# **FOOTHILLS ACADEMY**

*find* understanding. *build* confidence. *maximize* potential.



# 2020-2021 Report to the Community

# Message from the Board of Governors

The Board of Governors of Foothills Academy Society would like to take a moment to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of the staff at Foothills Academy – both in the School and in Estelle Siebens Community Services, and to thank them for all they do, not just during these unprecedented times, but at all times. Not only does this incredible group ensure that students receive a first-rate education and the supports they need to succeed, but they continue to innovate and think outside the box.

Despite the restrictions we all are living with, the School and Community Services have not only continued to successfully adapt and deliver core programming, but they have also pushed forward a number of key initiatives, including:

- Evolution of best practices in literacy and numeracy supports, programs and interventions.
- Facility upgrades, such as the new Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math (STEM) Lab, additional intervention spaces, as well as planning for the development of an outdoor classroom.
- An on-site therapy dog-in-training to provide comfort to anxious students when at the school with his parent.
- A wide range of wrap-around programs and services delivered both online and in-person, including remedial interventions in literacy; recreation opportunities for social connection; psychological services; and community education through the Estelle Siebens Community Services.
- Collaboration with the University of Calgary on the development and delivery of the graduate certificate program on "Learning Disabilities in the Classroom", as well as several ongoing research partnerships aimed at identifying new evidencebased practices,

- Leading the Calgary region Learning Disabilities & ADHD Network which is a collaborative initiative with a wide range of stakeholders in the community. The Networkhas recently launched a new resource website: www.ldadhdnetwork.ca
- Ongoing representation and leadership on advocacy boards related to Learning Disabilities and ADHD at the provincial and national levels.

All of these innovations, the remarkably effective COVID-19 measures and the ongoing success of the students and Community Services programs could not have been achieved without the leadership and support of the Foothills Academy administrators. In particular, the Board would like to draw attention to the efforts of our Co-Executive Directors, Dr. Karen MacMillan and Mr. Simon Williams.

Karen and Simon have been, and continue to be, the driving forces behind the success of Foothills Academy Society. They work tirelessly to ensure that teachers and other professionals have the resources, knowledge, expertise and support to deliver the best programming possible in support of kids with learning disabilities and associated disorders, such as ADHD. Since the onset of the pandemic they have balanced, with professionalism, dignity and an outstanding commitment to high educational standards, any number of unexpected situations including fluctuating government expectations and the needs of the student population in a virtual learning environment.

The Board of Governors is immensely proud of the efforts of the Co-Executive Directors, and all of the staff members at Foothills Academy. We would like to thank all of them for their ongoing commitment to ensure the success of kids in the School and Community Services.

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

## Board of Governors 2020/21

Angie Bishop, FAPA Rep Leslie Archibald, Governor Leo Golden, Governor Cheryl Hamelin, Governor John Krupa, Governor Simon Williams, Executive Co-Director Karen MacMillan, Executive Co-Director



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The 2020 - 2021 academic year at Foothills Academy was a time of evolution and revival. With the ongoing challenges of the global pandemic, we continued to adapt where necessary, and also developed even more ways to support the community of individuals and families living with Learning Disabilities.

Throughout the agency, we have continued to grow and evolve our programs, systems and overall capacity in three main ways. First, we have reflected on our programming and identified key ways in which we could upgrade our literacy and numeracy interventions. We have been very purposeful about our evolution in order to ensure that we are aligned with the current research on best practices. Second, we significantly invested in professional development opportunities for staff members throughout the building, in order to ensure that we are continuing to increase our knowledge and skills. Third, with a continuing high demand for our services, we also identified some spaces in the building that needed to evolve. In order to provide high-quality services to all of our students and clients, we updated our Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) labs over the summer. With many of our students entering science fields after graduation, we wanted to provide them with an up-to-date facility to nurture their interests and knowledge. We also renovated the building to add five new office spaces in order to provide more one-to-one and small group interventions.

