



Little Oak
MONTESSORI SCHOOL

2022/2023

ANNUAL REPORT

Inspiring a lifetime love of learning



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OUR MISSION

Little Oak Montessori supports...

the development of the whole child by providing a comprehensive Montessori education to children of the Columbia River Gorge.

Our goal...

is to guide each child's quest to reach their intellectual, social and emotional potential in a nurturing environment that fosters respect, compassion, and independence.

At Little Oak, children are both students and teachers with the capacity to listen to their own guidance and follow their own inspiration.



2022/2023 STAFF



Children's House Guides

Brittany Bernard
Hummingbird Lead Guide

Hannah McCulloch
Dragonfly Lead Guide

Jil Parish
Hummingbird Assistant Guide

Kaylee Baker
Dragonfly Assistant Guide

Elementary Guides

Sanaz Nakhjavani
Elementary Lead Guide

Julia Bartos
Elementary Assistant Guide

Melissa Enoch-Rex
Elementary Lead Guide

Kathryn Eagan
Elementary Assistant Guide

Administration

Lindee Lewit
Head of School

Carmen Brown
Office Coordinator

Kris Cronkright
Admissions Coordinator



A message from the Head of School



Dear Little Oak Community,

I am thrilled to present our Annual Report, showcasing the remarkable achievements and milestones that our Montessori community has accomplished over the past year. With immense pride and gratitude, I share the following highlights:

Record-Breaking Enrollment:

- We are excited to announce that our school achieved its largest enrollment to date. This remarkable growth reflects the strength of our educational program, the dedication of our staff, and the unwavering trust and support of our community.

On-Site Counseling Support:

- Acknowledging the significance of mental health and well-being, we introduced on-site counseling sessions with Kim Lubin. This initiative, dedicated to fostering a nurturing and supportive environment, provides invaluable support for both students and staff.

Community Meeting with AMI Human Rights and Social Justice Advisor:

- We had the privilege of hosting Sheri Bishop, an advisor specializing in Human Rights and Social Justice from the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI). This engagement deepened our commitment to creating a socially conscious and inclusive learning environment.

Elementary Garden Project:

- Embarking on a delightful journey, our school initiated the planning and construction of an elementary garden. Our elementary students showcased their entrepreneurial spirit by organizing a creative meatloaf fundraiser to fund this initiative, demonstrating their commitment to community involvement.

Return of Little Oak's Annual Fall Fair:

- Overcoming challenges posed by COVID, we successfully returned and hosted Little Oak's annual Fall Fair on-site at the elementary campus. This event not only brought joy to our community but also showcased our resilience and adaptability.

Message continued...

Record-Breaking Fundraising:

- This year marked our largest fundraising achievement with the Annual Giving Campaign raising an impressive \$25,000, and the annual gala setting a new record by raising \$75,000. These funds significantly contribute to our tuition assistance program, upholding our commitment to accessibility in Montessori education.

Full Ride Scholarship Pledge:

- Through the proceeds of our annual gala, we proudly announce a pledge from the Bruce & Mary Stevenson Foundation Fund C to provide a full-ride scholarship for one deserving individual in the upcoming academic year (2023-2024). This initiative aligns with our core values of inclusivity and making quality education accessible to all.

Introduction of Elementary After School Program:

- We were delighted to introduce our new Elementary After School Program, designed to enhance the educational experience beyond regular school hours. The program offered a variety of activities, including arts, crafts, and outdoor time with an emphasis on screen-free engagement.

Introduction of Elementary Enrichment Program:

- We introduced the Elementary Enrichment Program providing students with lessons on visual, performing, or physical arts beyond the Montessori included curriculum. This initiative allowed us to provide additional educational experiences for our students while opening up valuable time during the day for guides to collaborate on thoughtful curriculum development, ensuring a well-rounded learning environment that fosters both academic and social development in our elementary students.

As we reflect on these achievements, we extend our deepest gratitude to our dedicated staff, supportive families, and the entire Montessori community for contributing to the success of our school. Together, we are creating an educational experience that inspires a lifelong love of learning and prepares our students for a bright future.

