



THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE

2019–2020
ANNUAL REPORT



LETTER FROM MICHELE



Dear Children’s House Families and Friends,

In my wildest imagination, I could never have predicted the events of the 2019-2020 school year. My thirteenth year as head of school brought with it lessons in gratitude, humility, resilience, tenacity, and adaptability.

In November 2019, we gathered in the gym to celebrate the life of our founding upper elementary guide, Patty Anton. Hundreds of parents and former students joined together to share stories and pay tribute to an incredible teacher, mother, and friend. All who knew her will forever strive to embody Patty’s motto of “Bigger. Better. Stronger.”

In March, our country was struck by the beginnings of the COVID-19 pandemic. In a moment’s notice, we were charged with transitioning 245 students from learning in their classrooms to learning from home. Never before have I witnessed such a unified and dedicated collaboration as I saw from our staff and families during this time of significant challenge. As parents rose to the challenge of becoming teachers, our staff provided lessons, guidance, and support.



Our Children’s House community continues to overcome the unpredictable obstacles brought on by COVID-19. Because of our Board of Directors’ commitment to fiscal health over the past decade and the generosity of donors seeing us through a year of financial losses, we remain a healthy school. It was the dedication and trust of our families who stood by our school through these hard times that made it possible for us to open our doors in June of 2020 for the summer program.

As we continue to face the uncertainty of this ongoing pandemic, we are closely managing our budget as we are met with unpredictable expenses related to providing a safe, healthy, and secure learning environment.

My confidence in the resilience of our school in the face of significant challenge has never wavered. Together, we will continue to weather this storm because the true test of the strength of our community is in the moments that challenge us the most. I am humbled by the optimism, kindness, and generosity that has become visible through these times. My gratitude on behalf of the children is immeasurable.

With sincere appreciation,

Michele Shane

Michele Shane,
Head of School

Board of Directors

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Dan Besselsen, President | Julie Boss |
| Courtney Danbrook, Vice President | Jessie Houghton |
| Polly Carlton, Treasurer | Carolyn Purcell |
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THE LEGACY OF PATTY ANTON

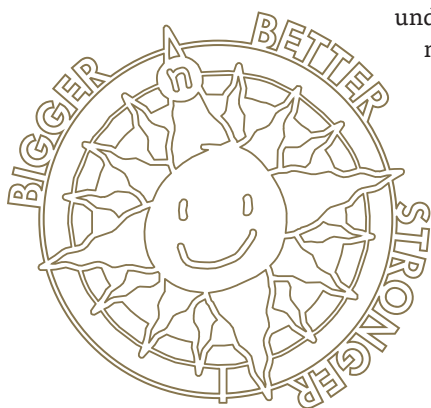
Our Montessori family tragically lost an incredible light on November 11, 2019. Patty Anton touched the lives of many children, parents, co-workers, and loved ones. Her bright spirit courses through the halls of The Children's House and the legacies she left behind are indelible. We remember her as caring, spirited, generous, and creative. She was truly a champion for every child and encouraged each one of them to believe in themselves and their special and unique gifts. Our community will continue to carry the torch that Patty lit through our belief in the potential of every human.

Patty Anton Scholarship Fund and Memorial

Frank Petty and John Ammond have teamed up to create two memorial artworks: one to install on our campus and the other at the school where Patty Anton passionately devoted her time and experience, 3 Mariposas in the Dominican Republic. The artwork will incorporate our sunshine logo and Patty's motto:

Bigger, Better, Stronger.

Donations in memory of Patty will underwrite the cost of these memorials and build the Patty Anton Memorial Scholarship. This new scholarship fund was endowed by a gift from Tammy Hagerty and Bruce Luoma and is now available for others to contribute in Patty's memory.





YOUR IMPACT: THROUGH COVID-19

The 2020 gala was going to be an over the top celebration honoring Colleen Christensen's 36 years of service to our school. Parent volunteers spent months planning and designing the event before it all came to a halt when COVID-19 made its way to Michigan. Our gala committee changed gears and moved forward with a virtual auction and raffle drawing. Many event sponsors and those who made reservations to attend allowed us to keep their contribution even though there would not be an event.

We are grateful for the thirteen families who made a major gift to The Children's House this spring. Together, their gifts totaled \$81,500. More families than ever made the decision to give to the 2019-2020 Annual Fund, which reached \$74,612. Those who participated in the raffle and virtual gala activities in April raised an additional \$26,059 for our school.

