*, Guide  
Carolyn Garza, Assistant

### CHILDREN'S HOUSE COMMUNITIES

Valerie Pheasant\*, Guide  
Matt Williams, Assistant  
Donna Mantich\*, Guide  
Kate Hearne, Assistant  
Elizabeth Suggs\*, Guide  
Laurel Gressett, Assistant  
Priya Salem\*, Guide  
Mary Ann Collins, Assistant  
Angela Eagle\*, Guide  
Socorro Aguilar, Assistant  
Elizabeth Howe\*, Guide  
Jinny Gonzalez\*, Guide  
Jesse Jahnke\*, Guide  
Jessica Whinery, Assistant

### EARLY ELEMENTARY COMMUNITIES

Mary Long Geil\*, Guide  
Diana Franklin, Assistant  
Erik Rivas-Rivas\*, Guide  
Khara Vincent, Assistant  
Jamie Stone\*, Guide  
Elena Kaough, Assistant

### UPPER ELEMENTARY COMMUNITIES

Nicholas Pippins\*, Guide  
Libby Head\*, Assistant\*  
John Hooper\*, Guide  
Kelsey Gallagher, Assistant

### Adolescent Community

Jesse Gevirtz\*, Guide  
Thomas Logan, Guide  
Veronique Mareen, Guide  
Kathryn Noack, Guide  
Bill Sneed, Guide



# Community Events

Here are just a few of the memorable community events that served to knit us together.

The **GREAT NORTHERN FAMILY PICNIC** and the picnics and gatherings sponsored by the Parent Association, brought us together to celebrate milestones in the school calendar and to enjoy each other's company.



**PARENT SOCIAL AT THE DRISKELL**



**FALL FESTIVAL**

Families and staff loved working together at our **OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT DAYS**, renewing and beautifying the gardens and play areas. Side by side we cared for the land that is our home.

**BLUEGRASS NIGHT** at the Adolescent Community at Gaines Creek continued to be a hugely popular whole-family event, full of good food, fun activities, and entertainment, all hosted by the adolescents in our community.

The elementary children and families enjoyed an evening sharing poetry with each other at the annual **CANDLELIGHT POETRY NIGHT**.



**OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT DAY**



**BLUEGRASS NIGHT**

**FALL FESTIVAL** brought us together for fun, fellowship, food and fundraising, as each classroom community sponsored an activity or cultural presentation.

**THE SILENT JOURNEY AND DISCOVERY**, took parents on a journey through each developmental level, allowing them to experience the full range of Montessori education as the children themselves experience it.

**THEATER NIGHT** at the Adolescent Community was a truly entertaining event for the cast, crew and theater guests.

The entire community came together to donate blood in honor of Graham Bullock, a member of the Windsong Community.



**GALA AUCTION**

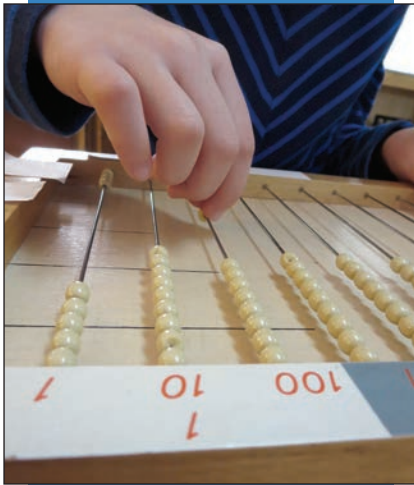


**THEATER NIGHT**

In addition to much-loved story times from guides and a presentation on Reading Aloud, the **ANNUAL BOOK DRIVE** prompted the donation of over 300 new books for our library and classrooms.

Our **Gala Auction** was a night to remember, netting over \$64,000 for our school.

We hosted a full slate of **PARENT EDUCATION EVENTS**, including Parent Gatherings and other meetings, a Parent Book Group, Parent/Infant Classes with Gwen Logan, the Silent Journey and Discovery, many Coffees with Grae Baker and parenting courses and evenings with Leslie Grove, Carl Pickhardt, Paula Polk Lilliard and others!



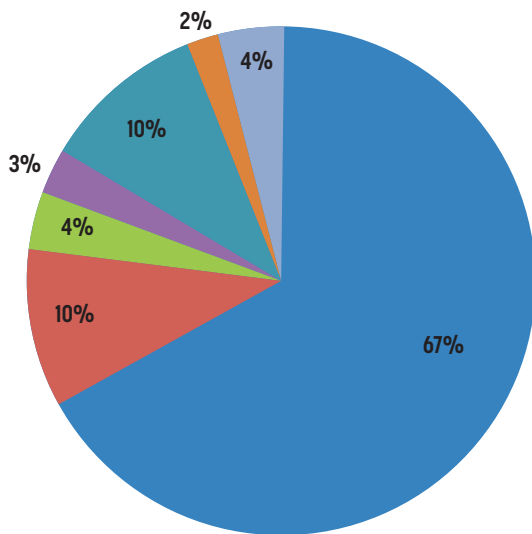
# Financial Summary

The Board of Trustees, with the Head of School, maintains the financial stability of the school through a board-approved budget that ensures predictable revenue and well-managed expenses.

Revenue for the year ending July 2016 totaled \$4.2 million, up from \$3.77 million in the prior year. Operating expenses totaled \$3.95 million, up from \$3.57 million in the prior year, yielding a net income of \$247,548. Non-operating expenses totaled \$218,910, which included \$148,759 in capital improvement expenditures and \$70,151 in debt reduction.

For the last 5 years, the school has increased enrollment and planned for modest increases to cash reserves. Enrollment for the year was up 4.6% from the prior year, and as of July 2016 the average cash reserves grew to 3.5 months of operating expenses.

As a non-profit school, philanthropy continues to play an important role in our financial foundation. A strong Annual Fund and Spring Gala combine with a disciplined operating budget to help keep tuition affordable for our families.



- Salaries & Benefits
- Instructional Expense
- Administrative Expense
- Interest Expense
- Facilities Maintenance
- Depreciation Expense
- Tuition Assistance

## REVENUE

Tuition & Fees .....	3,978,246
Fundraising & Donations.....	222,088
<b>Total Income .....</b>	<b>4,200,334</b>

## OPERATING EXPENSES

Salaries & Benefits .....	2,652,898
Instructional Expense .....	392,145
Administrative Expense .....	152,888
Interest Expense .....	106,216
Facilities Maintenance .....	410,838
Depreciation Expense .....	78,076
Tuition Assistance .....	159,725
<b>Total Expense .....</b>	<b>3,952,786</b>

**Net Income..... 247,548**

## NON-OPERATING EXPENSES

Capital Improvements .....	148,759
Principal Payments on Debt .....	70,151