In partnership,



Lindee Lewit
Head of School

Enrollment

Children's House

Hummingbird: 20 students

Dragonfly: 20 students

Elementary

34 students



Total 2022/2023 Enrollment:

74 students

*Little Oak Montessori School is a non-profit,
501(c)(3) educational organization
governed by a Board of Directors*

Rachel Montague *Board President*
Beatriz Acosta *Treasurer through January 2023*
Kristin Franger *Secretary through June 2023*
Kipp Baratoff *Interim Treasurer*
Anna Henschel *Secretary*
Eileen Brady
Sam Grimm
Kelly Miller
Kelly Turso
Lindee Lewit, *Head of School*

A message from the Board President

Rachel Montague, outgoing board chair, shares her thoughts on Little Oak School Board governance, strategies, and wisdom gained over the past 2 ½ years. This winter, Rachel will turn the reigns over to Amy Wilson, as she leads the Little Oak community in what is sure to be a transformational year.

What is the leadership role of the board of trustees at Little Oak Montessori?

The board of trustees is the governing body of the school. It is a phenomenal group of people who care deeply about Little Oak, our shared Montessori mission, and stewarding the school toward a prosperous future. It is comprised of 7-8 trustees who serve 3 year terms and bring a wide variety of skills and experiences in: education, financial management, strategic planning, fundraising, human resources / personnel management, executive roles, and creative marketing to help guide the school. Trustees are fiduciaries. They are volunteers and serve the best interest of Little Oak. Responsibilities include preserving the mission of providing Montessori education in the greater gorge, setting strategy, establishing policies, stewarding the school's resources (budget, facilities, fundraising dollars), advocating for increased access, philanthropy, and hiring, supporting and assessing the performance of the Head of School. Preserving the mission of the school is at the heart of each discussion we have and every decision we make.

continued.....

What are the board's priorities in the next 1-3 years?

This is a big year with the search for a new Head of School. We have been fortunate to have a wonderful Head of School for the last five years, during a time of immense challenge and change. The board appointed a Head of School Search committee and will be working to secure a new Head of School who will be able to move Little Oak through a period of expected and yet likely unprecedented period of growth. At the same time, the board is attending to our strategic planning and setting the vision for the future of Little Oak. The board is currently working to implement a three-phase plan to "strengthen the core" in the areas of increasing long-term staffing and student matriculation, strengthening administrative support, and securing and strengthening our donor base. Simultaneously, we are working to secure the purchase of land using a combination of cash reserves, low interest EIDL loan, and possible employment of a real estate investment trust. We are also working to set the foundation to be able to build a larger and integrated campus and offer greater access to the members of the gorge community who desire Montessori education. We will bring all we learn from the HOS search process, annual surveys, board sponsored conversations with the community, and informal social conversations to the planning conversations. We will seek parent, faculty, alumni, and community input, so please do not hesitate to share your views about the future of Little Oak or better yet, share your talents and become involved in committee work yourself!

What have you learned about Little Oak while serving as the school board chair?

What struck me most about my time on the school board has been the shared goal of continuing to form young leaders who are relentlessly curious, peace-minded, open to growth, and view themselves as strong and capable learners. Little Oak students are famously engaged in their immediate school community as elders on the playground, Reading Buddies, Friday Gathering and in entrepreneurial endeavors. They are also well integrated into the Columbia Gorge area community. From learning about Celilo Falls, annual salmon migration, involvement in MakerSpace and featured community artists, learning with Pacific Hermitage Monks, outdoor learning experiences, philanthropical involvement in projects such as WAGAP winter giving, and gathering the community for events such as the Science and Cultural Fair, Grandparent's Tea, and the Winter Program, it is evident that for a school our size, we have immense resources and continued dedication to Montessori education. This differentiates Little Oak as a stand-out option for early and elementary education. I have learned that when the mission is important, the education is steeped in pedagogical practices, and the community is engaged, that together those aspects draw skilled and devoted individuals who are committed to continue to stay true to our roots while evolving and innovating as we look forward. It has been an honor and a pleasure to be part of this work.



OUR PROGRAMS

Children's House

Senie Hunt performs his talents
Sanaz shares her kanun with CH
students



Elementary

Students share research projects
with grandfriends
Weekly visits from the monks



ENRICHMENT *and* EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Photography



Elementary campout at Ekone Ranch



Elementary Garden Project included student-led and executed fundraising, goal-oriented planning, and strategies to keep the garden sustainable, including proliferation, food storage, marketing and sales. Students found ways to be individual leaders, agree on group goals, and work through differences in opinion. The Garden Project also won a grant to continue their work in the coming year.



ENRICHMENT *and* EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES *continued*

Parent Colin Franger shares his vast knowledge of the world of fungi with the Elementary students.



Elementary students join local artist, La, in the studio for an introduction to pottery and ceramic arts.



