



2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Friends,

This past summer, my family and I packed our things and drove cross-country from New Mexico so that I could realize my long-time dream of becoming a member of the Miquon community. Our community has been exceptionally welcoming, and I feel as if I have finally come home.

I've been a Progressive educator for more than 30 years, and Miquon has always stood out as a trailblazer. As I lean into this community, its people and campus, pedagogy and traditions, I am struck by what you already know: there is a magic about this place – an often intangible, ephemeral, positive quality that is hard to describe but I know exists. I see it every morning when children bound from their cars and buses, thrilled for another day of school. It has been described to me, and I have often called it the “Miquon Magic”. Upon reflection though, something more crucial is happening than the happenstance of magic: something Progressive, transformative, affirmative, intentional, and long-lasting. This ethos permeates all facets of life at Miquon: it teaches children to see joy in learning, leans into their potential, and allows them to see the same in others. So perhaps the better term is the “Miquon Mindset”.

On the surface, the Miquon Mindset might seem to be rooted in the physical space, this secret and beautiful little valley in the woods. Even at this early stage in my time here, I see that it truly lies in the community's deep commitment to preserving the Miquon experience for generations to come. It starts with our teachers and learning support staff who are constantly working to give our children the attention and skills they need to thrive, while at Miquon and beyond. They are artisans – constantly crafting, reflecting, and re-crafting to ensure that each child can fully access all that our program offers.

And I see the Miquon Mindset in the way we put community at the center of our work. We make time to be together and welcome every member to show-up as their authentic self. That can be messy and challenging work, but we don't shy away from difficult conversations. We use Restorative Practices to help children when the inevitable conflict occurs, and have conversations about Equity, Action, and Justice to affirm our commitment to anti-bias and anti-racism. This hard work doesn't happen everywhere and it's a big part of the Miquon Mindset that is, in its implementation, quite magical.

I feel very fortunate to be part of the stewardship of it all, including the transformation that will occur this year when we construct our new library. For me, that project symbolizes much of what I'm talking about: a place for the intellectual growth that comes from reading and storytelling, a gathering space for community, and a reminder that we are place-based educators. This project combined with our love for our campus has created, in many ways, a lab to practice the many skills important to a Miquon education.

How wonderful that I get to be here through it all.

Warmest regards,



Geetha

Geetha Holdsworth, Principal



ENROLLMENT BY THE NUMBERS: 2022-23



OPENING DAY ENROLLMENT:

152

30%

of enrolled students
were children of color

The
Miquon
School

For the 2022-23 School Year,
we gave out

- ☛ **59** Financial Aid Awards
- ☛ Totalling about **\$808,099**
- ☛ To **39%** of our Miquon Students



NOTES FROM THE CLASSROOM



Attending a presentation by the activist group Students for the Preservation of Chinatown.

RESISTANCE AND THE FIGHT TO SAVE CHINATOWN

In every grade band, our children participate in year-long theme studies that are inquiry-based and driven by essential questions they raise during their research. Though part of Miquon's social studies program, in theme studies teachers use other disciplines like literature, writing, math, science, and the arts to enrich learning. Field work is also an essential component.

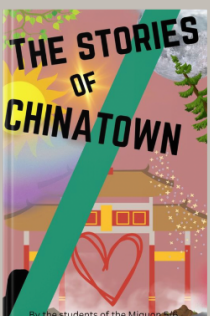
Last year, our fifth and sixth grade groups looked at the theme of resistance through the lens of the proposed 76 Place Arena currently slated for Philadelphia's Chinatown. Throughout the year they met with organizers on both sides of the debate, including city council member Isaiah Thomas, Center City District President and CEO Paul Levy, and Debbie Wei of Asian Americans United. "In reflecting on this project, many students said getting to talk to real people involved — residents, organizers, real estate and urban planning professionals — was an important highlight of this study," says group co-teacher Anna Weisberg, "They recognize that there is much more to learn and that they are outsiders to the community directly affected." They also took a field trip to see Chinatown for themselves and to speak with University of Pennsylvania students fighting to stop the project. In class, they studied the outcomes of similar projects in other cities,

as well as complex subjects like gentrification, tax abatement, and cultural displacement.

