
Annual Report

2023

Canberra Montessori School

Canberra Montessori Society

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Canberra Montessori School is a member of the Association of Independent Schools of ACT (AISACT) and NSW (AISNSW), Montessori Australia, Montessori Schools and Centres Australia (MSCA) and accredited by Montessori Quality Assurance Program (MQAP).

Our History, Vision and Mission

In 1980, a group of parents came together with a common purpose: they wanted to start a Montessori school in Canberra. These parents formed the Canberra Montessori Society that year, and in 1981, they established Canberra Montessori School. The initial 3-6 program was extended to include a primary school in 1996, which was situated at the school's Yarralumla campus.

The school moved to its current campus in Holder in 2003. This is one of the few Montessori School campuses in Australia that have been completely purpose-built, and it is also one of the most spacious.

As of 2023, the school consists of two early childhood environments, 2 parent toddler classrooms, four 3-6 classes, two 6-9 classes and one 9-12 class. Canberra Montessori School now serves families with children aged from 18 months to 12 years old. Every one of these classes is run by well trained and dedicated Montessori staff, who understand and respond to the developmental needs of the children in their care, to enable the full potential of the child to express itself naturally and without restriction by artificial demands.

The Montessori Method is a unique and comprehensive educational method which enables our staff to meet the individual child where their needs are, while still creating communities of learners, where the older, the more experienced and the stronger, nurture, guide and bring forth the smaller, the lesser experienced, and the not-yet-developed.

The Canberra Montessori Teaching Staff are the bearers of a rich and wonderful understanding of childhood and human development left behind by Maria Montessori. They build each other through sharing best practice pedagogy and hold workshops and demonstrations for parents who want to further align their parenting with this fantastic vision. The parents support the school through the work of the Parents and Friends Association, which runs social events for parents and raises money for special school projects.

The development of the full potential of the child is our mission, and the delivery encompasses all of these activities. It is because of this work that Canberra Montessori is becoming one of Australia's great Montessori schools.

LETTER FROM

The Board Chair

It has been a gratifying year to represent the Canberra Montessori Society on the Board of the school and to have served as the Board Chair.

Maria Montessori wrote that “the child is both a hope and a promise for mankind.”

The Society was established with the hope and the promise that a school would be built based on the example set by Maria Montessori, and it continues to be an enormous pleasure and privilege to walk around the school buildings and to see the school that was inspired by Maria Montessori, built to educate our children based on her astute observations.

Following her appointment at the end of 2022, Halima Khurram has led the school with distinction during 2023. Halima, together with the Directors, Assistants and other support staff across the school, has provided an environment in which our children can learn and develop in ways that are consistent with Maria Montessori’s observations. Halima has been a steward for the stability and the going concern of the school, and the Society’s financial accounts are a testament to her ability to not only support the learning in our classrooms, but also ensure the ongoing sustainability and viability of the school.

As a community, we have gathered at the yarnning circle to listen and learn from each other - inspired by the leadership of our First Nations community. The Parents & Friends Association, led by Anastasia Money West, brought us together to celebrate many events.

In relation to Board Members, Christine Harrison and Sean West Money saw in the calendar year, and the AGM saw the election of Katrina March, Marion Mcewin, Michael Skinner and Ziad Zakout. Anupam Malhotra retired at the AGM. Thank you to each of these individuals for the time, dedication and thoughtful contributions to the work of the school board. A special mention to Christine Harrison who has announced her intention to retire from the board. Christine has contributed to the life of the school as a parent, a grandparent, a principal and now as a deputy board chair. Her contributions have been extensive and will be missed.

It is gratifying to see the school in such a strong state - be it the children in the classrooms, the Directors and Assistant Directors supporting the children, the principal providing leadership, the support staff rising to daily challenges as well as the school’s financial accounts. 2023 has been a year of growth, consolidation and it has been my privilege to play a part.