Upper Elementary students see "It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play" at Portland Center Stage.



Elementary students are given almost limitless possibilities to create at Gorge Makerspace



SOCIAL JUSTICE WORK & MISSION STATEMENT



Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Statement (JEDI)

Dr. Maria Montessori was a passionate advocate for teaching peace. Little Oak recognizes that peace requires a commitment to justice within our community and world, alongside a spirit of learning and unlearning.

While we cannot solve all of the issues created by cultural and institutional classism, racism, and sexism, we know that this work is not neutral, and we must take active steps to move our community toward greater equity, inclusion, and justice.

We are committed to providing a school environment that actively identifies and reduces biases to honor differences in races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender expressions, religions/beliefs, family structures, economic backgrounds, cognitive and physical abilities, and other identities that make our students, staff, and families unique.

Our organization is committed to the internal and external work of identifying and dismantling bias and racism in our community. We acknowledge that this work is ongoing and we are deeply committed to this journey. We pledge to support each other in this process as we continue as educators for peace.



Last winter, Little Oak continued to take significant steps towards fostering a more equitable and inclusive educational environment by inviting Sheri Bishop, AMI Human Justice and Social Justice advisor, for staff training and a community meeting. The social justice committee solidified the school's commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) by writing an official statement. The JEDI statement impressed AMI, leading them to request permission to use it as an exemplary model for other Montessori schools nationwide. This recognition not only showcases Little Oak's dedication to fostering positive change within its community but also positions it as a leader in influencing broader advancements in the field of education.

Teamwork makes the dream work!

Thank you to our

Volunteers



The Children's House play structure received TLC to ensure the log steps and climbing holds remain strong



Volunteers ran all the activity booths at the Annual Fall Fair, including the busy bake sale table

Over the course of the 2022/2023 school year, we had 55 families offer their time and talents in the form of a whopping 1,592 volunteer hours! All of that precious time and energy lended itself to the ongoing maintenance of our school facilities, enrichment, and successful school events.

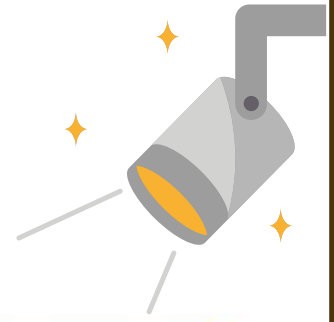


Parent volunteers played a huge role in the smashing success of our Annual Gala



Parents volunteered their time and talents as chaperones for our Elementary campout at Atlan

Alumni Spotlight: Anson Polk



Little Oak graduate Anson Polk was inspired by the service projects at Little Oak and started a nonprofit organization collecting bike donations for other children in need of bikes. He partnered with local nonprofit organizations. More details about Anson's story can be found at:

<http://www.ansonsbikebuddies.org/>



After School Program

Little Oak Students have the opportunity for both unstructured play and structured activities during the after care program at both the elementary and children's house campuses. This screen-free, active and engaging program extends time with peers in a supportive and safe environment. ASP students often work on projects such as art, gifts, baking and cooking, play collaborative board games, and play outside as much as possible. We are so thankful for this resource for families as well as for the skilled and dedicated ASP staff. Thank you Michelle and Kathy!



Thank
you



Little Oak
MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Supporters

Little Oak continues to grow with the ongoing support of our amazing community. Contributions in the form of cash donations, in-kind donations, and event sponsorships allow us to maintain the growth and overall health of our school, as well as extend our reach through community-centered events that strengthen our connections and attract more like-minded families in the Gorge. Your support and generosity makes a real, measurable difference in the lives of our children and our community- Thank You!

Cash Donors:

