

# Sounds Alive Newsletter

Eall 2021

It is interesting how the pandemic was so hard on our children, staff and their families on one hand while it lead to innovative solutions on the other hand which resulted in another very successful year for the school. I am pleased to report that the school and our foundation have both enjoyed a remarkable year.

Thanks to the earlier development of the MOSD Distance Learning Program the school was well positioned to migrate into one run effectively

despite the challenges presented by having to teach online. Over the past two years, thanks to very generous donors, we were able to build the technological infrastructure required to continue providing the support needed to effectively teach our children to listen and speak.

A few years ago the MOSD Foundation committed to support staff members to obtain a Masters in Deaf Education at The Fontbonne University. This requires substantial funding for each of them. I am pleased to report we now have three graduates and three new students enrolled! This program will ensure that the MOSD continues to have professional staff of the very highest quality. We are fortunate that this initiative, likely requiring well over \$500,000, is being funded entirely by our donors.

Special thanks go to the MOSD staff under the leadership of Luisa Cordoba. To say the very least the challenges presented created a very stressful environment for everyone. Our staff rose to the challenge in 2020 and continue to as we look at another year dealing with the effects of the pandemic. We are truly blessed to have such a dedicated team.

The Foundation's fundraising goals for the year were met thanks to great teamwork and the generosity of many donors. To achieve our ultimate goal to teach our children to listen and speak, we must strive to maintain our very high standards without compromise. To do so requires maintaining a professional caring staff supported by a first class infrastructure. Though we do receive government educational assistance which partially funds operations we nevertheless must raise substantial funds privately. On behalf of The MOSD Board and our Executive Director, Susan Bell I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all you who have supported our very special MOSD children.

Steve Hurlburt,

Chairman, MOSD Foundation











PHOTO CREDIT: PWL CAPITAL

# *"When you become comfortable with uncertainty, infinite possibilities open up in your life."*– Eckhart Tolle

The last trimester of the 2019-2020 school yearbrought, upon all, a significant number of new situations. We were in a pandemic, with very little solutions on the horizon.

That new context forced us to change. Successfully adapting to that change gave the MOSD team the confidence, the optimism, and the trust to face all the uncertainties that the 2020-2021 school year was going to bring our way.

"School or no school"; "Mask, or no mask"; "Teaching online, real time, or both"; "Itinerants and professionals providing one-on-one services and going from school to school"; "Confinements and deconfinements"; "Class bubbles, wipes, and hand sanitizer"; all while ensuring learning in a fun, safe and stimulating environment.

You can bet your last dollar that the entire MOSD community was feeling fear, discomfort, and uncertainty. Those feelings did not stop us.

We faced them through planning, constant communication, creativity, understanding and resilience. The final outcome: a stressful yet successful school year. I am very proud of what the MOSD community has accomplished. As Miss Kristina said on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021, while all staff members were waving goodbye to the children driving off, **"we did it!"** 

Throughout the year, along side with the continued educational and professional services, MOSD staff have remained committed to their professional development activities and with the support of the MOSD Foundation, our partnership with FONTBONNE University has continued thriving. Three staff members have graduated with a Master of Arts in Deaf Education and two more have started the program. Congratulations to all and many thanks to the donors!

Last but not least, a great deal of work has gone into the development of a NEW website. Despite the uncertain times, growth and development were pursued. The MOSD is proudly going to be launching its new website Tuesday October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021

"When nothing is sure, everything is possible" – Margaret Drabble

Thank you to all invested in the MOSD mission, it is with great pride and optimism that we will thrive through the 2021-2022 school year.

Luisa Cordoba Director General



**MONTHLY GIFT** A monthly gift is a simple and powerful way to change the life of an MOSD student. A special thanks goes out to all of our monthly givers, including many of our dedicated team at the MOSD. Please join this list by setting up a monthly donation today! Contact Susan Bell, Director of Development, 514 488-4946 or sbell@montrealoralschool.com for more details.

#### **PLANNED GIVING**

The MOSD Foundation has been fortunate over the years to have donors remember us in their wills. The funding we receive in bequests is invested for "future" projects the school requires to enable them to deliver their top-notch services. Cash donations, appreciated securities, charitable lead trusts, insurance policies and retained life estates are all tools to plan a gift during or after your lifetime to the MOSD Foundation. As with any planned gift, donors should consult legal and financial counsel before entering into any agreement. For more details, please contact Susan Bell at 514-488-4946 or sbell@montrealoralschool.com who would be happy to guide you along the way.



