

# **FOOTHILLS ACADEMY**

*find understanding. build confidence. maximize potential.*



# 2019-2020

# Report to the Community

## Message from the Executive Co-Directors



In many ways the 2019-2020 school year was defined by the challenges faced around the world due to COVID-19. We are incredibly proud of how Foothills Academy rose to the challenges of the past year. Despite the obstacles laid down by COVID-19 and all that it impacted, Foothills Academy has continued to serve a large community of people in need who are living with Learning Disabilities.

In March 2020, we were able to make a successful pivot to at-home learning for our school students within 48 hours of the Alberta government's announcement that schools were closing classrooms in response to the pandemic. Our administrators, teachers, educational assistants, and allied professionals did a truly amazing job of rising to the challenge, to not only continue academic support, but also provide ongoing social and emotional support through to the end of the school year in June. We were delighted to be able to put together a personalized graduation event for each of our grade 12 graduates; teams of staff were able to personally deliver graduation awards, caps and gowns to each student's family home, so that we could still celebrate the outstanding achievements of our students.

*"The school did an amazing job adapting. The kids at Foothills had the best possible experience and I can only guess at how different it would have been if we were still at a public school."*

In Community Services we developed, and began offering, a menu of newly designed online programs for the LD and/or ADHD population by May. And in June, we were also able to resume offering some in-person

programs and services with new safety protocols in place, including psycho-educational testing by the Psychology team, and one-to-one remedial instruction through our Read/Write & Math department. Our online courses for parents and for educators were accessed from across Canada and were a stable offering throughout the shutdown. And, over the summer we also safely provided 149 youth an opportunity to attend Amicus Day Camp, which provided much-needed socialization opportunities for young people, as well as respite for parents. Our Community Services managers and staff members worked incredibly diligently and creatively, in order to provide a high continuity of care to the public throughout the pandemic.

*"My son participated in the [Read/Write & Math] 1:1 online program during COVID. He connected really well with his teacher, through this medium. Evidence-based approaches were used and progress was tracked. Each session built upon the last. It was great! I hope online classes will continue as an option!"*

These successes would not be possible without the dedication of the back office and custodial staff, who ensured the continuity of our business processes, and kept the building carefully maintained with increased cleaning cycles. The feedback we received from the families we serve was vital to inform our ability to evolve and react to changing circumstances. And lastly, the consistent support we received from our Board of Governors, our community partners, volunteers, and our generous donors has made all of this possible!

The Foothills Family is one where care and relationships are important, and where professionalism and high-expectations are fundamental to what we do, and how we do it. Looking ahead, there is no doubt that Foothills Academy will continue to thrive, despite the incredible obstacles beset by the pandemic and by the impacts of the Provincial economy. Community Services departments continue to grow and develop, casting a wider reach across the Learning Disabilities and ADHD population, and impacting even more individuals struggling to find the relationships and competencies in their lives to be successful. All whilst the school program is honing in on the specific best practices

### Board of Governors 2019/20

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Bob MacDonald, Vice-Chair  
Kristin Smith, Secretary  
Dennis Auger, Treasurer

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Leslie Archibald, Governor  
Leo Golden, Governor  
Cheryl Hamelin, Governor

John Krupa, Governor  
Simon Williams, Executive Co-Director  
Karen MacMillan, Executive Co-Director

and targeted interventions which most effectively impact student learning and development.

As Executive Directors, we will continue to advocate for the LD & ADHD population at the local, provincial, and national levels. We will also continue to strive for excellence in all areas of Foothills Academy, and we can do so because of the incredible community of staff members; volunteers; Board members; and the donors who are dedicated to the