The work culminated in several written pieces: the students' joint "Recommendation to City Council regarding the Proposed 76 Place and Chinatown;" and two magazines: "The Stories of Chinatown" and "The Fight for Chinatown." Each is chock-full of the many interesting stories, facts, and histories they discovered in their work. Use the links and QR codes below to read more.

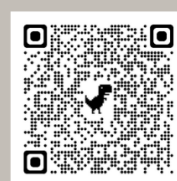


Students had great fun taking the train from Miquon into Center City, Philadelphia.

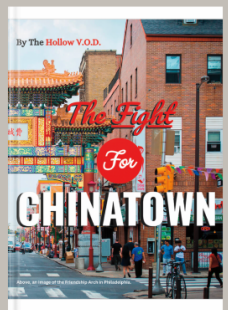


The Stories
of Chinatown,
also found at
bit.ly/StoriesofChinatown

Sparked by the stories
underlying the debate,
students honed their storytelling
and writing skills
to produce two comprehensive
and beautifully illustrated
magazines.



The Fight
for Chinatown,
also found at
bit.ly/FightforChinatown



NOTES FROM THE CLASSROOM



“ ———
It's hard to see the pros
to the project now that
we have a lot of
information from the
side of the activists, but
we are trying to keep
our minds open. ——— ”

Simran Kaur '24



During their field work, students broke into smaller groups in a scavenger hunt for signs of resistance and important landmarks like Philadelphia's iconic Friendship Gate.

Chinatown is a Safe Haven For Asian Americans

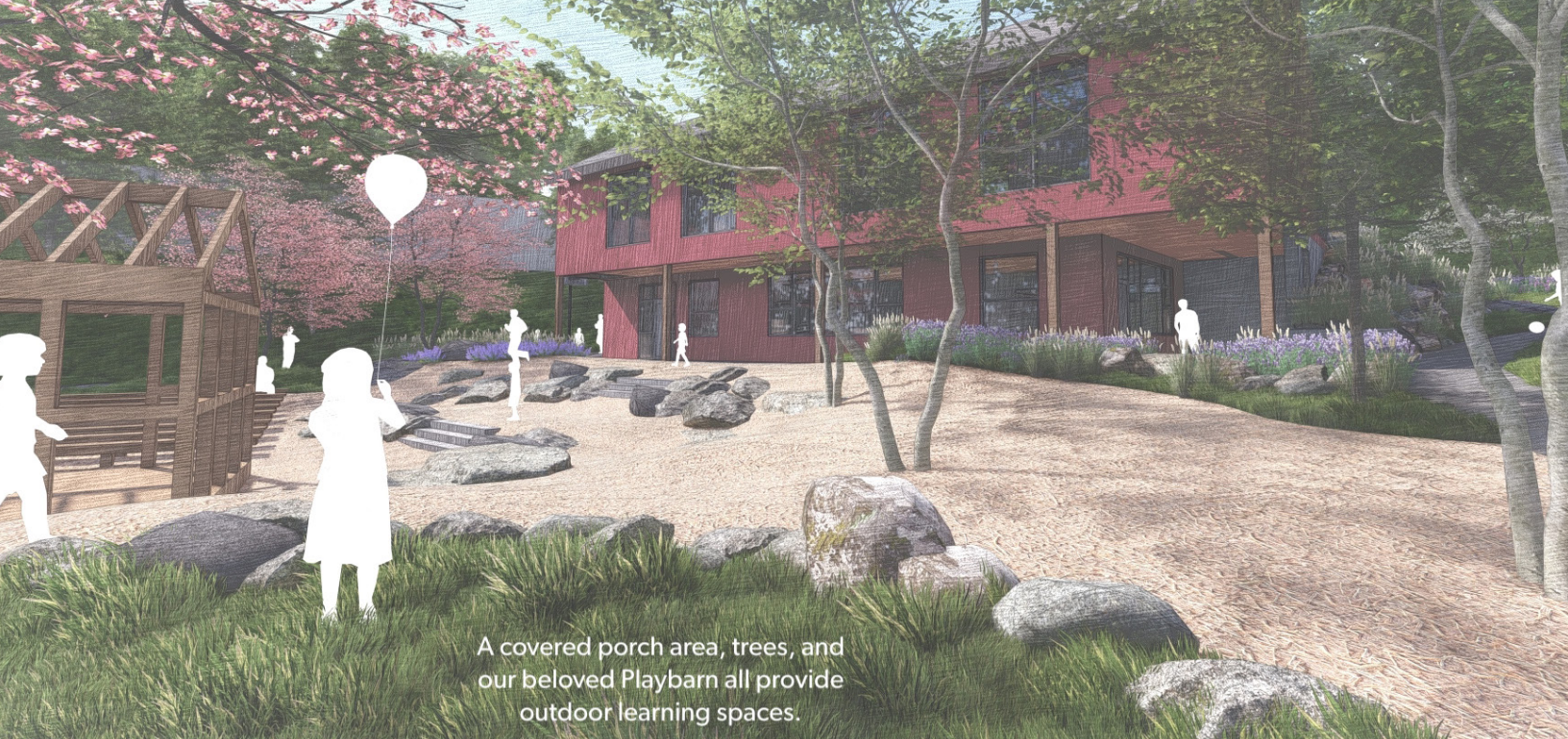
In the past, Chinatown has been a safe haven for Asian Americans and people coming in from other countries to Philadelphia. Over time it grew into a large community that brought a variety of new cultures and traditions into the city. The foods, art, and music all bring views of diverse lifestyles and the history behind different cultures across the world. It is wonderful to have access to that in such a large city. The community began in 1871 and is still thriving and bringing culture to Philly to this day.