Because of the generosity of many, the foresight of our Board of Directors to establish a healthy reserve fund over the past decade, and the Federal Payroll Protection Program, our school had the flexibility it needed to navigate this pandemic and remain the dynamic school we all love.



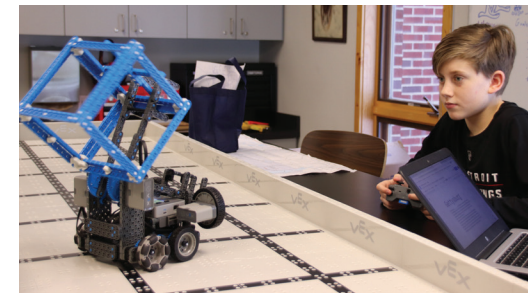
YOUR IMPACT: KAREN CIRCLE

Since 2005, women in The Children's House community have come together to carry forward Dr. Karen Gilhooly's passion for helping children learn to live healthy and active lives. Karen was a mother, physician, and involved parent at The Children's House who died tragically in 2004.

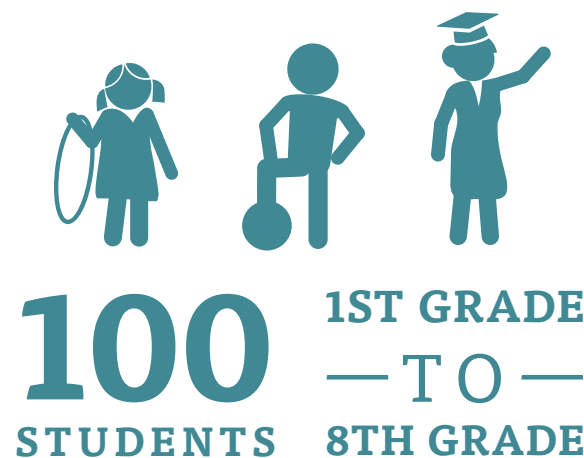
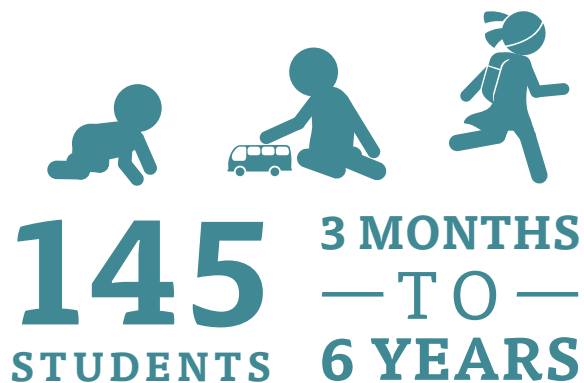
In November 2019, members of the Karen Circle met for lunch to make philanthropic decisions about how their \$21,000 collective gift would benefit The Children's House. They learned about the wishes of the guides, specialists, and administration and decided to support:

Vaulting boxes, outdoor playground storage, professional development, robotics program seed money, listening stations, a video camera, employee appreciation, musical guests and songwriting software, language materials, Outlast Blocks, and snow shovels for students.

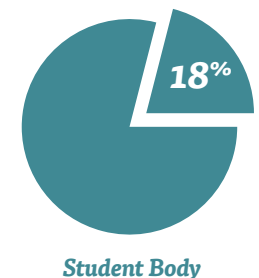
Because some items had not yet been purchased when our school closed due to COVID-19 in March 2020, members of the Karen Circle reallocated these funds to support what was needed most at that time – general operating funds.



2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR ENROLLMENT SNAPSHOT



\$327,062
TUITION
ASSISTANCE
FOR **45**
STUDENTS



Student Body

OUR LEARNERS: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Up to the Challenge By Karin Church