Mr. Simon Williams  
Co-Executive Director

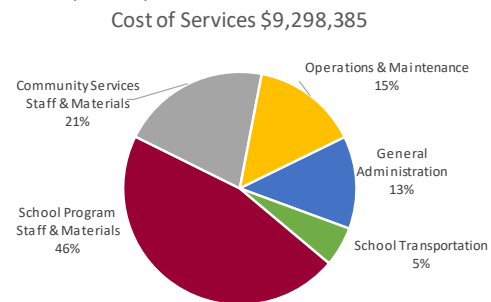
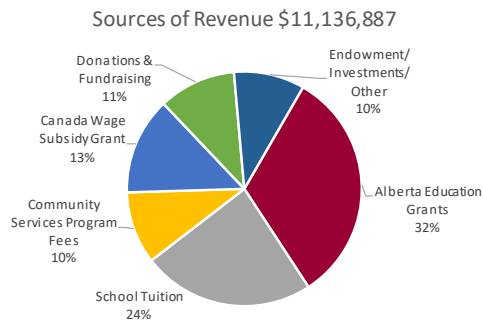
Dr. Karen MacMillan  
Co-Executive Director

LD community, and who are committed to working together to meet challenges.

Together, we will continue to grow and evolve to serve the Learning Disabilities community, and make genuine impacts upon the lives of many, regardless of the circumstances. We will achieve this as the Foothills Family, and we will get there by being Stronger Together, which we have identified as our slogan for the upcoming year.

## 2019 - 20 Financial Summary

Note: Full Audited Financial Statements available upon request



Fiscal 2019-2020 brought many new and unexpected challenges to Foothills Academy. Despite the disruptions of the pandemic, we were fortunate that there was no significant reduction of school tuition revenue or Alberta Education funding during this period.

By contrast, the operation of Community Services programs was significantly impacted. Initially, all programs had to be temporarily paused or cancelled. Relatively quickly, the departments were able to pivot and adjust their programs to serve as many clients as possible in new or adjusted formats. Hourly staff who were initially laid off were rehired as programming resumed.

All fundraising events that were planned from March to August either had to be cancelled or significantly adjusted which resulted in a substantial reduction in fundraising revenue this year.

At the end of fiscal 2019/20 it was confirmed that Foothills Academy qualified for a Canada Employment Wage Subsidy (CEWS) federal grant of \$1,492,605. We qualified based on the reduced revenue from Community Services and the lost fundraising activities due to the pandemic for the 2019-20 fiscal year. Foothills Academy Society was able to continue operations and retain most staff throughout the lockdown.

The operating surplus for fiscal 2019/20 has been placed in the Operating & Bursary Reserve. The surplus allows Foothills Academy to retain staff in Community Services

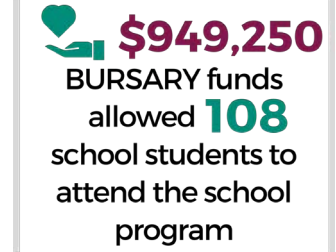
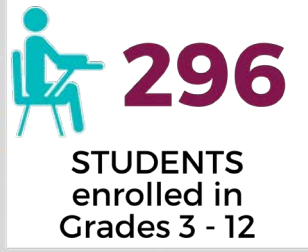
and continue to evolve services for families in the larger community, even though program revenues are lower than normal. The reserve fund also provides a necessary cushion for the expected significant reduction in fundraising revenues in the upcoming 2020-21 fiscal year due to the continuing effects of the pandemic. Despite the challenges we are facing, our long-standing mission remains to ensure that no child is turned away from our programs due to their financial circumstances.

The board directed that \$196,500 be allocated to the building Maintenance Reserve fund as per a building life cycle review conducted by an engineering firm and that the remaining surplus be allocated to an Operating & Bursary Program reserve. Capital spending this year included the upgrading of technology - especially Loftboards, the creation of a sports field space on the west side of the property, and the replacement of the stucco siding on the north side of our facility. A significant amount of money was also spent on technology and licenses to have all our staff able to operate remotely when all programs moved to online delivery.

Although fundraising was down, with the generous support of our community, we were still able to award 308 bursaries for the school and Community Services programs in 2019/20. The economic downturn and the pandemic has led to continued high demand for bursary funds. This financial assistance to families accessing our programs is valued in excess of \$ 1,090,359.

