



## The Heart of Miquon Campaign

*As time goes by, you realize the importance of giving back  
to the things that truly made an impact on your life.*

*—Anne Leblond Thompson, Class of '63*

The Heart of Miquon Campaign will make possible the construction of a new library building and two attached classrooms in the center of campus. The existing buildings have served Miquon well for 90 years but because of much love and heavy use they now need to be replaced. Centering a space for indoor and outdoor gathering and intellectual exploration and building a pair of new classrooms that increase opportunities for collaboration will help sustain Miquon and keep our school vital and inspiring for new generations of students.

This campaign was first conceived in 2015, and initial gifts were solicited to celebrate the tenure and retirement of Julia Finney, Miquon's principal from 2004-2015. The campaign's momentum grew until the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic, when we paused our work to refocus on keeping our students and staff healthy and learning together. We are proud that the entire student body has been on campus since September 2020, much earlier than many other schools, and that we have largely been able to avoid learning disruptions during this time.

As Miquon continues to evolve, the priority of this new building and its importance to our program are even clearer. Aging infrastructure is difficult and expensive to maintain. The new building and adjacent outdoor learning spaces will facilitate better collaboration among students, and staff, and that engage our community in diverse ways. We have raised \$2.4 million toward the campaign's \$3 million goal. An innovative decision that reflects Miquon's commitment to both learning and the environment is that the project is co-led by a landscape architect and a building architect. We have engaged the Philadelphia firms Grounds Reconsidered and SMP Architects, who are working in partnership to ensure that the building and the landscape around it best serve our needs now and in the future.

In taking on this project currently, we face a market with record-high construction costs and supply-chain delays. We cannot continue to wait to make these capital improvements to

campus, however. Our goal of \$3 million in the largest Miquon has ever tried to raise, but we know our community is dedicated to supporting both current and future Miquon students and staff. The time to complete the Heart of Miquon campaign is now, and we need the support of everyone who loves our school to make this project a reality.

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*I feel a debt of gratitude for the joy, work ethic, confidence, communication skills, and intellectual curiosity that have been forever instilled in our girls thanks to their time at Miquon.*

*—Jennifer Hasse, Alumni Parent*

## **Learning and Gathering in A New Library Building**

When Miquon's founders, Peggy Kiskadden and Peggy Regler purchased the land that is our campus in 1932, teaching originally began in the farmhouse on the property, which is now the Office. The current library building was the first additional structure built on Miquon's campus nearly 90 years ago. Since then, student enrollment has grown significantly, and our educational needs have overwhelmed the modest building and its single attached classroom. Accumulated moisture and structural damage mean we must replace the building and update the underlying systems (electrical, wastewater, and stormwater management) that make it possible for our campus to operate efficiently and safely.

The new library will be the nexus of Miquon's Progressive educational program, which is rooted in inquiry and discovery. The library opens worlds: to stories and characters both like and unlike ourselves, to new places, ideas, ambitions, and dreams. Books and literacy skills are at the center of this work, but the library will also use computers and digital tools to build 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills. Miquon students learn about the world around them not only by reading books but also by critically evaluating information online and exploring librarian- and teacher-curated resources. The library program supports students' curiosity by engaging them as informed digital citizens and we use technology such as laptops, tablets, and e-readers to build their 21st century research skills in developmentally appropriate, creative ways.

Exploration in the library happens often happens through cozy, intimate individual reading, but with expanded space, students will also have more opportunities to work together in whole grade-bands and across age groups. This means more shared learning experiences, exchanging ideas, working with computers and learning technologies, solving problems, practicing critical thinking, researching, and forming their own opinions based on evidence and deep

understanding. Larger groups of parents will also be able to gather in the new library, and to learn, plan, and support Miquon while in a key space where their children learn each day.

### **Two New Classrooms Will Foster Collaboration**

In 2008, renovations to the three classroom buildings on the ridge of our valley created an immediate positive impact on the daily educational experience for students and teachers. With lofts, kitchens, expansive windows, and cozy spaces for small-group work, these renovations have helped children and teachers learn together in new ways. The unrenovated buildings in the center of campus don't allow for the paired classroom configuration that would best serve Miquon's program. Students and teachers can collaborate more easily if the grade band classrooms can easily work together in and around the same building. In addition, the existing classroom attached to the library building and the old "Music Room" or Afterschool room are both smaller than is ideal for accommodating a full class of 20-24 students. The new classrooms will be appropriately sized, connected to the library and close to one another, while integrated into the surrounding outdoor environment.