Tim Bourke

LETTER FROM

The Principal

As I reflect on the journey of the past year, I am proud to share with you the resilience and growth that characterised our school in 2023. It was a year marked by challenges, but through unity, determination, and strategic decision-making, we emerged stronger than ever.

At the outset of 2023, we faced significant financial instability, prompting us to work together as a community to address the issues at hand. We remained steadfast in our belief that together, we could overcome any obstacle. Tough decisions had to be made, including reducing deputy positions, consolidating classrooms, and optimising our resources to ensure maximum efficiency.

We implemented various initiatives aimed at increasing revenue streams and securing additional resources for our school. These efforts included opening new Infant community classrooms, introducing two Saturday Parent Toddler Programs, hosting open days, and actively seeking government grants, all of which benefited the entire Montessori community.

Throughout this challenging period, the staff went to great lengths to implement innovative ways to further extend children and ensure that they were getting the most benefit out of their time. The steadfast support of our board chair provided a pillar of guidance for the school executive.

While the road was undoubtedly tough, every decision made ultimately strengthened us, both financially and mentally. As the year progressed, we began to see the light at the end of the tunnel, culminating in significant growth and progress by the end of Term 4.

As we embark on the journey ahead, we do so with renewed optimism and determination. Together, we have demonstrated that adversity only serves to make us stronger. I extend my deepest gratitude to our entire school community for their unwavering support, dedication, and resilience throughout this transformative year.

Sincerely,

Halima Khurram

LETTER FROM

The Parents & Friends' Association

With the Canberra Montessori School Parents and Friends' Association (P&F) beginning in December 2019, we have entered our fifth year of operations in 2024. Through its four years of operations the P&F has created a space in the school community to nurture connections and fundraise for small investments in the school experience for students.

In 2023, the Committee moved to build on its events, focusing on its role in growing connections among the school community and connections to the wider public. Through Terms 2-4, our events were designed to be accessible to all students, and to connect with things that interested students, such as nature exploration and art at the Autumn Flair, pretend play at Halloween, demonstrating their gymnastics prowess at the Bounce in to Summer event, and feeding their curiosity in musical instruments with Groovin' in the Grove. By putting students' interests at the heart of what we do, by offering different types of events, and by considering the feasibility of attending for carers we aim to build a stronger, more connected community.

The Committee has been sincerely pleased to see so many events well patronised, and with attendees embracing the spirit of the school and our community. My thanks to all of you who signed up and stepped up - and to those who were kind enough to smile and offer to help or just said 'sure' when we asked you on the day!

I would also like to recognise the efforts of the Committee and offer my personal thanks to those who have served the P&F previously and now. It can at times be a daunting and difficult task stepping in to these spaces, but to do so with kind and welcoming people makes it a highlight of your year.

To our members - we hope you had a chance to pop in to an event and enjoyed yourselves - we sure hope we get to welcome you to an event this year that will bring smiles to your faces and connect you with our warm community.

Anastasia

President 2023-2024

Achievements for 2023

Opening of another Infant Community Classroom

We understand that sustainability requires a strong foundation. Therefore, our primary focus for 2023 was to ensure that we could adequately meet the needs of our families.

Addressing the significant demand for our Infant Community program (ages 18 months to 3 years), we swiftly responded by expanding our facilities. Upon securing the necessary approvals, we promptly opened another Infant Community classroom to accommodate the growing number of families seeking the Montessori experience for their young ones. The rapid enrolment in the new class underscores the popularity and importance of early Montessori education in our community. Presently, we have 53 children enrolled in our Infant Community, further emphasizing the critical role we play in early childhood education.

Reconciliation Action Plan

The year 2023 marked a period of rebuilding for our school community. Through years of dedication and hard work, we successfully published and obtained approval for our Reconciliation Action Plan, which has now become an integral part of our Montessori curriculum. Additionally, we were honored to host several Indigenous artists, and Richie Allen led numerous workshops for parents and children, educating them about Indigenous cultures. These initiatives have enriched our learning environment and fostered greater understanding and appreciation for Indigenous perspectives and traditions.