Foothills Academy is unique in Canada. Nowhere else in the country can you find the complete range of services we provide to the LD/ADHD community. We also provide vital advocacy and leadership throughout the region, provincially, and nationally. Within the building, we continue to be in awe of the work our staff members do everyday. They rally together to meet challenges that come their way, and never hesitate to go the extra mile for a young person, or each other. The Foothills Family atmosphere creates a safe and caring place for kids and adults alike.

As we move forward into the 2021-2022 school year, we are excited to continue raising the bar on our services and programming, as well as tackling more projects which will enhance our facilities and increase our capacity to meet the demand for services for many years to come. Just like the young people we serve, we are working to maximize our potential!



Mr. Simon Williams Executive Co-Director

Maglilla

Dr. Karen MacMillan Executive Co-Director

# **School Program**

The School Program is a full-time program for students with Learning Disabilities from grades 3 to 12 following the Alberta Education Curriculum. The staff to student ratio is typically around 1:6 with a teacher and educational assistant. With just less than 300 students, we focus upon a wide range of strategies to help students find success; ensuring that students reach their full potential. As well as creating and developing new strategies to help our students reach their potential, we are conducting research to support our program development. The aim for our students is to go on to successful post-secondary education or meaningful sectors of the workplace. We build on students' strengths to enable them to become the great individuals whom they are all capable of being.

#### School Program Full with Waiting List



The school program was full in 2020/21 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.

#### **Overall High Parent Satisfaction**

parents agree that the teachers care about their

children

In the 2021 annual survey of parents, teachers and students done by Alberta Education, we were pleased to see that 100% of parents agree that teachers care about their children. 97% of parents agree that

school is welcoming, caring, respectful and safe. And, 96% of parents are satisfied with the overall quality of

education. All these positive feelings about the school no doubt led to Foothills Academy being named one of the top three private/charter schools in Calgary in the annual Calgary Herald/Calgary Sun Readers' Choice Awards in 2020.

#### 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 2020/21, approximately 25% of students utilized these very necesary supports. Conservatively, providing this support cost our organization almost \$300,000 to provide. Access to mental health supports continued during all he pandemic lock-down with counsellors shifting to online delivery of counselling sessions.

#### **Bursary Assistance**

\$1,198,000 BURSARY funds allowed 134 school students to attend the school program

Bursary assistance requests went up by over 25% in 2020/21. Bursaries were requested and approved for 134 families for a total of \$ \$ 1,197,917. This represents a 24% increase in the number of families requesting assistance and a 26% increase in the

amount of bursary awarded. 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.



# **School Program**



66 Foothills was instrumental in helping my child to achieve his goals and graduate with amazing grades and confidence in himself!

### Foothills Academy Parent of Graduating Student

## 100% Grade 12 students GRADUATED

We were proud to celebrate the graduation of forty students from grade 12 in May 2021 representing a 100% graduation rate. An in-person ceremony for graduates was shared with friends and family via livestreaming to comply with COVID protocols. Approximately 85% of our students were accepted into a post-secondary program after graduating from Foothills Academy.

66 What sets Foothills Academy apart is the staff and the overall philosophy of caring about not only a child's academic progress but helping in every facet of their educational journey. No kid is left behind. They recognize each person's strengths and help build kids up rather than tearing them down for their faults.

> Foothills Academy Parent of **Graduating Student**



The mandate of Estelle Siebens Community Services is to assist children, youth, and adults who are experiencing difficulties in their school, work, and/or home environments as a result of Learning Disabilities and/ or ADHD, and related social/emotional challenges. We offer assistance to these individuals as well as parents and relevant professionals through the provision of psychoeducational assessments; recreational and psychosocial programming for children and adolescents; counselling services; parent presentations; professional development workshops; and intensive remedial instruction for reading and writing.

#### Accessed by Nearly 3,000 People in 2020/21



In 2020/21, Community Services was able to reach approximately 2,000 individuals in Calgary and beyond. Just under 1,000 children and youth accessed programs through one of our Community Services departments. Just over 1,000 parents, guardians or other interested adults accessed our community education programs either through a webinar, online course or parent support group. A little more than 100 educators accessed professional development benefitting approximately 2,200 students that they taught last year.