The historic importance of Chinatowns in general is to have available ethnic residential and business community

Chinatown has probably a bigger population than you think and they have lots of historical restaurants, you would be surprised how good it is. Also the Chinatowns provide houses and help Asian Americans thrive. The Chinatown community needs business to make money for a bigger community and for better places to live. We need our Chinatown to live for a long time.

Back in the 16th century people from Asia came to America because of the unfair laws in their home country or for the fact that they thought that America was full of gold and rich people. But when they arrived, it was very different from what they imagined. That's why they built Chinatown. It was a place for immigrants to feel safe and be able to access food, water, and a place to sleep at night. It also brought culture, like Chinese new year, with big parades and colorful lights and fireworks.

An excerpt from the Students' Recommendation to City Council.



A covered porch area, trees, and our beloved Playbarn all provide outdoor learning spaces.

THE HEART OF MIQUON CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Transforming the Center of Campus

The time is here! After many years of planning, design, fundraising, and lately permitting work we are beginning construction on our new library/classroom building. The existing library and adjacent smaller building currently used for Afterschool will be demolished by the end of 2023 to make way for the new structure pictured above. The ground floor library and second-floor classroom building will be constructed using the natural slope of Miquon's valley so that the classrooms are accessible via a short flight of stairs on the rear side, while the library windows will continue to look out over the woodchip field.



Our landscape and building architects spent significant time getting to know Miquon and incorporated features that speak to Miquon kids' sense of play and adventure like the slide and rock scramble pictured at left, as well as a fireman's pole on the other side of the porch. In addition to the building, we are also constructing a series of rain gardens to help mitigate stormwater and flooding on campus. The Playbarn will remain in its current location. Construction is slated to be completed by the start of the 2024-25 school year.

