

the MIQUON SCHOOL

2011-2012

Eighty Years On

Reflections on the state of the school by Julia Finney, Principal



Five years ago we conducted an opinion survey of our current community. I wasn't surprised to learn that the power and magic of our natural environment, the skills of our staff, the emphasis on encouraging children to just be children as long as possible, and the trust and respect with which we honor children when we give them choices and let them play independently - all these things - were widely acknowledged and acclaimed as central to our success and our identity.

Nor was I surprised to hear the frustration people felt about the perception that somehow all of that progressive learning outdoors meant that Miquon was not "rigorous." As a result of that survey and the strategic plan that it engendered, I adopted as one of my clear priorities, the need for Miquon to be recognized as a serious educational institution ... without, of course, losing our sense of humor and our commitment to letting kids play along the way!

So the Board, the staff and I attacked that complex problem in multiple ways. First, we started an internal communications campaign so that our current parents could learn and understand the pedagogy, the breadth of research and the professional expertise that were behind our very purposeful and very effective practices. Second, we recognized the value of our teachers, their professionalism, and their contributions to Miquon, as well as to the broader educational community, by instituting a new compensation and benefits system that rewards mastery and distinguished performance, in addition to years of service.

Third, we increased our training in learning disabilities and current interventions so that we could use those practices to better serve all our learners and determine when student learning needs were beyond our resources. Fourth, we took apart and are rebuilding almost every strand of our curriculum, to ensure that there is coherence, and collaboration, and continuity between the grades, and to demonstrate that we are living up to the ideals of our mission. Fifth, we made concerted efforts to send our teachers not only to attend, but to present workshops at professional conferences like the Pennsylvania Council of Teachers of Mathematics,

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New Ways To Connect

As times change, we have determined that there is a diminishing interest in and value to our traditional print newsletter, The Miquon News. We know that there are some folk, particularly those who are further away from their Miquon days, who enjoy the annual update from Miquon in its traditional format. But in an age when the vast majority of our alumni and their families are connected to the internet and getting their news online, the expense of producing, printing, and mailing the newsletter has become less justifiable, and we are discontinuing it.

However, the good news is that this same movement towards a world of virtual information has made it easier than ever for Miquon to remain connected to its friends. We are in the process of designing a new website to launch in February 2013, and we are looking at ways to make this useful and user-friendly to the alumni community, as well as appealing to prospective families. In addition, our e-newsletter Miquon Connections will be enhanced to include the more substantial articles and news from Miquon that previously appeared in print. And of course, we are using social media. The Miquon Facebook page has a steadily growing fan base, and we are poised to make use of other platforms such as Twitter and LinkedIn, as soon as we hear from you that you would like Miquon to be active in more social media.



News from the Development Office



In Memoriam

In memory of **Alexander C. Walbridge '95**, who passed away in July 2011, his family and friends generously donated funds for the construction of a new pond close to the Kindergarten classroom. This is part of Miquon's efforts to restore and develop that part of campus, which includes the Japanese pond area created upon the retirement of Cynthia Adams. That has been reconceived as a bog garden, and the new pond, with its three levels and gentle waterfalls, provides an idyllic spot for the quiet observation of pond life. Constructed in September 2012 and planted at the fall workparty, we expect this area to quickly become a favorite corner of the campus.

Ways To Make A Gift To Miquon

- Give securely online at www.miquon.org > gifts
- Send a check directly to Miquon
- Ask your employer to match your gift
- Make a gift via Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program (more information opposite)
- Talk to your financial advisor about making a gift of appreciated securities
- Designate Miquon in your will

If you have any questions, please contact the Director of Development at 610-828-1231 or development@miquon.org.

\$1,277,580

\$324,462
Board designated funds

\$98,761
Ada D. Lloyd Fund

\$104,676
Staff Compensation

\$310,206
Sabbatical

\$79,332
Professional Development

\$360,143
Financial Aid

Miquon's Endowment

Miquon's endowment of nearly \$1.3 million provides essential income that helps the school to stay vibrant and strong, despite a challenging economy. The various endowment funds provide support for specified purposes (see left), as well as a general fund whose income may be directed by the Board as it sees fit from year to year.

Ada D. Lloyd Fund

Established in 2009 by Ada's daughters Marcia and Carolyn, along with family friends, to provide assistance with expenses beyond tuition for families receiving financial aid, this fund supported tutoring for five Miquon students in 2011-12. A teacher writes, "the Fund has enabled some of my students to receive such valuable services ... we have been able to nurture each child as a whole, while ensuring that their specific learning needs were being met in a clinical setting. It has helped children to cement phonics skills and reading fluency while still having time to explore Miquon's outdoors and collect rocks in the creek. Quite simply, it has allowed us to take care of our children and families to an even greater degree than ever before!" And a parent adds that thanks to the Fund, her daughter "... is more comfortable with her reading skills and has really begun to enjoy reading much more. She has taken on more challenging chapter books and feels confident in her ability to decode unfamiliar words. Thank you for allowing me to express how grateful we are to receive this support."

Tony Hughes Fund

In 2011-12 more than \$6,000 from the Tony Hughes Fund was allocated for a variety of projects in areas close to Tony's heart. Science teacher Kate Shapero was able to work with both 3rd-4th grade groups to create and nurture a garden that has provided an abundance of vegetables all summer and fall long. Seeds, tools, supplies, and some expert assistance from a local organic farmer were made possible by the Fund. In addition, woodworking supplies and tools for the After School Program, xylophones and chimes for the music program, digital cameras, and digital projectors purchased through the Fund have enormously enhanced the program and benefitted many classrooms.