Festival of Nature

In 2023, we secured another grant for our Indigenous Garden, allowing us to install rainwater tanks for summer watering. This achievement led us to open our gardens to the entire Canberra community, in collaboration with ACT Landcare, as part of the Festival of Nature. Minister Vassarotti attended to commend our efforts and provide encouragement. The event gained popularity, featuring numerous stalls presented by former and current CMS students showcasing nature plant dying displays, beekeeping demonstrations, and more. CMS plans to build on this success by hosting the event annually. It was a remarkable testament to how the entire Canberra community came together in support of our initiative.

Sustainable Action Plan Committee

In 2023, in collaboration with parents, we established a Sustainable Action Plan Committee and organized working bees to implement sustainable practices within our school community. Some of the initiatives we undertook included installing compost bins near all classrooms and educating children about composting, growing vegetables in our garden beds for use in our cooking, and one of our significant achievements was signing the contract for the installation of 50 kW solar panels in our school. Additionally, as a team, we revisited our current values and reaffirmed our commitment to sustainability as a key element in everything we do. Reflecting on Maria Montessori's message to care for the world, sustainability has become an integral part of our Montessori ethos.

Prepared environments

Creating prepared environments is another key element of Montessori philosophy. In 2023, we took significant steps to enhance our school environment. We installed new blinds throughout the school, including the administration building, and upgraded hot water systems in all children's toilets. Additionally, we made investments to improve communication with parents by providing new iPads for all classrooms and installing new Wi-Fi routers near classrooms, ensuring timely updates through Transparent Classrooms. Furthermore, updates were made to our Cycle 1 and Infant Community playgrounds. We have initiated a four-stage playground improvement plan, with an initial deposit paid, scheduled to commence in 2024. In line with our commitment to providing quality Montessori education, investments were made to purchase new Montessori materials for each classroom. Additionally, to ensure sustainability and support communities in need, old materials were refurbished and sent to the Montessori Australia Foundation for distribution to countries in need. These efforts reflect our dedication to creating enriching environments that foster learning and growth for all our students

School Team

Staff Numbers

Teaching staff, full-time and part-time positions:	35
Administration staff, full-time and part-time positions	7

Staff Attendance

Average number of days absent per staff member:	7.5 days
Long Service Leave was taken by:	3 staff

Staff retention

Average years of service:	5 Years
Maximum years of service:	24 years

Staff Qualifications

PhD:	1	Bachelor's Degree:	6
Master's Degree:	5	Diplomas and Others:	19
Graduate Diplomas:	9		

All teachers are registered with the Teacher Quality Institute ACT

All assistants are either Montessori qualified or participating in Montessori professional development.

All staff members hold a Working With Children card.

Staff Roles

Principal	Halima Khurram
Business Manager	Amanda McDermott, Karen Achurch
Administrative Staff	Judy MacGowan, Gemma Fisher, Tonia Lewis, Prue Loader, Khusla Greg
Directors	Glen Watson, Leharne Fountain, Tom Ransom, Darcy Loughton, Emma Kate Potter, Alice Quade, Ros Hartley, Shereen DeSilva, Louise Draper, Tomomi Evans, Teiyanee Mosby, Kim Hughes, Tab Yang, Archana Lal, Luis Gallardo
Assistants	Viv Moir, Banipreet Kaur, Samjhana Parajuli, Kylie Hunter, Jing Yi, Stephanie Viegas, Sukhi Sahota, Veda Limaye, Mathew Sellen, Vinh Ngyuen, Srijana Achhami, Jessica Kennett, Lauren Ford, Anneke Power, Arti Kumar, Cathy Zhou, Damanpreet Kaur, Huzaifa Khurram, Dan Lu, Dorji Yangden, Hina Tariq, Karen Carrera, Ozge Nar, Jusuf Meskin, Matthew Hardy.