This project would not be possible without the support of our community! Thank you to everyone who has made a gift to the Heart of Miquon capital campaign. We have raised \$2.9 million toward our \$3 million goal — and it's not too late to contribute! Help us to meet and exceed our goal: your gift of any amount will go directly toward construction costs for this beautiful building that will help keep Miquon vital for years to come. To make a gift, visit miquon.org/gift or use the QR code.



2022-2023 DONORS

THANK YOU SO MUCH!



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& Roger Clisby ('51)*

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WELCOME WHITNEY!



This past August, Whitney Snead joined Miquon's Administrative Leadership Team as our new associate director of development. Prior to Miquon, she spent nearly 20 years in teaching and curriculum development. We are thrilled to have Whitney on board and look forward to working with her.

In honor of Susannah Wolf

Alicia Woodley ('90)
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& Nathan Richter
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Cynthia Claus
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CELEBRATING SUSANNAH



On June 17, we gathered to celebrate outgoing principal Susannah Wolf ('81), whose tenure at Miquon included eight years as a student, and another eight as our top administrator. We are grateful for her leadership, vision, partnership, and dedication to Miquon. Over the summer, she and her family relocated to California, a life-long dream, where she is now the Head of Pluralistic School One in Santa Monica. We miss her deeply and wish her all the best at her new school.

Help us celebrate Susannah by making a donation in her name to the Heart of Miquon capital campaign. Gifts of any amount are greatly appreciated, and your donation of \$250 or more in her honor will be recognized with a special bookplate with your family's name for a book in the new library. Your gift will help make Susannah's work toward this project a reality. Visit miquon.org/gifts or use the QR code.

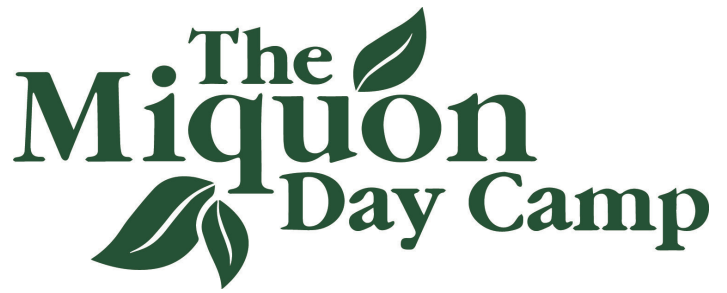


THANK YOU CINDY!

Miquon Day Camp Director Cindy Fleming-Powell officially retired at the end of the 2023 season. After an astounding 41 years as camper, counselor, and director, it is fair to say that she is a Miquon icon.



Cindy and her granddaughters at Day Camp.



Cindy's commitment to our campers and their families has been the backbone of the Camp's success. This year, it hosted an average of 217 campers per week, some for several weeks at a time, and employed an average of 75 administrators and counselors. Its revenue contributes substantially to Miquon's annual budget, helping to support facilities maintenance, financial aid, and other line items.

Camp programs include art, dance, physical education, group activities, swimming, and camp-wide events. It is wildly popular with our local community and throughout Philadelphia. This past year, it made Newsweek's list of Best Summer Camps and registration sold out within three weeks.

That kind of success is wholly attributable to Cindy and the team she has built over the years. During the 2023 season she was succeeded by long-time Assistant Camp Director, Carlos Nuñez, ensuring Camp will continue to flourish for years to come.

THESE TEN TENETS GUIDE OUR WORK AND RELATIONSHIPS EVERY DAY, EVERY YEAR:



1. Children learn by doing.
2. Helping children learn to think is as important as teaching any specific subject matter.
3. Learning occurs in ways unique to each child.
4. Children's curiosity and initiative are integral to their education.
5. Independence is a vital part of every child's development.
6. Working with others enhances children's growth in every domain.
7. Every person is a thinker, creator, and contributor.
8. The natural world is a place to learn.
9. Childhood should be fun, and children should find joy in learning.
10. Children can be upstanders and agents of change.



Congratulations Class of 2023!

