



2018–2019
ANNUAL REPORT



THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE



LETTER FROM MICHELE



I want to express my sincere gratitude for your generous support of The Children's House during the 2018-2019 school year. Our school is dedicated to carrying out our mission of supporting and respecting every child in becoming independent, curious, confident, and community-minded.

Our students, spanning from the ages of three months to 15 years, are embraced as individuals, each deserving of care, respect, kindness, and patience. We prepare our classrooms to support the needs of each child and set high expectations for our students in all aspects of their lives – from their academic performance to their respect and care for themselves, for each other and for the world beyond our campus.

A vital benefit of our independent school status is having the freedom of uninterrupted time to understand each child and how they learn. We assess progress through observation, relationships, conversations, and feedback. We are free from the requirement of standardized tests that measure one kind of intelligence and instead have the privilege to appreciate the gifts every child has to offer the world.

The generosity of our community bridges the gap between what tuition covers and the actual cost of operating a school of our high caliber. By keeping tuition manageable and supporting families through our tuition assistance program, we are able to provide an education for a diverse group of children. Ours is an education we believe every child deserves.

We are grateful for all that we were able to accomplish during the 2018-2019 fiscal year and appreciate the generosity of our community in making it possible. We look forward to the years to come with great optimism in our ability to provide a top notch independent Montessori experience for our families.

With Gratitude,

Michele Shane

Michele Shane, Head of School

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YOUR IMPACT: *Making a difference*

Annual Fund

Because you gave to the Annual Fund, our students enter beautifully equipped Montessori classrooms each day of the school year. Child-sized tools allow children to do meaningful and real work. Three-dimensional materials provide a concrete way to learn abstract concepts. Field trips (from a few hours for our kindergarteners to several days across the country for our junior high students) build independence, confidence, and curiosity. Our commitment to high-quality professional development opportunities for our faculty sets The Children's House apart. Tuition assistance allows more families the opportunity to give their children the gift of a high-fidelity Montessori education.



Your gift to the Annual Fund supports all of this and more.

Swingshift and the Stars

In the fall of 2018, The Children's House participated in Swing Shift and the Stars – a special community event that raises hundreds of thousands of dollars every year for local nonprofit organizations. Steve Maas bravely took on the role of our “star” and Renee Mittelstaedt led our parent partnership toward reaching our goal of raising \$30,000. In the end, The Children's house was able to purchase a much-needed second passenger van.



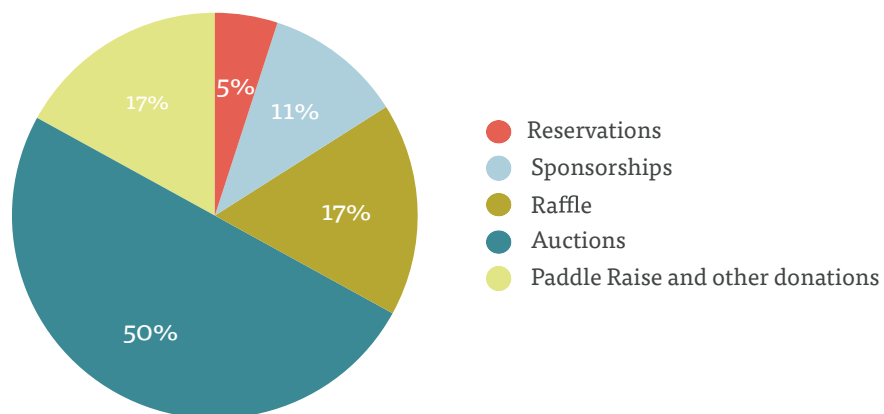


YOUR IMPACT: *Continued*

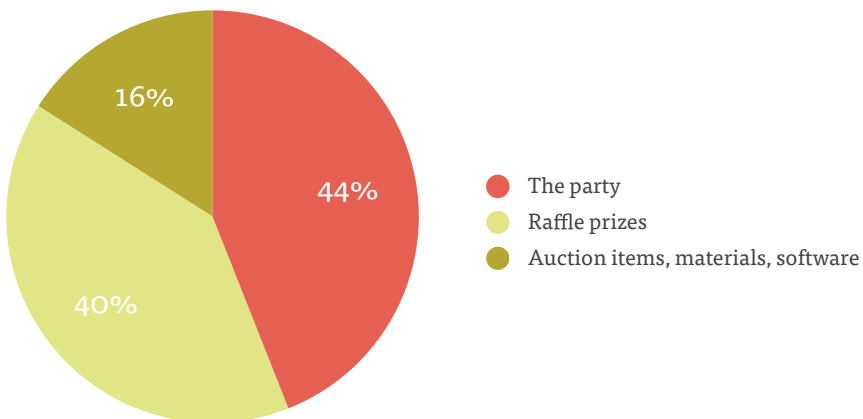
2019 Gala

The 2019 gala, *A Celestial Celebration*, was a beautiful evening and successful fundraiser for our school. More than 160 Children's House parents, staff, and friends attended the special event on March 8.