Keli Aiello, Caitlin & Emily Alcott, Kay Alton, Anonymous, Lori Baker, Chris & Russ Bath, Juliet Berkshire, Adrian Bradford, Meg & Luke Bradford, Eileen Brady & Brian Rohter, Dr. Henry Bratton, Eric & Alia Breon, Carmen Brown, Don Burton, Kristen Campbell, Leslie & Doug Campbell, Malea Clark-Nicholson, Audrey Collins, Lois Colton, Ryan Dougherty & Marla Keethler, Teresa Langen Earle, Nichole & Erik Ekman, Susan & Adam Elliott, Melissa Enoch Rex, Trish Grant, Caroline Grew & Tucker Szymkowicz, Diana Grotte, Monica & Pete Happy, John Head & Lucia Orth, Julianna Hein, Harry & Lulu Henschel, Anna Henschel, Chuck Henschel & Diana Robinson, Chad & Savannah Hinman, Camille & Chuck Hinman, Deborah Humphrey, Elaine Johnson, Paige & Kyle Jones, Pete Kotkas & Cassandra Cass, Pete & Phoebe Kruchoski, Joe & Katie Kula, Eleanor Lemann & David Cleveland, Ben & Lindee Lewit, Bob & Jane Lewit, Cynthia Lindsay, Catherine Loke, Sharon Mann, Janet Mayo, Tad McGreer, Anais Mera, Kelly & Denver Miller, Laurie & Pranesh Narayanaswami, Ali Nicklas Arnold, Carolina Pfister, Lucas Pinelli, Cassie Powell & Eddie Kurtz, Nashira Reisch & Jim Miller, Kathleen Roberts, Dov Rohan & Mary Hunter, Marva Sadler, Christina Sadler & Wyatt Rivas, Jannie Schaffer, Mimi Shannon, Silvan Shawe, Bradford Sprouse, Lance & Misty Stern, Anne Stroud, Karl Swanson, Chris Swisher & Kathleen Korwin, Deborah Tacon, Anthony & Jaclyn Tamfer, Rachel Montague & Scott Tamfer, Katie & Jesse Thetford, Thomas & Gloria Thetford, Andrew & Suzanne Trickey, Kelly Turso & Travis Tacon, Karen Vance, Cheryl Watson, Gerald & Leah Wells, Heather Whidden, Laila Winner & Saurabh Asthana

In-Kind Donors:

Eric & Joellen Bingener, Laura Bissell, Meg Bradford, Eileen Brady & Brian Rohter, Eric & Alia Breon, Cassandra Cass, Adam Deskin, Kathryn & Shane Eagan, Ashley Erdely, Kristin & Collin Franger, Pete & Monica Happy, Harry & Lulu Henschel, Kika Kielpinksa, Paige & Kyle Jones, Ryann & Aron Kivel, Pete Kruchoski, Laura & Jason Mann, Aurora & Zan Moore, Kris Ostness, Rachel Montague, Silvan Shawe, Shelley Tattam, Kelly Turso, Mersadie Vasquez

Fall Fair Donors:

COR Cellars, NK Studios, MoonMountain Highway, Ruddy Duck, The Society Hotel, Henni's Kitchen & Bar, and Mugs Coffee.



Annual Gala Donors & Sponsors

Thanks to the generous support of our Gala donors and sponsors, we successfully raised **\$75,000** for our Tuition Assistance Program!

Annual Gala Auction Donors:

AniChe Cellars, Society Hotel, Trellis, NK Studios, Laurel & Eddie, Yoga Samadhi, Surf Salon, Sheri Horvat Massage, Hiyu, Jackalope Jamboree, Plenty, Satori Tattoo & Skin, Skamania Lodge, Cassandra & Pete Kotkas, Kika Kielpinska, Alpine Sea, Arome, Bingen Theater, Blowfish Hats, Boda's Kitchen, Ruddy Duck, Common House, Brimstone Boulders, Virginia Hartnett, Ron Montague, Barbu Panaitescu, Fish People, FOAM Salon, Wilderton Distillers, Treebird Family Market, Rebecca Bashara, ProShine Cleaning, Ashley Erdely, Fruit Loops Art Center, Hera Woman, Hood River Dental, L77 Ranch, Dog River Coffee, Hood River Stationers, Little Splashes Swim School, Moon Mountain Highway, Slingshot Sports, Tokki Art Supply, Pete Kruchoski, G. Williker's Toy Shoppe, Kristine Pollard, Tucker Road Animal Hospital, Behold Life Packs, Mitchell Point Summer Camp, Snapdragon Yoga, Kelly Turso Photo, Eric & Alia Breon, Harrison Henschel, La, Wildcraft Studio School, Kathy Gillies, COR Cellars, Domaine Pouillon, Karl Swanson, Jil Parrish, Analemma Wines, Runcible Cider, Twiggs, Le Double Trouble Wine Co, Bloom & Dye

Annual Gala Auction Sponsors:

Little Shredders, Kula Chiropractic, Proactive Financial Management, Sotheby's/ England Property Group, Golden Goods, Alpenglow Farm & Garden, Best Western Hood River, Caroline Grew & Tucker Szymkowicz