#### **Bursary Assistance to Ensure Accessibility**

More bursary assistance was provided for families to access Community Services programs than ever before. \$

SURSARY funds allowed 168 youth to access Community Services

183,379 was awarded to 168 families representing a 30% increase in bursaries awarded in 2020/21 over the previous year. No doubt income uncertainties due to the general economic downturn coupled with the impact of COVID is affecting families' income.



Psychological Programs & Services The Psychological Services and Programs department offers quality, comprehensive psycho-educational assessments, individual and family counselling, and group programming services for children, youth and adults affected by Learning Disabilities and/or ADHD. Our team relies on evidence-based practices in Psychology and Education to guide our practices. We not only seek to understand what a child's difficulty might be but also the areas where they can find pride and success.

Psycho-educational assessment and counselling services are offered year-round to children (age 5+), adolescents, and adults. No diagnosis is necessary. Group programs are offered during the school year for children, teens and young adults diagnosed with a Learning Disability and/or ADHD. Group programs focus on social skills development, executive functioning skills, study skills and leadership.

In 2020/21, 231 psycho-educational assessments were completed. In addition to working with students students within the school program, the counselling team worked with 45 clients through private counselling. Fifteen people participate in a new online parent support group.

Foothills Academy is one of the largest training facilities for psycholgists in Calgary. In 2020/21, 18 provisional psychologists and interns received training and mentoring at Foothills Academy.



Psycho-educational assessments provided by Interns and Provisional Psychologists

**Š**A 126

Interns and Provisional Psychologists provided counselling to **45** private and **81** school counselling clients

Interns and Provisional Psychologists were MENTORED by staff to work with children with

LD & ADHD

(<sup>1</sup>) 15

Parents participated in our online Parent Support Group



Amicus Programs & Camps The Amicus programs operate year-round to provide social-skills based recreation and camp programs to chilren and teens who may be struggling with making and keeping friends due to their Learning Disabilities and ADHD.



Campers who struggle with their social skills at any time needed the lessons and reinforcement of Camp Amicus more than ever. After a year and a half of COVID, social isolation and living lives online, campers arrived at camp with more pronounced social skills deficits than ever before. There was also much more anxiety than usual in the campers and their parents.

Thirteen different day camp sessions were offered for 216 youth from grade 3 to grade 12. Camps included traditional day camp, adventure camp options and horsemanship experiences, leadership camps and counsellor-in-training. All camp spots filled quickly. Parents wanted their child to have a camp experience with peers and caring counsellors. It was magical seeing campers connect with new and old friends and reconnect with nature.

Thirty-two youth attended at least one Amicus Recreation program during the year. COVID significantly affected the number of programs that we were able to offer.



Made at least

one FRIEND at Camp Amicus

Gained self-confidence at Camp Amicus



Improved their ability to identify their unique strengths and talents at Camp Amicus



Our son said that he loves Camp Amicus because they understand his ADHD. I love how Camp Amicus works on social skills, confidence and self esteem which are not necessarily a focus at other camps, but are very important to us.

**Camp Amicus Parent** 





**Read/Write** Literacy Programs

Read/Write Programs offer evidence-based literacy instruction customized to each student's needs. The Read/Write literacy program offers Structured Literacy based on evidence-based programs. Published research has confirmed the benefits of Foothills Academy's Read/Write program. Programs range in intensity from 60 minutes per day one day per week to 3 hours per day five days per week. We provide remediation which means that we identify gaps and then work with each child to close those gaps. The vast majority of our programs are offered in a one-to-one setting.

In 2020/21, the Read/Write department undertook an extensive rejuvenation of all elements of its programs to ensure that they are providing current, evidence-based programs and instructors

are providing consistent high level instruction. We are proud of the changes and plan for more exciting developments in the Read/Write

department such as the introduction of early literacy instruction for

4 - 6 year olds. When COVID-19 restrictions allow, we also plan to pilot small group instruction to be able to deliver high quality programs

at a more affordable price to more students. In total, 19,000 hours of instruction were provided through 432 programs. 98% of parents

would recommend the Read/Write program to others.