Total Raised \$134,710



Total Gala Expense \$32,203



In addition, \$2,529 was raised to purchase specific classroom materials.





Karen Circle

In 2005, a group of women came together for lunch and formed the Karen Circle in memory of Dr. Karen Gilhooly who died in 2004. Karen was a mother, physician, and involved parent at The Children's House. Her passion for helping children learn to live healthy and active lives has been continued through this group of women.

Every year, members of the Karen Circle each make a generous \$1,000 gift to The Children's House. When these gifts are combined, the result has a transformational impact on our school.

In November 2018, Karen Circle members awarded \$24,000 toward these projects:

- New mats for the bouldering wall
- Badminton sets for physical education
- Balance bike track for YCC playground
- Trees for a natural traffic barrier
- Professional development for faculty and administrative staff
- Employee appreciation
- Junior Great Books Curriculum, Wilson Fluency Kit, Newberry Books
- Bead cabinet and tone bars for Upper Elementary classrooms
- Down payment for a new school van
- Endowment funding

2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR ENROLLMENT SNAPSHOT

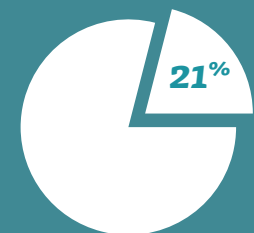


136 3 MONTHS
— TO —
STUDENTS 6 YEARS



109 1ST GRADE
— TO —
STUDENTS 8TH GRADE

\$374,721
TUITION
ASSISTANCE
FOR **21%**
STUDENTS



Student Body



OUR STUDENTS: *Making A Difference*

Environmental Stewardship: Raising a Sturgeon

“After several years of participating in *Salmon in the Classroom*, the children researched other options of environmental stewardship and voted on raising sturgeon,” recalled Karin Church, Upper Elementary Guide. With curriculum and materials developed by The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians and grant funding from the Grand Traverse Stewardship Initiative, the inaugural year of *Sturgeon in the Classroom* was a success.

“Our elementary and junior high students benefited from learning about the history of sturgeon in Michigan, their cultural importance to the indigenous peoples, and the crucial role they play in the health of our ecosystems,” Karin Church explained. “The children gathered data, cared for this amazing animal on a daily basis, cleaning the tank and feeding it bloodworms, and, on a weekly basis, monitored the water chemistry and carried many buckets of water to perform the necessary water change.”

On May 2, 2019, students said “Giga-waabamin naagaj” (See you later) and “Bon Voyage” to *Superior*, their Lake Sturgeon, who thrived in a 130 gallon aquarium for seven months – growing 17 centimeters and gaining 123 grams. Students released *Superior* in the Black River in Onaway, MI after a ceremony and an offering.

Special thanks to Jim Garavaglia, inland fish and wildlife biologist from the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, and Kris Dey, Amanda Weinert, and Dorothy Perry, biologist and education specialists, respectively, from the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, for their support.



OUR STUDENTS: *Continued*

Helping Seniors: Delivering More Than A Meal

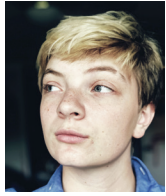
This was the second year that our students and families have been delivering more than a meal to the ten individuals on route 43. Meals on Wheels is a program of Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency and serves the most at risk seniors in our community. Virginie Kanner, TCH parent, is passionate about service work and teaching children the importance of doing good in the community and world.

After brainstorming with other parents during a Children's House Parent Association meeting, Meals on Wheels seemed to be a good option for making a positive impact in the community. It was decided that two parents and four students (elementary through junior high) would be needed to drive route 43 each Friday. These visits have turned out to be eye-opening experiences for our children that lead to conversations about family and aging.