Little Oak
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Grants Received

Inukai Family Foundation

\$500

Social Justice Training Program

Walmart Foundation Community Grant

\$500

Educating, Supporting and Empowering Children's Social and Emotional Health

Marie Lamfrom Charitable Foundation

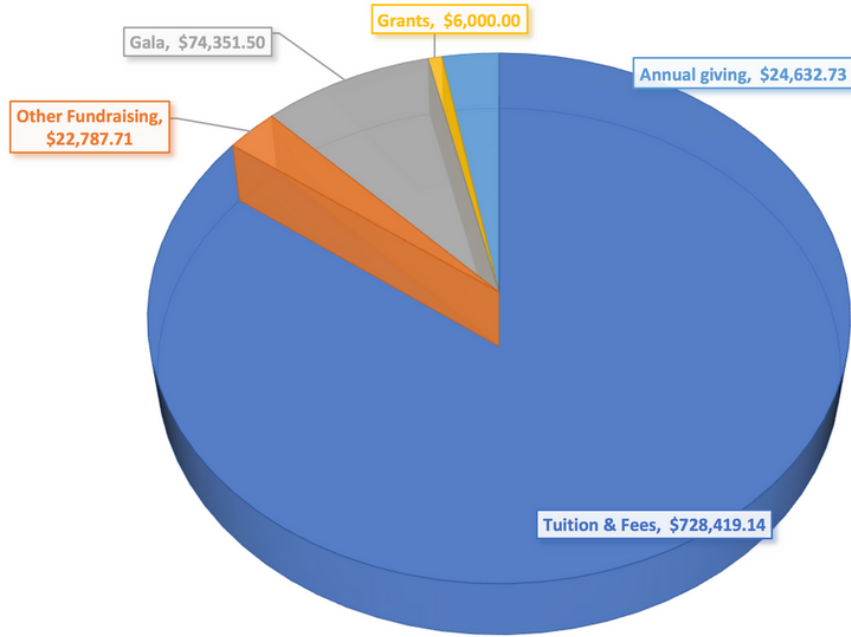
\$5000

Educating, Supporting and Empowering Children's Social and Emotional Health

Funds received from grants supported Sheri Bishop's visit and subsequent training of staff and Board members. The on-site counselor support for students and professional development provided to our staff by Kim Lubin, LCSW, was also made possible by these grants.

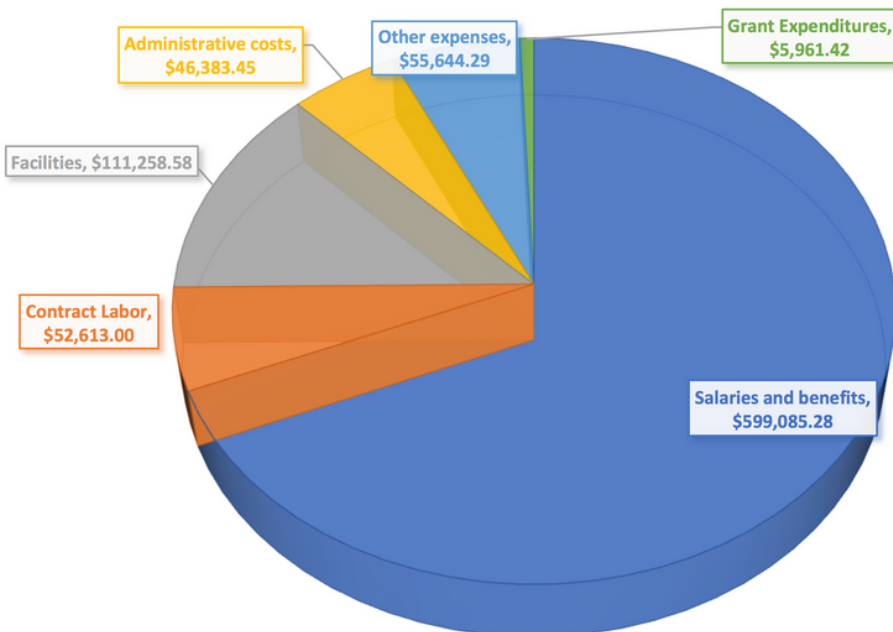
Financial Report

2022-2023 REVENUE AND SUPPORT



Total Revenue and Support: \$856,191.08

2022-2023 EXPENSES



Total Expenses: \$870,946.02

As a community, we share a common vision to embrace child-centered education and partner with parents in developing capable and confident human beings connected with their inner voice. You can help support our mission by staying informed, participating in community and school events, and sharing your ideas and concerns regarding the growth of our beloved school.



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Stay connected!

Follow us on social media