# Fulfilling our Mission in 2019 - 20

## School Program



The school program was full in 2019/20 with 296 students. Most grades have waiting lists which is a tribute to the success of our program. We provide a safe and caring environment for children with Learning Disabilities. Foothills Academy looks to understand each student, for their unique strengths and needs, whilst helping each child understand themselves. We support every student to have confidence in the knowledge of how successful they can be so that they can truly maximize their potential in school and life. Three highlights of our school program this year include:

### Pandemic Learning

Like everything else in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic overshadowed everything else that took place before it. After the announcement by the Minister of Education, Adriana La Grange, that in-person classes were cancelled as of March 14, 2020. Foothills Academy was able to begin full-time online learning two days later and kept this up until the school year ended in June.



Being able to move our teaching staff and students so quickly to online learning was only possible due to investments into technology such as computers, monitors, webcams and licenses for software such as Zoom. We were also fortunate that all students already had a personal technology device that they could use to continue to access learning while at home.

### Access to Mental Health & Other Professional Supports

At Foothills Academy, we recognize the complexity of the needs of our students. These needs require that our staff go beyond addressing academics. When students' social and emotional needs are met, we have a greater ability to build the strong characteristics required for academic and post-secondary success. To achieve this, we invest heavily in our in-house psychology team plus contracted Occupational Therapy and Speech-Language Therapy services. In 2019/20, approximately 25% of students utilized these very necessary supports. Conservatively, providing this support cost our organization almost \$300,000 to provide. Access to mental health supports continued during the pandemic lock-down with counsellors shifting to online delivery of counselling sessions. Additionally, the counselling team distributed a Weekly Wellness newsletter to school families and the public throughout the lockdown to help families have handy tools to get through the challenges of 2020.

### Bursary Assistance

Bursary assistance remained essentially the same level as 2018/19. Bursaries were requested and approved for 108 families for a total of \$949,250. Approximately 40% of families receive some amount of financial assistance for their child to attend the school program.

A complete school performance report and three year plan is submitted annually to Alberta Education and is available on our website.



*"Attending Foothills Academy made me believe in myself and my dreams. Without Foothills Academy, I'm not sure I would have completed high school."* Foothills Academy Alumnus

## Community Services



Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Community Services was able to reach approximately 3,000 individuals directly in 2019/20. Three highlights include:

### Pandemic Response

Each department was impacted in a major way by the pandemic and the shut down that occurred in mid-March. All in-person programming was temporarily halted and staff worked quickly and diligently to reimagine how programs and services could be offered through online formats. For the first time in our history, counselling, camp, recreation, literacy and math remediation and workshops were conducted using online formats.

Spring and summer plans and programs were revised numerous times to adhere to the ever changing health and safety guidelines. The stoppage of programming resulted in hourly staff initially being laid off. But, as we were able to pivot to online programming and health guidelines allowed us to resume some in-person programming, we were able to hire back staff and serve more clients.

By the summer, we were able to resume some in-person programming including day camps, remedial instruction, assessments and counselling. Alberta Health regulations

did not allow for any overnight camp programming this summer. We appreciate the donors and supporters of Camp Amicus that continued to provide support for these programs this year.



### Technological Challenges

Pandemic circumstances also required a technological leap to provide online registration and payment for all programs. The positive side of this experience is the discovery that some of our programs can be provided online. And, for some clients and some programs, online delivery may continue even once the pandemic restrictions lift. Having programs available through an online format increases the accessibility for clients who may find it difficult to physically come to a program particularly if they live outside of Calgary.

### Bursary Assistance

More families than ever applied for Bursary assistance during 2019/20. Bursaries were requested and approved for 200 families for a total of \$141,110 which was approximately 11% more bursary assistance granted compared to 2018/19.