#### "MOSD children raise over \$1,000 for Terry Fox"





CELEBRATIONS OF A DIFFERENT KIND RAISE MONEY FOR THE MOSD FOUNDATION

Since COVID 19 struck, we made the tough decision to not participate in the Scotia Race as it presented too much risk for our supporters and virtual did not allow us to have the team spirit we are so blessed to have on this amazing day. Two very special supporters went out of their way to help us by hosting special parties – one celebrating her birthday month and one celebrating his graduation from Grade 6 to move on to high school and move from in-house to itinerant status.

Meet Joanne Garfinkle and Richard Stubina. Joanne joined the Foundation board in 2016 and has been a strong supporter each year of the Scotia race. When she heard we would not be participating, she said "I am going to raise money for my birthday month". February arrived and off she went! No friend or family member could say no and she successfully raised over \$20,000. The year before, she and her new husband, RichardStubina bettered that by asking their wedding guests to send donations in their honour to the school. Both Richard and Joanne continued their fundraising projects – Richard by donating a percentage of all Caddy-Treks sold through our Golf Day and Joanne hosted a garage sale at their home in Sutton, QC. When one door closes, it presents opportunities - we are very grateful to them both.

This September, our student Arman Dimirjian came into the school to present us with a cash donation of \$725.00. Because of COVID, Arman's graduation party was a family event only but he still wanted to raise money for the school that has helped him so much in his journey. Arman was one of our 2021 graduating students and he decided he would sell his guests snow cones and other treats to donate to the Foundation. We have watched Arman grow since he arrived in Pre-school and off he went to high school this year! We know this is the beginning of great things for this young man. He aspires to be a movie producer and we just know he will achieve his goals! Thanks you Arman, and thanks also to Maggie and Mike – the village that stands behind him.

#### **E-Receipting**

The MOSD now offers the convenience of e-receipts. If you would like to be receipted electronically, please drop Susan Bell a line @ sbell@montrealoralschool.com <u>or mark in on your returned donor card.</u>



#### GOLFERS REUNITED DESPITE "COVID-19"

The MOSD Foundation finally hosted the 7<sup>th</sup>Hugh G.Hallward Memorial Golf Tournamenton July 12, 2021 with a smaller contingent of golfers but a huge fundraising

success. TEAM AUNE was once again crowned the LOW-NET trophy winner, but TEAM NOVA STEEL, our TITLE SPONSOR, were crowned LOW GROSS winner- the real test of a golf tournament with no mulligans involved. The biggest winners of the day were the MOSD children as the event raised just over \$140,000 with only 40 golfers in attendance. We are so grateful to all of our sponsors and golfers who supported us financially and promise to be back in bigger numbers next year. A huge shout out and thank you to the event sponsors: Nova Steel (Title Sponsor); The Aune Foundation; and Fednav (Platinum sponsor); Birinco, Jarislowsky Fraser, Letko Brosseau, (Gold Sponsor); A special mention to the additional sponsors: Constant America, Lengvari Capital, Garvin Brown, Mint Group, Joan and Ted Fletcher, David Forest Financial Services, Jacques Nolin, Caddy-Trek, Burgundy Asset Management, Kelly Patrick and Sophie Palmer, Deloitte, Mavrik, Proreit, The Howick and Avedesian Families, and Cinema Guzzo.

A huge shout-out to the amazing leadership behind the event, Randall Birks and Jason Tsadilas with unlimited special assistance from Steve Hurlburt. Thanks also to the MBCC team, led by General Manager Louise Côté and Scott Johnson, who worked hard to make it happen despite restrictions by the government regulations due to COVID. All of the guests enjoyed the NEW format of casual BBQ dinner in the beautiful gardens. Thank you Mother Nature for continuing to provide us with a beautiful sunny and warm day – despite the forecast. Thank you to volunteers Judy Martin, Honora Shaughnessy, Fern Whitehouse and Joanne Garfinkle who make the day run so smoothly. A special thank you to the members of the club who unselfishly agree to lend us their course for the afternoon. Please SAVE THE DATE Monday, July 11, 2022 to celebrate the 8th Annual Hugh G. Hallward Memorial Golf Tournament. We are ever hopeful COVID-19 will not restrict us in any way and we can host more golfers and more dinner guests on the day. Details will be sent out in JANUARY 2022 - book early by contacting Susan Bell, sbell@montrealoralschool.com to set aside your foursome.



