Dear CMS Community,

The AGM is next Tuesday evening (22 March at 7pm), which means it’s time to consider who you wish to represent you on the CMS Board.

I’m very pleased to say we have a strong field of candidates this year, which is exactly what we want as we start realising our new Strategic Plan, 2016 - 2025. We have a great mix of current parents and external candidates, which demonstrates the high level of interest and support for the school and what we’re doing. Having a mix such as this is very beneficial to the Board. While any Board member, parent or otherwise, can bring valuable expertise and experience in areas such as finance, legal, governance, community development or in other fields, there is additional value to be had by sourcing Board members from diverse backgrounds.

For example, having CMS community members on the Board means that there is a day-to-day understanding of the school which is very useful when considering the implications of long term strategic decisions. On the other hand, when we have non-parents on the Board, not only does it give us an outside perspective, we often get additional expertise and access to networks that we may not otherwise have. Different kinds of question get asked, and this is extremely important for robust governance. It also provides us with additional ways to introduce or strengthen the understanding of Montessori to a broader reach of the community. So we are fortunate, this year, that we have such strong diversity in our candidates.

When considering whom you would like to support as a Board member, please ask yourself the following questions:

- What professional skills (e.g. legal, financial, strategic, analysis, community development, etc) can this candidate bring, and how would that contribute to the overall mix of skills on the Board?
- Will this person be able to drive the strategic plan of the school forward?
- Is there good diversity amongst the Board?

Then, please either attend the AGM, (please help us anticipate numbers by RSVPing to Reception) to cast your vote on this and other items, or complete your Proxy Form.

If you would like me, as the Acting Board Chair, to act as your proxy, please either provide your proxy to Reception or directly to me via board.chair@cms.act.edu.au. If you have a specific Proxy in mind, please provide them with your proxy form to bring with them to the AGM.

Outgoing Board Members:

I would like to express, on behalf of the Board, our sincere thanks to our out-going Board Members.

Vyt Vilkaitis, who has served on the Board for 6 years, 5 of those as Chair, has made an enormous contribution to both the development of the Board and of the School. Vyt's children left the school several years ago, but he
has continued to be heavily involved and led the transition to Anthony Vandermolen, our Principal, as well as overseeing the development of two Strategic Plans. On the governance side, Vyt has led the Board through significant improvements to our processes, documentation and transparency and the School and Society are better places for his hard work.

We have other Board members who are not standing again or have stood down for other reasons. Monica Murfett left us to move overseas at the end of last year. Karl Caig, Petrina Schiavi, Emma-Kate Potter and Kieron Meagher are also not seeking re-election after valuable service to the Board. Karl has been heavily involved in developing the finance and compliance aspects of the Board and also served as Deputy Chair for some time. Petrina has served in a number of ways, particularly on the Policy and Building subcommittees. Emma-Kate has been a strong contributor in a number of ways, including on the OLCC and as part of the Communications committee. Kieron joined the Board just recently, but has been very valuable in his strategic contributions. We thank these members for their significant time, effort, consideration and dedication to the improvement of the School.

Thanks to everyone in the community for your support over the last 12 months, and we look forward to seeing you at the AGM.

Kind regards,

Catherine Prosser
Acting Board Chair

New Nominations

Peter Stephenson
Peter is new to Canberra Montessori but not to the Montessori method of education. He and his family have recently moved from Perth to Canberra. His son attended Perth Montessori and is now in Banksia at Canberra Montessori. He has been actively involved in community groups for a number of years. Until leaving Perth he was president of the Ratepayer’s Association for the suburb of Guildford. In this role he represented the interests of the community and worked closely with local, state and federal government representatives. He also consulted and liaised with members of the community and similar organisations. He has an MBA as well as other qualifications. He has worked extensively as a Business Analyst and Project Manager. He has a wide experience in a variety of industries. He also has considerable experience conducting training courses and coaching sports. He hopes to support Canberra Montessori and ensure the best possible outcome for the school and its students.

Samantha Scott
Sam has extensive experience in public sector management, committee governance and helping implement change, including helping people deal with change. Sam loves strategic and tactical thinking – particularly
connecting complementary ideas and perspectives. Sam is currently working as a Director of Strategic Advice following a two year term as a political adviser to a Federal Minister. A highlight of her career was a posting as the Executive Officer to the CEO of Centrelink. Sam holds an Executive Masters in Public Administration (ANU) and a Graduate Certificate in Management (Deakin University). Sam is interested in giving back to society in a voluntary capacity, likes what she has learned about CMS, and sees Board membership as a way to give back.