"I hear stories about their own grandparents and reflect on how fortunate we are and how important it is to give to others," commented Virginie Kanner. "We always drive route 43 because it is important to know the clients - to see if their health changes and what their needs are. Some individuals have very little and they really appreciate the students kind words, smiles, and treats. When I deliver without students, I always hear, 'Where are the kids?' In a little over one hour of our time, we get to please ten individuals who we would not have met otherwise."



OUR ALUMNI: 2019 Graduating Seniors



Andrew Eldridge is pursuing an honors college bachelor's degree in International Studies with a focus in Global Politics and Societies and a minor in Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of San Francisco. "My passion lies in activism

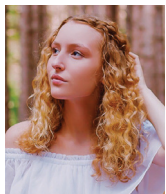
and fighting for the rights of others. I hope to continue my studies to become a lawyer for those whose voices are ignored and overturned in our society. I plan to fight for my fellow LGBTQ+ peoples, specifically for transgender youth and LGBTQ+ people of color. TCH helped me grow as an individual and realize my own voice, as well as exposed me to the vast variety of people who coexist across the globe."



Aidan Bishop is majoring in biology at Grand Valley State University. "The Children's House has impacted my life by teaching me how to be a good person, treating others with respect, and how to become the best person I can. Science lessons at TCH always interested me and that influenced my decision to major in biology."



Angela Patanella is a student in the pre-nursing program at Northwestern Michigan College and plans to pursue a bachelors in Nursing. "Going to The Children's House I learned lots of important skills that helped me succeed later on in life."



Annie Hessler is spending a gap year travelling, which started in the UK, and writing a life story biography. Next year she will attend college for freelance travel writing / journalism. "Attending The Children's House was

one of the greatest gifts I have ever received. It was there that I learned to never underestimate yourself; to always strive to be yourself and your best; to always be kind to others, including yourself; and when others want to bring you down, bring them up with you. I will hold the knowledge that it taught me and the memories that came with it, always."

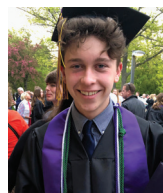


Eamonn McGonigle is attending the University of Michigan in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts in pursuit of a future in global public health. "TCH allowed me to expand my social skills, taught me the power of conflict resolution,

and gave me a thirst for knowledge. I am so grateful for the opportunities that TCH gave me and for the skills I learned that I continue to use."



Emma Burns is currently studying history and literature at Albion College and planning on taking full advantage of a liberal arts education. "The Children's House was my community growing up and the friends I made there continue to be my lifelong friends."



Jakob Gale is pursuing a degree in Game Design with a minor in IT at Eastern Michigan University. "The Children's House is, when I think of it, what inspired me to be me. Because of it, I am pursuing a dream job that I've had since my first grade year at TCH."



Joe Beatty is a student at Northwestern Michigan College working toward a degree in either art or science. He plans to continue his studies at Wayne State University or the College of Creative Studies.

"There are many things in my life that I could trace back to my time at The Children's House, but the most important thing I learned was how to learn. I don't think that I would've been able to push on through difficult classes, nor would I have taken much away from them, if I didn't have the mindsets, tools, and understanding of myself that I got from TCH."



Noelle Riccobono is currently pursuing an associates degree at Northwestern Michigan College and plans to transfer to Grand Valley State University to continue her studies.

"I am thankful for The Children's House community for creating a thoughtful and creative learning environment and their kindness and encouragement to me while I was a student there."



Sheldon Gravis is majoring in Construction Management at Michigan State University and studying agricultural engineering.

"Through my studies so far, I have realized the impact The Children's House has had on me both as a student and as a member of the community. The balance of freedom in my studies at TCH and strong support from teachers and staff is something I credit my success thus far and will continue to in the future."

FEATURED ALUMNUS: *Nathan Mikulski*



Our alumni are out in the world following their dreams and making the world a better place. One in particular is Nathan Mikulski, Associate Engineer, Universal Creative. He started at TCH as a toddler in 1996 and graduated 6th grade in 2006. In July 2019, Nathan visited our summer program and talked to the students about his work and passion for roller coasters. We followed up with a few questions:

What are your favorite memories of being a student at TCH?

My favorite memories of TCH were working in the greenhouse and going on some amazing field trips and camping trips with my classmates all while learning about the world around us along the way.

How did TCH prepare you for life after elementary school?

TCH allowed me to be creative in my learning and find new ways to solve problems. That translates into my work today as a mechanical engineer because I often need to find unconventional solutions to problems, especially working in the theme park industry.

What inspired you to want to build roller coasters?