19.000

INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS provided in Read/Write & Math (online & in-person)



Parents would recommend Read/Write program to others



gnificant improvement in reir ability to identify letter unds, to read both familia id unfamiliar words and to ng th Read/Write Progra

4.6/5 On average, parents rate their child's experience in the Read/Write program 4.6 out of 5



Professional Development & Community Education

Professional Development and Parent Education team brings **f** knowledge, expertise, practical strategies, and humour to our wide PARENTS/COMMUNITY range of workshops, both in-person and online. Continually evolving to reflect current research and to meet the needs of our community, we have a wide range of content to engage parents and professionals in appealing, meaningful, and practical learning opportunities. Students with learning and attention issues can be successful, particularly when they are surrounded by adults who understand them!

participated in Parent/Community Education online

people accessed a 1:1 ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY CONSULTATION for them or

their child to make learning more accessible In 2020/21, 1,070 adults participated in monthly Community Webinars and online courses to expand their understanding and knowledge and LD & ADHD.

Over 750 educators participated in professional development through live workshops or self-directed online courses. 100% of educators would recommend the self-directed course to a colleague.

Fifteen people had one-to-one Assistive Technology consultations with an AT specialist.

58 EDUCATORS

participated in Professional Development cour benefitting 15.160 students

**%001د:** `

would recommend the professional development course to their colleagues

We are so impressed with the growth we have seen in our son since starting the Foothills Academy Read/Write Program. His literacy has improved in terms of words per minute, but even more importantly in terms of his joy and confidence. We are very grateful for this excellent program.

Maria Galley, Read/Write Parent



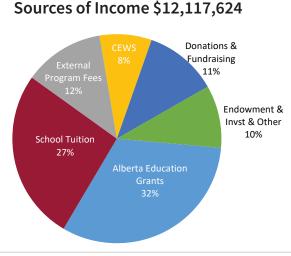


Learning Disabilities & ADHD Network CALGARY REGION The Learning Disabilities & ADHD Network is a collaborative impact group dedicated to supporting individuals who struggle with learning and attention issues. The volunteer members represent a broad group of organizations across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors in the Calgary region, and are united by their passionate commitment to realize the Network's strategic goal: Individuals with LD and/or ADHD will have the necessary support, resources, and opportunities within the Calgary region to be successful and thrive.

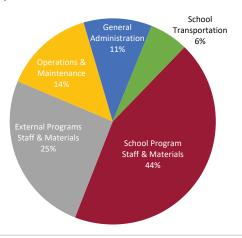
Originally called the LD Stakeholders Group in the 1980s, the organization has continued to evolve. It is now supported by an annual grant from an anonymous donor disbursed by the Calgary Foundation, and since November 2020, has been formally operating through Foothills Academy Society which employs a manager to coordinate the activities of the Network members. The Network's first ambitious project, several years in the making, was the creation and launch of their resource website Idadhdnetwork.ca this year.

# 2020 - 21 Financial Summary

Note: Full Audited Financial Statements available upon request



## Expenditures \$10,024,584



# **Fundraising and Donations**

## Supporter Spotlight: Centron Group



The relationship between Centron Group and Foothills Academy goes back to 1990 when Centron completed the construction of Foothills Academy School. The school won an award for best in class and Centron established long-standing relationship with Foothills Academy. They have been a major supporter of Foothills Academy ever since. In 2021, we were honoured to have Centron Group as Presenting Sponsor of the 11th Annual Gordon Hoffman Charity Golf Classic. Their involvement was a major contributor to the success of the event.





Thanks to generous donors, sponsors, parents and staff, \$835,967 was raised for Foothills Academy Society in 2020/21 through fundraising events and donations. This figure includes just over \$58,200 which was donated specifically for our Amicus Camp and Recreation programs.