Jodie Beitzel
Jodie would very much like to contribute to the CMS community and bring the skills she’s gained through volunteering, work in the public sector, in the private sector as a patent and trademark attorney, and her academic background in science to assist the CMS to achieve its strategic aims and troubleshoot any issues. She has experience as a co-Chair of the PM&C Women’s Network in 2015 and on the committee of her son’s ANU daycare. Jodie is keen help CMS run well financially and operationally, communicate more effectively, streamline policies and process and deliver on its strategic outcomes. Jodie believes that any community position is a gift to the person serving as much as it is to those being served. She feels being on the Board and serving the school will allow her to make further personal connections with other parents of the school and provide her with experience on a Board, which she is very interested in.

Nemanja (Nem) Jovanovic
Nem wants to help the school succeed. She has quite a diverse skill set from basic engineering to engagement at very high levels in organisations, setting strategy, establishing stakeholder management plans, large scale process/procedure management, and a general desire to learn.

Stuart Pascoe
Stuart has been a serving officer in the ADF for 27 years. Across this time he has accumulated experience in leadership positions and strategic planning that would be of use to CMS. He has great interest in helping to resolve complex problems and enjoys learning from this.

Current Board Members Re-Nominating

Jacqueline Gellatly
Jacqueline has been involved as a parent of two children at CMS for over 10 years now, and on the Board for 4 years. Her children have now left CMS. She has had children in PTP through to Cycle Three and had witnessed much growth and change over the last 10 years, all of which has paved the way for where we are now. She believes a strong board consists of both people with new skills, insights and enthusiasm and a number of experienced members to assist with corporate knowledge, smooth processes and perhaps sometimes the wisdom of hindsight. In her professional life, at the Commonwealth Education Department, she has also been involved in work about parent engagement in education for about 4 years and would like to continue to assist CMS to develop this important aspect of education. She believes the next few years under the leadership of Mr Vandermolen will see a new turning point in the school’s development and its ability to stand shoulder to shoulder with the very best schools in today’s educational landscape by being able to articulate the measurable benefits of a Montessori education.
Current Board Members Serving 2 Year Term

Catherine Prosser
Catherine has 3 children across Cycles 2 & 3. Catherine is the Deputy Chair and sits on the OLCC subcommittee. Catherine has been a director on the boards of several theatre companies as well as a member of the ABC Advisory Council and has also founded a business in the area of project and inventory management for the entertainment industry. She is currently a full-time writer. These experiences have given her a good foundation in governance and development of organisations with a strong community focus and she hopes to continue offering these skills to the Board and school.

Anna Neilan
This is Anna’s 4th year as a Board member. She serves on the Policy and Building Committees. Anna and her family have been part of the school for about 4 years - her almost 5 year old son Ari attends Dryandra and her youngest son, Archie attends the Parent/Toddler program. Anna joined the Board in 2013 when she and her husband were still beginning the Montessori education journey. Being on the Board has enabled Anna to become more engaged with the wider Montessori community and it allows her to make a significant contribution to the CMS. Anna’s "day job" involves helping people going through their family law issues. As a result, she is a problem solver and likes to "think outside the box" in terms of finding solutions that fit. She feels that these skills, together with her interpersonal and communication skills assist the Board to realise its strategic goals. Anna also has a Commerce degree and can read a Balance Sheet/Profit and Loss Statement and other financials as she does this on a regular basis in her work as a family lawyer.

Tony Butler
As an enthusiastic contributor to CMS over the past 3 years since arriving in Canberra, Tony joined the board and the finance committee in 2015, his first year was both challenging and richly rewarding journey in these roles. Jointly leading the organising committee for the School fair in 2015 capped a very busy year. Tony is a Chartered Accountant and Project manager with experience in multiple industries and several charities. Tony is active as a mentor in the ACT Menslink community as well as coaching the Karri class rugby team.

Mike Power
Mike has 3 daughters, one in Casuarina, one in Melaleuca, and the other in Karri. Mike has been with the school for 9 years. Mike joined the board in 2011 year, and has been a member of the Policy, OLCC and Finance subcommittees, and is currently a member of the Building subcommittee. A psychologist by training, Mike now works for the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training in early childhood education child care policy modelling and policy development.

Tara Wood
Tara’s daughter is in her fourth year at CMS. Tara founded and runs a speech and drama academy, is completing a Masters of HR and led a 14 year public sector career prior to that. Tara brings to the Board a diverse range of experiences from designing and delivering multi-million dollar innovation programs, directing
operations of up to 125 people nationally, to working with other not-for-profit organisations in the social welfare and education sectors at the front line. Her passion for the Board is to see the business of CMS running so well that maximum energies and funds are always directed to the delivery of wonderfully individualised, Montessori education journeys for every CMS child.

Rob Smith-Saarinen
Robert would like to contribute to his child’s school as he feels it’s important to be part of the school community, his son is the remaining child of 3 who have gone through a Montessori education. He has worked in small business for his entire working career and has owned and still owns several businesses including Financial planning and Finance. Robert feels passionate about the need for Montessori parents to roll up their sleeves and get involved in the school community.