# DONOR STORY –

#### **Rob Kerr**

I consider myself lucky to have had the opportunity to work with the MOSD Foundation for over 15 years, and to have had the chance to meet their dedicated teachers, audiologists and most importantly the children.



I saw how this organization

helped by working with young children born with hearing disabilities and learned that if hearing loss goes undetected too long, the children miss out on many years of hearing and learning for themselves. Parents too are left on their own wondering how they can help their children. MOSD fills <u>the</u> gap by testing hearing, recommending hearing aids and/ or cochlear implants, and by having skilled and dedicated teachers and support staff to work with these children on an individual and small group basis, giving them an enormous opportunity to learn to listen and speak naturally so that each can fully participate in their community.

It is hard to find teachers and audiologists who are skilled and dedicated to undertake the challenge of teaching children with hearing loss to learn through listening.. Welltrained professionals with this area of expertise are a rarity both locally and nationally. I was impressed when MOSD started to provide support, funds and time to allow their personnel to gain this specialized training when it was lacking.

I also saw how relieved the parents were to know that their children were getting the best possible assistance to help them integrate fully into their local communities.

I had the opportunity to take some of my friends and clients to see how the school operates and get them interested in adding financial support. A few of them contributed extraordinary amounts and really felt good about what they did. Marjorie Pike was one of them, and I was delighted when th3e school named to newly installed Elementary section after her and her grand generosity. But being a tax advisor, I also wanted to see her get the most bang for her dollar, so we arranged for her to make gifts from her increasing value portfolio so that the capital gains tax did not have to be paid upon her death. The charity gained and Marjorie was able to give larger amounts without having to pay as much income tax. Now, this is becoming a well understood practice, but it should be used for annual giving and for gifts in one's will, to the extent that you can spare this money.

I am pleased to see my colleague Frank Settino taking-up the cause and continuing as a Director for the MOSD Foundation and I encourage you all to get fully involved as well. The MOSD "extras" rely on private donors like you and me.

#### Volunteers Make a Huge Impact at the MOSD

What is your connection to the MOSD? I joined the Board in 2010. At the time Bob Babinski had asked me if I knew anyone who might be interested in joining the Board. I asked a few people. But then I thought about it and thought "I would really like to do it myself".



Bob told me a bit more about the board and how much his own daughter had benefited and I was super keen to learn more. I had suffered a hearing loss in my twenties and knew how frustrating it was for myself not being able to hear properly so I was very sympathetic to the experience of children.

What made you decide to become a volunteer? I think like a lot of the MOSD volunteers we get hooked after one visit to the school. The atmosphere was so positive and the children are incredible ambassadors themselves. They seemed happy! And the staff then and now were incredible. It was clear that the staff really cared deeply about helping the kids and were always willing to extend themselves. The MOSD staff are very special, dedicated individuals.

What did you hope to take away from your volunteering experience? I honestly didn't really think about what I could take away. I just wanted to be sure that I could contribute to the Board and to the School in a meaningful way.

Have our children taught you anything?For me seeing how the children struggle to live with their hearing loss has humbled me. I have been to Awards night several times and seen how proud the students, their parents and the staff are of the accomplishments of the students. The atmosphere is always so positive. And, I have heard several testimonials from the students that have really moved me. Really the students have taught me the value of giving and trying and not judging.

What would your message be to someone who is considering becoming a volunteer at the MOSD? I have served on many boards throughout my career and I can say unequivocally that serving on the MOSD board has been the most meaningful of all those experiences. I have enjoyed getting to know fellow board members and staff and feel that we have worked well to support the students and the staff. So the short answer would be – if you are considering joining the MOSD as a volunteer, don't hesitate. Go for it. You won't regret it.

Volunteering and Corporate Work Days- Are you interested in new team-building experiences for your company or family and friends? Volunteering at the Oral School is a great way to inspire your team and give back to the community. For more information about special projects for volunteers and/ or corporate work days, please contact Susan Bell @ sbell@ montrealoralschool.com. We are also very grateful to the 35 incredible individuals who gave their time to support the MOSD by working in the preschool, providing in-home tutoring, completing administrative duties etc. A special shoutout to Joan McCordick for her excellent and tireless translation work. Thank you all for your generosity, time and expertise! It takes a village!

### Kudos to the MOSD team......

We all know how special our MOSD teachers and staff are. Day in and day out they provide the children and their families the support they need to be successful. Some of the team

had special successes of their own this past year. Kudos and huge congratulations to them for these amazing accomplishments: **Karen Coulombe,** Itinerant Specialist completed her Masters of Teacher of the Deaf from Fontbonne University



Heather Reckling, and Tracey Green both successfully completed their LSL certification. Both ladies now sport the designation LSLS cert. Auditory-Verbal Therapist







Meet the Pre-school team.....