### **Our Campus is Our Classroom**

The outdoors is an integral part of our students' experience. It's their playground, classroom, their hallway, and a place for endless exploration. We are creating a landscape design that engages, educates, and stewards the next generation of Miquon students. We were excited to find two partners, Ground Reconsidered landscape architects and SMP Architects to co-lead this project because they both understand what makes Miquon so special. The consequences of climate change are already becoming evident in our valley as more frequent intense storms and water runoff from surrounding properties cause floods, erosion, and increased humidity inside buildings. The architects are working together to address energy efficiency, integrated stormwater and landscape management, environmental literacy, and natural play spaces. We will also install a new wastewater treatment system to replace our outdated current system to better support the entire campus. The ambitious goal for the new building is to integrate the buildings into the land, and the land into the buildings to promote the core values the Miquon community has held for 90 years: engaged curiosity, independent play, holistic stewardship, and community equity.

### **Re-envisioning the Heart of Campus**

Miquon's Design Committee, an intergenerational group made up of current and alumni parents, alumni, staff, and design professionals, identified the following objectives for the design and construction of the new library and classroom spaces:

- The project will connect humans to nature, integrate into the existing campus environment, and facilitate courageous exploration into the world of new ideas and stories.

- The project will be as innovative as possible while staying within the budget.
- The construction timeline will be phased to have the lowest impact on our programming.
- Children and families will make vibrant connections in a built project that is simple, efficient, natural, and healthy—and that provides spaces big and small in which children and teachers will happily learn from each other and from the environment.
- Our spaces and places will foster an atmosphere of stewardship that reflects our belief in individuality and respect for one another.

Similar to other buildings on our campus, the library building will create flexible, inviting space, inside and out, allowing students and teachers to collaborate, gather, work, play, and learn together. Mindful of our natural environment, the architect and designer are committed to conceiving of a building will not take up any more footprint on campus than absolutely necessary and will be in conversation with Miquon’s existing infrastructure. Additionally, stormwater management around the building and the surrounding landscape will be an integral part of this plan. To be fiscally responsible, we will build a beautiful structure within a conservative budget.

### **Timeline**

The time to complete this project is now, and the campaign seeks to raise the remaining funds and open the new building by spring 2024. The project’s current timeline is as follows:

- April 23, 2022: Community Design Charrette
- May 15, 2022: Architect Open House to review initial designs
- June 2023: Fundraising complete
- Summer 2023: Groundbreaking
- Spring 2024: Celebration to open building for use

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*Miquon is my North Star. It’s a truly magical place.*  
*—Peter Slutsky, Class of ’93*

### **Miquon’s Endowment: Ensuring Our School’s Future**

Miquon's endowment supports important general operating expenses each year, including the care of our campus and facilities. The current endowment is \$2 million, much lower than many of our peer schools in the area. Looking toward our 100-year anniversary in 2032, we seek to grow the endowment for the long-term financial stability of Miquon.

The endowment also supports our students by offsetting the cost of tuition. Currently, almost 50 percent of our families receive financial aid, and many of them struggle to attend Miquon even with this support. Increasing the amount of financial aid we offer our current and prospective families through the endowment is crucial to ensuring our community remains vibrant, socio-economically diverse, and accessible to anyone who seeks our Progressive program.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss your gift to Miquon, whether you'd like to support the library building, the endowment, or consider making Miquon a part of your estate plan.

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*My years at Miquon helped nurture my creativity and supported  
my ability to challenge convention and become the person I am today.*

*—Hank Seifert, Class of '67*

## **In Closing**

Throughout its history, Miquon has specialized in student-centered learning in which our curriculum engages and motivates our students to follow their curiosity, ask and seek answers to questions they pose, and find their voices. We have undertaken the Heart of Miquon Campaign with that image, balancing the past and the present, in mind. Miquon's Board of Directors and administration asked what we must preserve over time and what we must change to ensure Miquon's future. Staying at the forefront of Progressive education by making sure our students have the tools to make a difference in the world, has been our driving force. Keeping our infrastructure up to date is essential to making sure Miquon can continue to educate students for another 90 years. We have made major progress toward this goal, but we need your help to make this critically important project a reality.

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