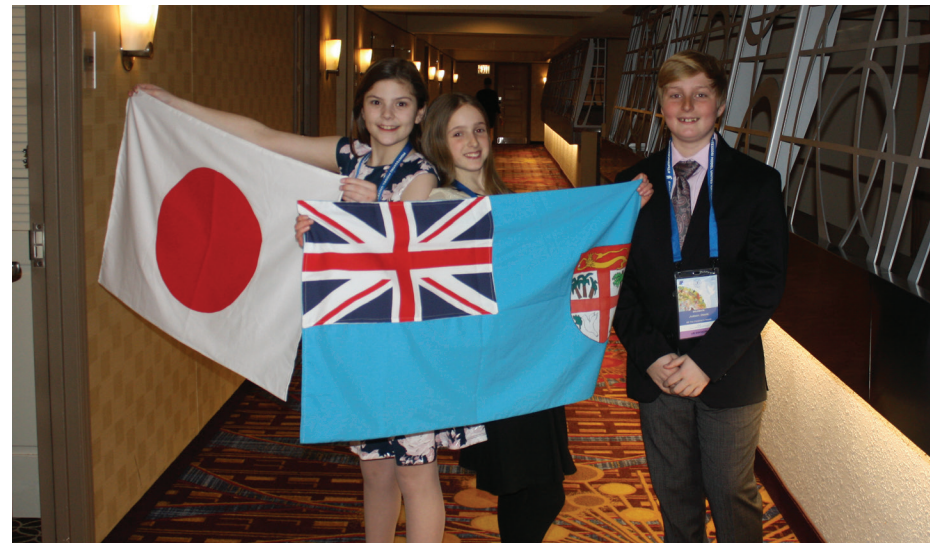
The beauty of the three-year cycle is never more apparent than when the 6th year children attend the Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN) conference in New York City. It is not just sixth months of preparation, but years of preparation, starting well before they enter our upper elementary classroom. They've been developing their interests, their skills and their independence, following their unique paths to becoming who they are meant to be.

Entering as 4th year learners, some fear the hard work and responsibilities of their 6th year classmates. Nevertheless, they research what interests them, broaden the scope of their world, and develop confidence in their ability to stretch themselves out of their comfort zone. As 5th years, they begin to accept that the challenge lies ahead and even look forward to the freedoms and responsibilities that accompany this great work. When they arrive as 6th years, they already have an air of "I've got this." Yes, it wanes from time to time and the work and challenges may feel overwhelming, but they have faith in what they can do because they've been practicing and they have each other.

The 6th year group traveled to New York City in March 2020 and followed a schedule of transportation, entertainment, and dining that they created. They took the Q70 bus to the R line subway and ended up in Times Square, ready to absorb the world around them. They interacted with warmth and sincerity with children from Peru, Canada, Australia, Mexico, and many states in our own country. They spoke in front of hundreds and danced in front of thousands, inspiring others to get out of their seats and dance as well.

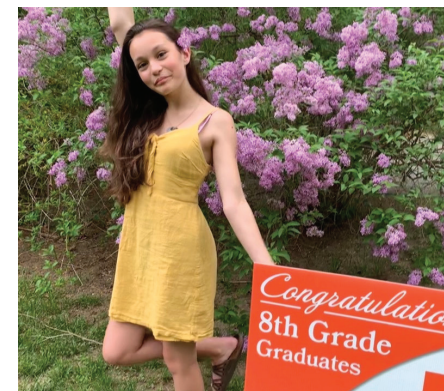
They returned home, standing taller, speaking with more confidence and sharing tales of their adventures. Many dreamed of the next time they would be able to participate in an event that felt as important as what they had just experienced and some dreamed of themselves as future leaders and members of the real UN.

In February 2021, the 10th delegation of The Children's House 6th years will participate in MMUN. Although they will not physically travel to New York City, they will travel virtually in order to actively engage in committee sessions, meeting and collaborating with children from around the world, and striving to develop solutions to today's pressing issues, such as climate change, access to clean water, economic and political gender equality, and the elimination of racism and xenophobia. Fostering the development of global citizens and connecting our youth with their international peers is of vital importance today, perhaps more so than ever before.



LEARNING RESILIENCY: MONTESSORI AT HOME

On March 16, 2020, parents, guides, and children began learning together – from their own homes. Parents learned more about the practice of Montessori, children learned how to be resourceful, and guides learned new technologies.





JUNIOR HIGH: THE FIRST SIX YEARS

A Bold Venture by Tree Sturman

In spring 2020, The Children's House celebrated our very first Junior High class as they graduated from high school and began the next chapter of their lives. This same year also marks the largest Jr. High class in the history of the program. As we celebrate these milestones, let's reflect on the program's roots.