Fundraising activities were hampered throughout the year due to COVID pandemic restrictions. Luckily, we were able to host the 11th Annual Gordon Hoffman Charity Golf Classic tournament and the virtual Calgary Marathon. Funds raised through fundraising events were \$141,512. Generous donors continued to support Foothills Academy through online giving and through the Foothills Academy Parents Association Truck Raffle. For the first time, the Truck Raffle was conducted through an online platform which should allow for a broader reach of potential ticket buyers each year. The endowment fund income in 2020/21 was \$131,725.

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

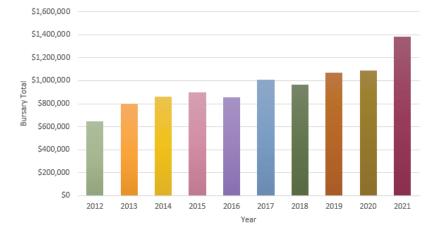
## Supporter Spotlight: Rick and Linda Skauge and Olympia Charitable Foundation



Rick and Linda Skauge have been huge supporters of Foothills Academy for many years through event sponsorships, auction item donations and matching gifts for our Giving Tuesday campaign through Olympia Trust Company and the Olympia Charitable Foundation. We truly appreciate their generosity throughout the years.



# **Fundraising and Donations**



Bursary Awarded Total

The demand for the bursary program increased significantly in 2020/21 no doubt due to the financial turmoil brought on by the pandemic that many families faced. Thanks to the generosity of donors and supporters, we were fortunate to be able to meet the demand for assistance this year. In total, 302 children and youth were able to access programs and services that might otherwise have not been able to do so. In 2020/21, \$1.34 million was awarded in bursary funding for children and youth accessing programs at Foothills Academy. \$1.24 million was awarded to families with students attending the school program and \$183,379 was awarded to children and youth attending programs or accessing services offered through Community Services.

So today I pulled my hitherto school-ambivalent, under-achieving, not-generally-popular girl out of class early to get her braces removed. She was excited to get the braces off, but I DID NOT EXPECT WHAT HAPPENED NEXT! She couldn't WAIT to get BACK to school to show her teachers, and her FRIENDS her fabulous 'new' teeth! Even though there was only just one hour of the school day left, she all-out begged me to take her back! I actually had a little cry of joy after I dropped her off... my little girl loves school! She feels loved, and safe, and popular! All this in just twelve weeks!

Thank you to everyone at Foothills, and thank you to every single donor who has made this possible for me, my daughter, and my whole family. I could NEVER have afforded this opportunity on my own. Truly, I don't have big enough words for how I felt today when she BEGGED me to take her back to class!

My lovely, sad, lonely child who used to dread her days in school couldn't bear to stay away! Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Erika Laverick Foothills Academy Parent

# 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** Ailsa Le May & Margit McGrath Amy & Joey Sleno Anonymous **Barbara Fries** Bettina Achmus & David Moss **Brenda Hughes** Brenda & Edward Straw Brenda Wyne Candace Shibou Celine Bittante Charles & Renee Maygard Chris & Michelle Hunt Clara Tseng Claudette Dick Colleen & Ross Willis **Constantine & Belinda Pefanis** Corrado & Shellev Costanzo Cynthia Mintz & John Krupa David & Patricia Deveaux Debbie & Dwayne Ekkel Denise Lobb & Scott Pattinson Diana Abernethy Donald & Lynne Bauman Edna Melgaard Elke Meyer Emma Saxon Erica & Scott Riddell Erika & Bill Schultz Estate of Sandra Heather Munro Esther Chu Glen Richardson & Kari Meggs Greg Tarr Izak Claasen Jacqueline Davies & Brent Anderson Mike Shaikh James Kopec Janet & Brian Creaser Janet McMahen

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The Ken and Roma Lett Foundation The Prosser Charitable Foundation WestJetters Caring for Our Community Program

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#### Parents and Staff

We'd like to say a special thank you to all our school parents, staff and many companies who contributed auction items and purchased items at our fundraising events. Thank you also to 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

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## Charitable Registration Number: BN 118927060RR0001

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