I actually was inspired to build and learn about them long before I was brave enough to ride them. When I was around 6 years old, we took a family trip to an amusement park and I remember being mesmerized by the coasters and immediately wanted to know everything about them. This then led me to the theme park industry as a whole and to my current role at Universal Parks & Resorts; all from one little trip!

Where did you continue your education?

Traverse City Central High School (Sci-Ma-Tech, Robotics), University of Utah (Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering)

Was there a specific person who encouraged you along the way?

I always connected well with Steve Maas. I was a student of Steve's almost continuously throughout my time at The Children's House. Steve was always firm but fair and encouraged me along the way to strive to be better. Steve was, and continues to be, a role model for the current students of TCH.

What experiences led you to your current job?

One of my favorite internship experiences was when I had the opportunity to be a ride technician at SeaWorld in Orlando. It was the first time I was able to see the rides up close and really learn about how all of the safety systems worked. This really opened my eyes to how a park operates and how a massive team of people come together to create amazing experiences for the guests in the park every day.

What is the best part of your job?

The best part of my job is working on cutting edge technology but often utilizing that technology in ways it was never imagined to be. This allows us to make something truly unique and make unbelievable experiences for our guests. I also love working with the studio members of our staff (story writers, attraction designers, show set designers, creative directors, etc.) to craft a guest experience and a ride system that seamlessly fits into the storyline of an attraction.

Do you have any words of wisdom to current TCH students?

One thing I would tell current students is to take every opportunity you can to learn but to never lose sight of your passion. What may seem like a step backwards in your career path could be just what you need to push through to the next step. I have had several different internships and jobs along the way but each one has molded my knowledge base to be able to do what I love today. You can learn anything from anyone at anytime.



STRATEGIC FINANCIAL DIRECTION

The Children's House Board of Directors adopted a new multi-year strategic plan in April 2019. Significant progress is already happening on these financial initiatives included in the plan:

- Maintain a comprehensive and competitive employee benefit package
- Provide competitive compensation package
- Determine an optimal level for tuition assistance
- Increase long-term reserves for capital expenditures

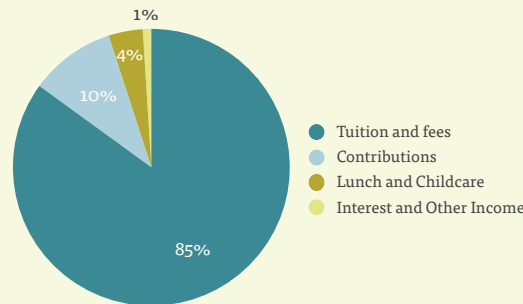
Fiscal year 2019 saw a \$165,000 increase in net assets. This has been set aside in a reserve fund for capital expenditures for the near term as the building approaches 20 years old. There is an estimated \$500,000 in capital expenditures projected over the next ten years to maintain our school building.

In January 2020, The Children's House will submit an extensive self-study report and a copy of the audited financials to Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS). In April, TCH will host an ISACS accreditation visiting team to validate that our school has met more than fifty standards of best practice for independent school education, admissions, and employment.

With growing funds set aside to build an endowment, the Board of Directors agreed to invest the endowment with Independent Bank Wealth Management. TCH now has a mechanism in place to receive and invest planned gifts. To make a planned gift, first talk with your estate planning attorney and personal financial advisor, then let us know of your intentions. Summary of audited fiscal year 2019 financials:

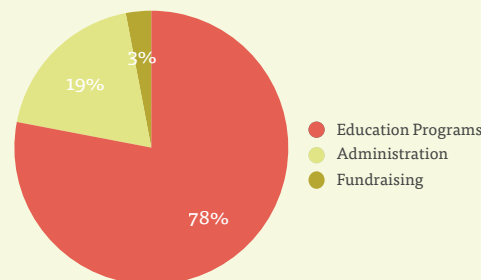
Revenue Total \$2,918,715

● Tuition and fees	\$2,489,445
● Contributions	\$284,368
● Lunch and Childcare	\$120,873
● Interest and Other Income	\$24,029



Expense Total \$2,753,652

● Education Programs	\$2,150,665
● Administration	\$517,967
● Fundraising	\$85,020



Net Assets - Beginning of Year	\$1,176,278
Net Assets - End of Year	\$1,341,341
Increase in Net Assets	\$165,063

OUR DONORS

With sincere thanks, we recognize those who give generously in support of The Children's House.

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THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE

Montessori Children's House, Grand Traverse

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