Professional Development

AMI Assistant to Infancy Diploma

AMI Introduction to Adolescence Certificate

AMI Montessori 3-6 Orientation

AMI Theory into Practice series

ACT Child Protection

Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspective

Eco-Art and Natural Journalling

Disability Standards for Early Childhood Education

Responding and Reporting of Critical Online Incidents

Managing Food Allergies

Multi-Sensory Structured Language Education

AISACT - Inspiring Leaders

AISACT - Mandatory reporting

How to Teach Sustainability with Hope

Privacy and Confidentiality training

First Aid - Provide Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

Montessori Principals to Practice

Positive Discipline in a Montessori Classroom

Transformation of Adult - Montessori Conference

Student Profile

Student attendance supplied for the Census in Term 3, 2023 was 89%.

Management of non-attendance:

Student attendance is marked every morning and every afternoon by the teacher.

Parent/Carer must provide either a written or verbal explanation for the absence or lateness for a child. The explanation must clearly indicate the date and time of the absence or lateness as well as the reason for the absence or lateness.

Teachers record student attendance electronically, any students whose absence are marked as unexplained; unexplained absences are followed up through the Office and parents of these students are contacted to verify their absence. The School has a sign-in system for late attendance. A late slip is handed by the Office staff and sent with the student to the class which is handed to the teacher, by following this procedure the teacher is aware that School's policy and protocol has been adhered to. Excess late arrivals and absences are discussed in a parent-teacher meeting. Continued absences are referred to the Principal.

In the event of a child being absent for extended periods of their schooling, please inform the School as early as possible.

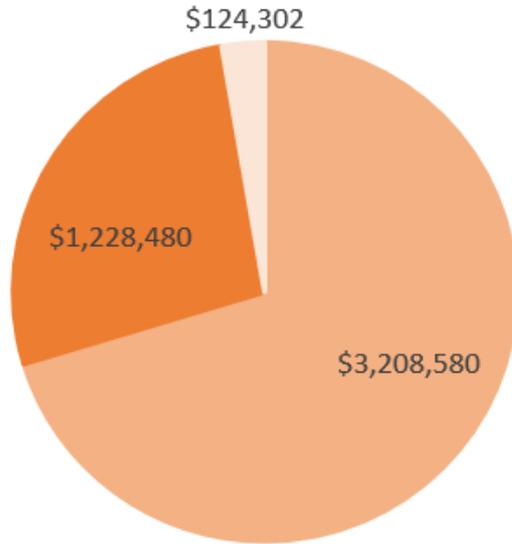
The Canberra Montessori School's Attendance Policy is available on the School's front office.

Enrolments

Cycle 3:	32
Cycle 2:	44
Cycle 1:	72
Infant Community:	53
Parent Toddler Program:	22

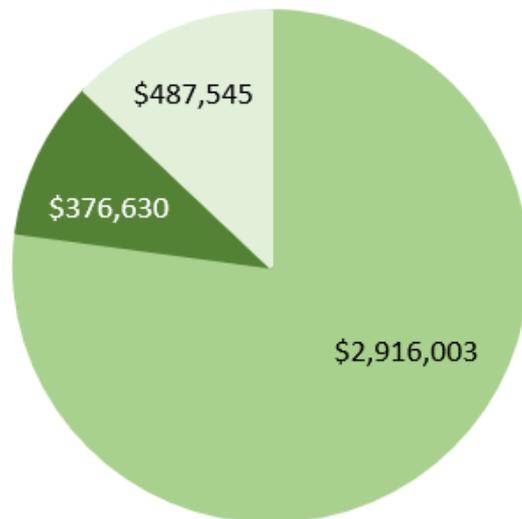
Financial Information

2023 Revenue



■ School Fees ■ Revenue from Government ■ Other Revenue

2023 Expenditure



■ Employee expenses ■ Building maintenance ■ Other expenses

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School

2024