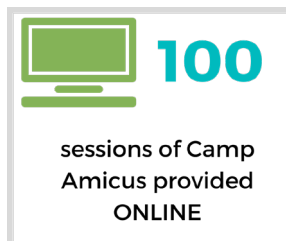


*"You guys are the absolute best! Caleb was a little concerned about coming to camp, he didn't know anyone else who was attending and it's his first activity with other people since March. His mental health really plummeted with being isolated at home and only having online connections to school, friends and family. He has absolutely come out of his shell this week. He bounces home in the afternoons and is glad to go through the photos together on the blog. Thanks so much for what you do, it really has made a difference for him."* Camp Amicus Parent

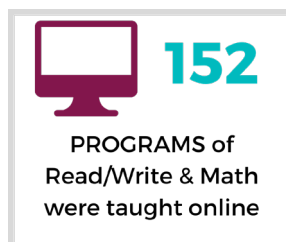
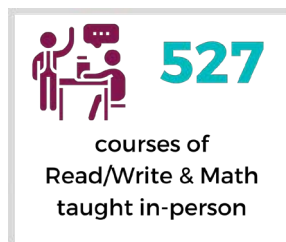
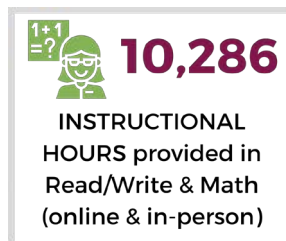
# Fulfilling our Mission in 2019 - 20

*"Sophie has LOVED her 3 week program . She is making gains and reads to me every night " to show off her skills". Her confidence is growing and it is so nice to see. Thank you a million times for your support in helping us as parents get this amazing opportunity in place for her."* Read/Write parent referring to new online program

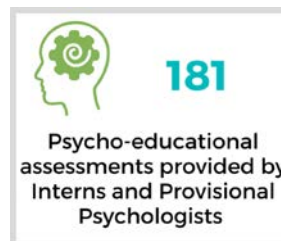
## Amicus Programs



## Read/Write & Math



## Psychological Service & Programs



## Parent Education & Professional Development



*"My little girl is a very special little girl, and those of us who know her well know how kind, generous, loving, and willing she is... What she ISN'T (generally) is expressive and/or outwardly emotional. So you can imagine my utter joy at the sight of her gushing about her experiences at camp! Thank you all for giving my most special girl a place to feel free enough to just be herself, take some risks, have lots of fun, and come home absolutely brimming with tales about it. I will never forget this.*

*Please thank all of your team, and if possible thank the donors who made this possible for us, because without them, I would have never had the joy of seeing my lovely, different, special girl come home from camp and enthuse about it, just like any other kid!"* Camp Amicus Parent

# Fundraising and Donations



Thanks to generous donors, sponsors, parents and staff, \$865,525 was raised for Foothills Academy Society in 2019/20. This figure includes just over \$63,500 which was donated specifically for our Amicus Camp and Recreation programs.

Fundraising activities started off strongly in the fall of 2019 as Foothills Academy celebrated its 40th anniversary. Over 700 people joined us for the celebration. A direct mail campaign was also launched to celebrate the 40th anniversary with a special appeal for donors to contribute to the 40th Anniversary Legacy Fund.

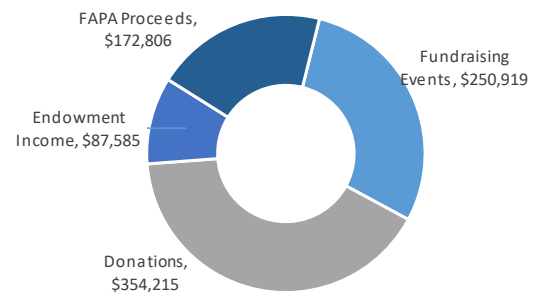
The COVID-19 pandemic meant that the remaining fundraising events of 2019 - 2020 were either cancelled or were changed significantly to comply with social distancing requirements. The Gordon Hoffman Charity Golf Classic was cancelled. The Scotiabank Calgary Marathon turned into a virtual event and although many parents and staff still participated, the donations generated by this event were down significantly from previous years. The cancellation of events will also affect us well into the 2020/2021 year.