News from the Development Office

Thank You

We are proud and grateful to announce that generous donors to Miquon raised \$136,533 for the Annual Giving Campaign of 2011-12. This total included 100% participation by the Miquon Staff and Board. An additional \$76,595 in new restricted gifts was received. In order to protect our environment, we have shared our donor lists electronically. Please visit www.miquon.org > gifts > donors to view the list of those who have made gifts to Miquon. Thank you again. We are grateful to you all.

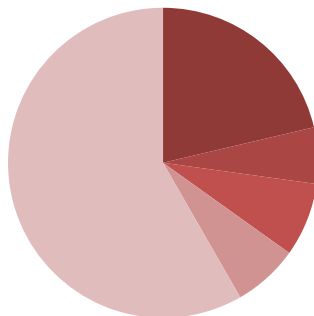
Highlights of the Operating Budget 2011-12

Total Revenues \$2,660,075

Non-tuition revenue streams \$630,937

clockwise from top right

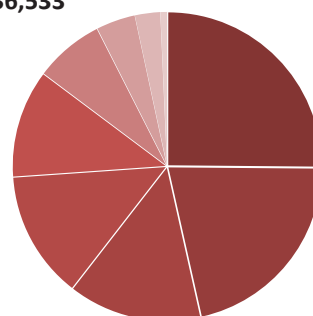
- 21% donations, unrestricted
- 6% donations, restricted
- 8% endowment income
- 7% miscellaneous
- 58% camp



Contributors to Annual Giving \$136,533

clockwise from top right

- 25% alumni parents
- 21% current parents
- 14% alumni
- 13% events
- 11% board
- 7% current grandparents
- 4% organization
- 3% other
- 1% staff



Note: reporting protocols for NAIS require that donors should be assigned to a single constituency, according to a designated hierarchy.



Educational Improvement Tax Credit

In the 2011-2012 school year, Miquon received more financial aid support via EITC than ever before. We were grateful to be the beneficiary of renewed grants from **Republic Bank** and **Philip Rosenau Co.** New funding was generously provided by **First Niagara Bank** and **UHS of Fairmount**. We also received a special grant for our nursery program through the **Bridge Educational Foundation**.

Miquon is on the list of scholarship organizations approved for the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program offered through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania's EITC program awards tax credits to businesses that make contributions to scholarship or educational improvement organizations. A corporation may receive tax credits ranging from 75 - 90% of its contribution, up to a maximum of \$300,000 per taxable year. All EITC contributions are allocated to Miquon's financial aid program. Since Miquon is an approved scholarship organization, we hope that our community will encourage any business they are acquainted with to make a gift for scholarship support. Tax credits are available from the EITC program on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, please contact the Development Office at development@miquon.org or 610-828-1231 or visit www.newpa.com and search for EITC.

Eighty Years On *continued*

the Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children, and the Progressive Education Network, among others.

We accomplished all of this without changing our values and our commitments as a progressive school. To me, it was about intellectualizing and communicating in multiple forms what we do, and - honestly - what we have done for 80 years. What can sometimes look so simple at first glance into a lively classroom is really a very well orchestrated dance between teacher and student - guided by appropriate principles of child development, and awareness of the demands of a changing world. knowledge of what should come next in a child's learning. The many classroom blogs and websites now published online offer a strong sense of that. We knew if we could share that more effectively with parents and educators, no one could ever say Miquon was loosey-goosey again.

Recently that survey has been repeated, and as I watch the responses coming in, I have the very clear sense that we can now put that erroneous image to bed. All the indications are there. Enrollment is the highest it has been in ten years. We had funds remaining to allocate to special projects at the end of last year, including a small acknowledgment to our hard-working teachers and staff. Annual giving to the school has been steady throughout the recession, with the number of major gifts growing. Our graduates continue to distinguish themselves in their secondary schools. Our teachers, including two fabulous new lead teachers, Diane Webber in the 5th-6th grade and Marisa Campbell in the Nursery, are well-trained, articulate, passionate, intellectual, talented, and devoted to observing first and creating the learning plan second.

The Board is once again engaged in the process of envisioning a future for Miquon that will guide the next phase of long-term planning, bringing our school to within a decade of its centennial celebration in 2032. A hundred years! We would not be at this exciting age without your care and support. As the Miquon song affirms, "We are proud of what you stand for, and we're glad to do our part ..." Thank you for doing your part for Miquon!

***"After graduating from Miquon, I went to some pretty well-respected schools - Germantown Friends School, Harvard, Penn Medical School. I would choose Miquon over any of them as having had the greatest influence on my education - a lifelong curiosity and interest in learning new things as well as the confidence to pursue whatever path I chose."
(Bill Kirber, class of 1964)***

Stay connected with Miquon

Please keep us updated with changes in your contact information (email, postal address) and let us have your news.

www.miquon.org > alumni > contact Miquon



Contact Miquon online

alumni@miquon.org

610-828-1231

**2025 Harts Lane
Conshohocken
PA 19428-2414**

Congratulations to the Miquon Class of 2012!

Visit www.miquon.org > alumni to see the schools they are now attending.