The idea for a Junior High program at The Children's House existed long before the planning for the program took hold in early 2013. It took the leadership of a small, dedicated group of parents, staff, and community members to bring that idea to fruition. They met in coffee shops, living rooms, bookstores, and breweries, as they hashed out everything from curriculum to enrollment and everything in between. When the dust settled, The Children's House Junior High emerged: four students, one teacher, one classroom, and the sheer determination to make the program a success.

As with many bold ventures, the Junior High has changed over time. It has grown from a farm-centered model to a place-based curriculum that adopted all of Northern Michigan as its classroom. The farm was replaced with a "Land Lab" at the nearby Timbers Recreation Area. The week-long "Northern Michigan Experience" was added to the beginning of the school year, along with a three-day trip to Detroit. The experiences themselves became the curriculum. We study democracy in Washington D.C.; the Industrial Revolution in Chicago; Civil Rights in Montgomery, and Tuskegee Alabama; and the Civil War in Atlanta Georgia. We build underwater robots in Michigan and test them out in the waters of the Florida Keys. All the while, we draw our students back to their home in Northern Michigan and ask the critical question: "how is your life, your home, your experiences, connected to everything that has come before you, and everything that will come after?"

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, The Children's House Junior High now occupies the former Music and Art wing, and includes three beautiful, well equipped classroom spaces, a common room, and the student's favorite: a dedicated locker room complete with magnet wars, gossip, and other youthful shenanigans.

From the very beginning, we imagined the Junior High as a home away from home, a place for young adolescents to find their voice, gain confidence, and become the best versions of themselves. This vision is affirmed in the faces of every student that walks through our doors, and in the voices of our graduates as they tackle the challenging world beyond the classroom. Our graduates are uniquely positioned to take on those challenges, because they've already been there. They've navigated city streets and backcountry trails; they've taken on the tough questions, and even tougher answers; they've pushed themselves to their limits, and discovered what they're made of. They are our mission brought to fruition. They are the future.

OUR ALUMNI

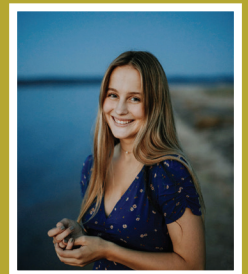
2020 Graduating Seniors

Daniel Magiera is enrolled in the Engineering Technology for Small Unmanned Aerial Systems (SUAS) program at Northwestern Michigan



College. Once he earns an Associates degree in Engineering Technology SUAS, he plans to build a career working with drones such as public safety, crop health advisor, or aerial mapper. "The Children's House inspired me to be the best person I can be, to do the most work as I can, and to be dedicated to help others around me who may need it."

Sylvie Shane is attending Western Michigan University and is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Biology and an Associates



degree in Chemistry. She plans to attend graduate school before starting her career. "The Children's House prepared me for my future by teaching me independence and the motivation skills needed for success."

FEATURED ALUMNA: ERIN COVER



Erin Cover attended The Children's House from 1997 to 2007 and is now the Director of Education at Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park, the Citizen Support Organization that provides resources to John D. MacArthur Beach State Park in North Palm Beach, FL. She is in charge of the award-winning Natural Science Education Program, internship program, Junior Friends program, a Speaker Series, and Marine Biology Summer Camp. In total, she educates over 10,000 students (in-person and virtually) each school year. We decided to follow up with a few questions:

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

The structure of the classrooms. It was very free-flowing and I had the opportunity to learn about things that I was interested in. I was able to go at my own pace, ensuring that I fully understood a topic before moving on to something else. Also the relationships I made with the teachers. I am now 25 years old and I still stay in contact with some of them! Patty Anton (rest in peace) was always so cheerful and fun and her positive attitude and smile were contagious. I miss her greatly.

How did TCH prepare you for life after elementary school?

TCH instilled a sense of independence and curiosity in me, which are invaluable characteristics to have regardless of what field you go into. The teachers I had at TCH also taught me to always think critically and never stop asking questions.

What inspired you to follow the career path you chose?

I think the principles geared towards nature and outdoors that I learned at TCH greatly influenced the career path I've taken. I remember spending a lot of time in the green house and in the garden watching the bees pollinate the plants, which allowed me to develop a passion and appreciation for the natural world. I wanted to give students the same exposure to the outdoors that I had growing up, which is why I've dedicated my career to educating them about the environment, conservation, and sustainability.

Where did you continue your education?

After TCH, I attended East Middle School, Central High School, and then went on to Rollins College where I received my Bachelors in Environmental Studies and University of Miami where I earned my Masters of Professional Science in Marine Conservation.