The Foothills Academy Parents Association (FAPA) made significant contributions this year through their annual vehicle raffle, casino proceeds and a small WestJet raffle. We are very fortunate that families, staff and community supporters continued to support our fundraising efforts.

The endowment fund revenue is lower than previous years due to lower returns on investments due to the economic downturn.

Recognizing that the demand for financial assistance will likely continue to grow, we continue to pursue a diverse mix of donors and fundraising options.

Fundraising & Donation Breakdown 2019/20



## Supporter Spotlight: Children's Hospital Aid Society



The Children's Hospital Aid Society has been a supporter of the Camp Amicus program for over 20 years. They have been providing funding that is directed to support Camp Amicus being a financially accessible program for children and teens with Learning Disabilities and ADHD. This summer we particularly appreciated CHAS' support of our online camp programs. Providing individually prepared supplies increased our program supply costs significantly. But, with the aim of ensuring that all participants had needed supplies, they were all provided. And, by providing all the necessary supplies, it provided parents with some respite as the children were able to participate in all activities independently.

# Thank you to Our Generous Donors and Sponsors!

We sincerely appreciate each and every donation. Due to space limitations, we have had to limit this list to only include all contributions \$1,000 or more

## Individual Supporters

Alex & Myrtle Volpi  
Anthony Van Winkoop  
Armour Equipment  
Barbara Fries  
Beverley LeBlanc  
Brenda Hughes  
Brenda Wyne  
Brent & Kristine Neil  
Bruce Buchanan  
Cameron Lehmann  
Celine Bittante  
Corrado Costanzo  
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Cynthia Mintz  
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Emma Saxon  
Erica & Scott Riddell  
Glen Richardson & Kari Meggs  
James Kopec

Jared Bradley  
Jane Carstairs  
Jody & Curtis Passmore  
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Katherine Stavropoulos  
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Mark Drewniak  
Maryn & Claudio Milazzo  
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Michelle Fontanne & James Surette  
Patty Stinson  
Rick & Linda Skauge  
Robert Jones  
Stanley & Margaret Owerko

Susyn Wagner & Mike Giroux  
Sylvia McIntosh  
Teresa & Brad Funk  
Trevor Candrllic

## Community Groups, Foundations, Granting Agencies & Partners

B'nai Brith Calgary Lodge No. 816  
Calgary Foundation  
Calgary Marathon Society  
Children's Hospital Aid Society  
Dunscombe Family Foundation  
Leonard and Faigel Shapiro Family Fund  
Nickle Family Foundation  
Olympia Charitable Foundation  
Rotary Partners of Calgary a Stampede Park  
Shaw Charity Classic - Birdies for Kids  
The Ken and Roma Lett Foundation  
The Parent's Choice Bursary  
The Prosser Charitable Foundation  
United Way Calgary and Area

WestJettors Caring for Our Community Program

## Corporate Donors

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Husky Group of Companies  
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## Corporate Sponsors

Garrison Woods Dental  
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Architectural Solutions Inc

## Parents and Staff

We'd like to say a special thank you to all our school parents and staff who contributed hundreds of items to, bought tickets for and purchased items at all our fundraising events and all the volunteers who donated their time to Foothills Academy Society this year!



## Our Mission

*The mission of Foothills Academy is to facilitate learning in persons, primarily youth and children, identified as having a Learning Disability by providing quality educational programs and a supportive environment for families and staff. We recognize that we are interdependent with our global community – by participating in research, public education, in-service and advocacy, through community service.*



FOOTHILLS  
ACADEMY  
SOCIETY

A Leader in Learning Disabilities since 1979

Foothills Academy Society  
745 37 Street NW  
Calgary, AB T2N 4T1  
403.270.9400  
info@foothillsacademy.org

Charitable Registration Number:  
BN 118927060RR001

[www.foothillsacademy.org](http://www.foothillsacademy.org)