Our Preschool Program plays a key role in our children's success. The MOSD preschool staff works together in a team that includes teachers, audiologists, SLPs, educators and other educational specialists. Their goal is to support the listening and spoken language needs of our students, helping to develop their full potential!

This preschool program, unique in Quebec, focuses on the amplification provided by different types of hearing devices, parent coaching and an environment filled with language stimulation to promote the development of listening and spoken language. Our preschool classes follow the Quebec Education Plan (QEP) and are designed to provide a rich and stimulating environment.

A huge thank you to Catherine, Heather, Isabelle, Kat, Petti, Ollie, Itzia and Jenny, all of whom feel privileged to be working within the MOSD's dynamic, unique, and highly specialized school environment!

Interested in seeing our programs in action and meeting all of our teams. It would be our pleasure to give you a guided tour to see your dollars in action! Contact Susan Bell to set up an appointment sbell@montrealoralschool.com.

#### AND OFF THEY GO.....

June is a month of goodbyes to students who have successfully completed their elementary education "in-house" and are off to the mainstream. Huge congratulations to you all and don't forget to come and visit us when you are in the school.



We also said goodbye to some pre-school graduates who continue to receive our itinerant services in their neighbourhood school. Graduation for both these groups was "zoomed" for all family and friends to enjoy their celebration.



**MOSD Communication tools get a facelift.** Over this past year the MOSD team worked hard at updating many of their communication tools. The <u>www.</u> <u>montrealoralschool.com</u> new look will have launched by the time this newsletter



hits the stands and we hope you enjoy all the new tools and sections added to meet the needs of our families and future families who will benefit from our services.

With the help of Maeve Haldane, our information brochure



was streamlined to reflect the school today. This brochure is available on-line through the new website in both English and French.

Watch also for all the information and photos of all our activities through the Facebook and Instagram pages.



MOSD swag available: In response to requests for MOSD swag, you can now order MOSD sweatshirts directly from the manufacturers TORO Graphix. Youth and adult sizes are



available in both navy and blue colours. Order directly at the following link: <u>https://www.torographix.shop/s/</u>



search?q=M.O.S.D. We also have a new tote bag which can be purchased. Contact Susan Bell @sbell@ montrealoralschool. com or 514-622-9162.



# Funding for special projects at the MOSD

Over the past few years, the MOSD Foundation has focused a lot of time raising funds for "special projects" and we are very grateful to those who have chosen to "invest" in the school and allow us to see them come to fruition. All of these projects were in addition to the regular funds we commit to raise each year to ensure that our "free" services continue to be offered to all of our students and their families.

The school continue to need state of the art technology for students and staff to always be ready for online learning. This technology also allows us to reach out to communities not easily accessible so those children can receive ongoing services as well. The school currently provides itinerant services to children in the Eastern Townships, the Cree school board, students in Khanawake and we are also hopeful to continue providing service to a student who has moved back to Kuujjuag, Nunavik.

The investment in the Masters program at Fontbonne University continues and we now have three teachers who have successfully graduated with three more teachers expected to have graduated by Fall 2022. While this is a huge investment financially, it is also a huge investment of time and energy for our teachers who work all day and on-line learn in the evenings and weekends. Their investment makes our investment in them a priority so the school continues to provide our students with the best learning opportunity. We expect to provide the funding to have two new graduates each year until all of our teachers are Masters – Teacher of the Deaf. Congratulations to Karen Coulombe, our newest Masters recipient and best of luck to Isabelle Gervais-Chapman, Robert Burns and Stephen Ho in the year to come.

As with all technologies, we are in the process of working with the Audiology team to ensure all of their equipment is state of the art. We have identified some pieces that will need replacement over the coming year and will work hard at funding so they are working with the most up to date equipment they need to ensure optimal hearing at all times for our children.

Capital improvements to the building are necessary over the next few years. Our roof has been patched as much as it can and leaking windows are beyond repair. We await quotes and time lines for both these projects and again, will work hard to ensure these can be realized in the coming year.

If you are interested in learning more and would like to help, please complete the enclosed donor card or contact Susan Bell @ <u>sbell@montrealoralschool.com</u>.



# A heartfelt thank you to each and every one of you who believes in our students and donates to ensure they all succeed. Our students' success is your success!

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