What experiences led you to your current work?

The most significant and perhaps earliest life experience that led to my work now was the first time I went scuba diving. My parents are avid divers and travelers so I was very fortunate to be immersed in that lifestyle early on. I was ten years old the first time I went diving. The minute I got underwater, I knew that it was going to be my life's work to not only protect this amazing ecosystem, but to educate others about it!



What is the best part of your work?

The most rewarding part of my job is that I have the opportunity to take students, many of whom live a few miles away from the ocean, to see it for the first time. I work with many low-income and minority schools that don't have the resources to take their students on field trips but because our field trips are free of charge, we get to provide those students with an amazing experience, that they otherwise might not get. I also get the honor (and responsibility) of creating the next generation of environmental stewards, teaching students important principles in science and sustainability!

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

Always remember to be patient and kind to not only others but to yourself! Life is full of ups and downs and you may fail many times before you succeed so it is incredibly important to enjoy the journey and be grateful for everything you have.



STRATEGIC FINANCIAL DIRECTION

The COVID-19 pandemic financially impacted the last few months of fiscal year 2020. The school's fundraising event, which was scheduled for April 2020, was canceled. The operating budget relied on this special event to raise \$100,000, net of expenses.

In response, a number of donors stepped up and made major gifts to the school. More families than ever made the decision to give to the 2019-2020 annual fund. These gifts, in addition to money raised through the raffle and virtual gala activities, helped to surpass our fundraising goal. Moving from in-person to at-home learning for the last three months of the school year also impacted the school financially as \$259,000 was provided in tuition relief for our families.

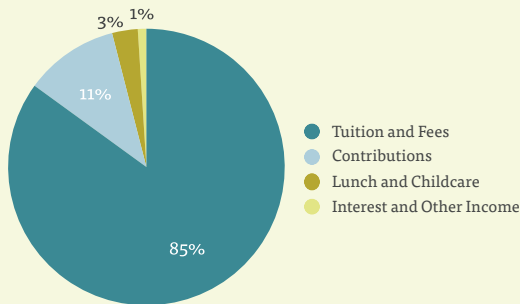
With sufficient endowment funds in hand and the appropriate governance policies in place, the Board of Directors invested the endowment in the market in March 2020. In line with the culture of the school, the endowment is invested in a mutual fund that considers environmental, social, and governance issues. To date, as of October 8, 2020, the endowment has had a rate of return of approximately 30%. Eventually, the endowment will support school operations through tuition assistance.

The pandemic has reinforced the fact that having a strong reserve fund is critical to the sustainability of our school. It has also taught us to not rely so heavily on a single fundraising event.

Summary of fiscal year 2020 financials:

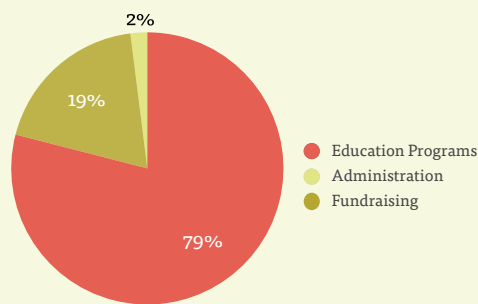
Revenue Total **\$2,940,342**

- Tuition and Fees \$2,482,089
- Contributions \$330,201
- Lunch and Childcare \$88,200
- Interest and Other Income \$39,852



Expense Total **\$2,937,750**

- Education Programs \$2,319,153
- Administration \$567,657
- Fundraising \$50,940



Net Assets - Beginning of Year	\$1,341,341
Net Assets - End of Year	\$1,343,933
Increase in Net Assets	\$2,592

OUR DONORS

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

COVID-19 Relief

- Leah and Adam Carlson
- Lori Lemonnier and Jay Dujon
- Rebekah Fahey
- Kim Hagerty
- Soon and McKeel Hagerty
- Tammy Hagerty and Bruce Luoma
- Nicole and Chris Klau
- Renee and Rob Mittelstaedt
- Mary Morrissey
- in honor of Michele Shane
- The Sandlers
- Jessica and Ryan Sullivan
- Sarah Bancroft-Treadway and Corey Treadway
- Jon Yanover

Annual Fund

- Jana and Phil Akers
- in memory of Kyle Akers
- Suzanne and Jason Allen
- Liz and John Ammond
- Ashley and Adam Bachi
- Eric Bachmann
- Maria and Klaus Bachmann
- Daniel and Sharon Bancroft
- Royce and Marjorie Beers
- Otto and Kathleen Belovich
- Jacquelyn and Edward Bergeron
- Sandra and Dan Besselsen
- Timothy and Cheryl Bloomquist
- Julie and Daniel Boss
- Annie Botsford
- Halley and Nathan Brandsen
- Keith and Debra Brandsen
- in honor of Berkley & Charley Brandsen
- Catherine Buchan
- in honor of Berkley & Charley Brandsen
- Michele and Mike Buday
- Karen Kulik and Michael Bukowski
- Danielle and James Casey
- Joseph and Kristin Castine
- Colleen Christensen
- Dustin Christensen
- Karin and Bill Church
- in honor of Colleen Christensen

- Jessica Coles
- in honor of Colleen Christensen
- Polly Carlton and Patrick Cotant
- Michelle Courval
- Mona and Donato Daddario
- Cortney and Christopher Danbrook
- Leslie and Karen Dennis
- Shelly and Bob Derrer
- Brooke and John Di Giacomo
- Adrienne and Carl Edgren
- Nadine and David Elmgren
- in honor of Colleen Christensen
- Lindsay and Papillon Erreca
- Tom Flitton
- Nancy and Bob Flowers
- Kim Gallagher and Chad Schrader
- Therese Grabowski
- Jana and Nathaniel Gray
- Carolyn Greenman
- Nathaniel Greenman
- James and Kelley Griffin
- Soon and McKeel Hagerty
- Julie Schaar and John Hart
- Jeanne and Michael Haynes
- in honor of Stephen & Jodie Haynes
- Laura Herd
- Renee and Chris Hintz
- Jane and Bob Holdeman
- Lindsey and Justin Hollander
- Rose Hollander
- Eric and Jessie Houghton
- Diana and James Huckle
- Elizabeth and Joseph Hunter
- Emili and Matthew Jackson
- Janet and James Johnson
- Kal Excavating Co., Inc.
- Jeanette and Michael Kania
- Virgine and William Kanner
- Anne Kelly
- in honor of Colleen Christensen
- in memory of Thomas M. Kelly
- John and Connie Kerns
- Durkhanai Jan and Amjad Khan
- Hillary Loomis-King and David King
- Patricia King
- Nicole and Chris Klau
- Karen Krawczyk and Josh Krawczyk
- Jennifer and Kieron Lake
- Jennifer and Jacob Lamble
- Karen and Michael Libby
- Brenda Lijewski and Jakeun Lee

Emily Modrall and Matthew Lindstrom
Blaise and George Lowe
Brittany and Andrew Luea
Tammy Hagerty and Bruce Luoma
Gregory and Susan Lyman
Karen and Steve Maas
Christine and Christopher Magiera
Kathy Malone
W. K. Kellogg Foundation
Kristi and Ty McGregor
Paula and Mike McIntyre
Amanda and Larry McMann
Becky and Pete Mead
Jill and Martin Miklos
Claire Miller
in honor of Mark Allen
Judith Miller
Donna Mire
in memory of Gail Robinson
Katelyn and Adam Mock
Jim Modrall
Kristina Weidenfeller and Keil Moshier
in honor of Colleen Christensen
Ann Murphy
Terry Murphy
Misha and Jeffrey Neidorfler
Sheri Novak
in honor of Colleen Christensen
Simon and Jenna Ochoa
Jessica Olson and Nick Perez
Emily and Rob Palmer
Craig Pauly
Angela and Frank Petty
Carrine and Mark Pomaranski
Elizabeth and Benjamin Post
Ann and Tom Post
Carolyn Purcell
Stephen and Susan Rathford
Hannah and Stephen Reichard
Nancy Rosan
Jeremiah Lucey and Richard Rosan
in honor of Ella and Miles Kirkwood
Susan and Gary Ruoff
Missy Russell
in honor of Colleen Christensen
Amanda Ruthenberg
Jamie Schaub
in honor of Colleen Christensen
Don and Susan Schmuckal
Debra Schrader
in memory of Papa Schrader

Colleen Schuerlein
DiAnn and Matt Service
Michele and Steve Shane
Paula Smith
Linda and Stan Smyka
Molly and John Stanifer
Lynda and Peter Starkel
Rachel and Jay Starr
Melvin and Lois Straley
Jessica and Ryan Sullivan
Sharon Sutterfield
in honor of Colleen Christensen
Becky and Craig Tester
in memory of Drake Tester
Lisa Thauvette and Brian Thelen
Herm and Laurie Thomas
in honor of Jordan and Nicholas Thomas
Britny Tollstam
Margo Tollstam
in honor of Colleen Christensen
Sarah Bancroft-Treadway and Corey Treadway
Gretchen Uhlinger
Rachel and Jeffrey Valice
Taylor Vancil
in honor of Colleen Christensen
Marie and Joel Voss
Norie Warnke
in honor of Colleen Christensen
Megan and Scott Wick
Gary and Nancy Woodard
Agnes Woynarowski
in honor of Colleen Christensen
Jon Yanover

Karen Circle Members

Suzanne Allen
Sarah Bancroft-Treadway
Mindy Beers
Julie Boss
Mona Daddario
Kim Hagerty
Soon Hagerty
Tammy Hagerty
Courtney Kaiser-Sandler
Nicole Klau
Lori Lemonnier
Hillary Loomis-King
Brittany Luea
Christie Minervini
Renee Mittelstaedt

Judy Murphy
Angela Petty
Carrine Pomaranski
Alyson Ronald
Jessica Sullivan
Gretchen Uhlinger

Patty Anton Memorial Scholarship

Established by Tammy Hagerty and Bruce Luoma and supported by:

Tina and Thomas Beatty
Theresa and Timothy Galante
Eileen and Carl Ganter
Dianne and Thomas Jurica
Rose Laing
Misha and Jeffrey Neidorfler
Linda Oliverio
Anne Morrison Perry and Tim Perry
Angela and Frank Petty
G. Paul Russo
Becky and Craig Tester
Marie and Joel Voss
Joni and James Wagner

2020 Gala

Suzanne and Jason Allen
Megan Andrews
Rick and Karin Andrews
Aunt Tara's Creative Canine Solutions
Colleen Christensen
Danbrook Adams Raymond PLC
Michael Estes
Ford Insurance Agency
Craig and Deborah Harris
Jennifer Lee
Chelsea and George Malinoff
Northwestern Michigan Dermatology, PC
Old Peak Finance
Alan and Hilary Palazzolo
Angie and Frank Petty
in honor of Colleen Christensen
Carrine and Mark Pomaranski
Pulmonary & Critical Care of NW Michigan
Kate and Mike Radke
Rehmann Group
TBA Credit Union
Venus Beauty, Inc.

Special Partnerships

Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians
Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians
Grand Traverse Stewardship Initiative
Timbers Recreation Area,
Long Lake Township

Rain Water Collection Project

The Friendly Garden Club

Because our gala did not happen, these businesses were not properly recognized for giving auction items to help raise money for our school:

Barker Creek Nursery & Landscaping Inc.
Beaver Island Boat Co.
Becky Thatcher Designs
Centre Ice Arena
Cherry Republic
Creative Canine Solutions
Crystal River Outfitters
Currie's Furniture
Dennos Museum Center
Food for Thought
FYT Health Foods
Garden Goods
Gerald R. Ford Museum
Grand Traverse Bay Gymnastics
Great Lakes Children's Museum
Great Wolf Lodge - Traverse City
Jenkins Group
John Ball Zoo
KPO Creative LLC
Leelanau Outdoor Center
Mackinac Island Carriage Tours
Michigan Legacy Art Park
National Writers Series
Oryana Community Co-op
Pets Naturally
Poppycocks
Riverside Canoe Trips
Shanty Creek Resort
Sharon Sutterfield
Shepler's Mackinac Island Ferry
Sip n' Sail Cruises
Star Line Mackinac Island Ferry Co.
Sustainable Landscape Design LLC
TC Balloon Tours
TC Helicopters/45 North Aviation
The Cooks' House
Toy Harbor
Traverse Symphony Orchestra
Traverse Tall Ship Company
Yoga for Health Education

THANK YOU, COLLEEN

The end of the 2019-2020 school year marked the retirement of Colleen Christensen, a remarkable woman who worked tirelessly for 36 years building The Children's House into what it is today. We thank Colleen for her stewardship of our school's mission and vision, and for her leadership qualities that defined and upheld the culture and environment of The Children's House.



THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE
Montessori Children's House, Grand Traverse

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Traverse City, MI 49685

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