



Impact Report

2023-2024



The Montreal Fluency Centre

A Word of Acknowledgement and Gratitude

Summer 2023 was a busy time at the Montreal Fluency Centre (MFC). We said goodbye and thank you to our Executive Director Véronique Paulet, who worked tirelessly to strengthen operations and ensure our viability in the post-pandemic world. We also welcomed our new Executive Director, Sandra Furfaro. With 45 years of experience in the education sector, the first 12 in the classroom, Sandra has brought a refreshing, non-clinical perspective to the MFC. The other board members and I are grateful for Sandra's enthusiasm, knowledge and insightful leadership, and we deeply appreciate the renewed energy and dedication of our staff and volunteers.

On the following pages you will read a few of the many highlights over the last year. Our donors have driven this impact. Thank you for your generosity and continued support. This year, with Sandra's guidance, we embarked on a transformation. We are fully embracing our place in the social impact sector, a place where our donors can make a lasting difference in the lives of our students by giving them the tools and

confidence they need to reach their full learning potential.

Together with our donors, we will ensure that cost is not a barrier to learning.

We also said goodbye and thank you to board member Teresa Fata and longtime board members Sara J. Price and Ken Salomon who made a difference at the MFC during their time with us. I am delighted that Sophie Bossé and James Feith joined the board last year and have rolled up their sleeves to ensure the MFC can help more families and students. Over the next twelve months, we look forward to welcoming new parents, educators, clinicians, business professionals, accountants, and lawyers to our board of directors.

I feel hopeful as I think of what's ahead, thanks to you.

**James Officer,
Board Chair**



Celebrating our Students, Staff and Supporters

When I took on the Executive Director role, I knew the MFC had a reputation as a solid organization. I knew it was a vital resource for young people's journey to becoming the best learners and communicators they could be. After a wonderful first year, I have seen what sets the MFC apart—our excellent multidisciplinary staff, our volunteers, and our focus on providing essential services that are not available to everyone in the public system. And I learned that it is our donors who make it all possible.

Too often, a child falls through the cracks and does not get the extra support needed to thrive in school. Learning differences go undetected. Communication difficulties are not treated. Literacy is often not achieved. We know children and families face challenges that still linger from the pandemic school closures, the more recent school strikes, the ongoing difficulties in the educational system, and the rising cost of living.

I am convinced that the MFC has the solutions to these challenges. To tackle them head-on, we must build capacity.

How will we build capacity? We must invest in three key areas: Personnel, Finances, and Facilities. The result—more children and youth who would otherwise still be on a waiting list in the public sector will be able to access essential complementary services for language, communication and learning challenges; more financial assistance so no family gets turned away because of the inability to pay; more students developing the tools they need to successfully navigate their education, their relationships, and the world around them.

Thank you to the staff, board, volunteers and donors who have welcomed me and my new ideas. I look forward to the year ahead. Let's see just how far we can go together to open a world of possibilities for our students.

Sandra Furfaro,
Executive Director



Who we are

The Montreal Fluency Centre (MFC) is a non-profit multi-disciplinary clinic of Speech-Language Pathologists, Psychologists and Educational Therapists.

What we do

We provide assessment and treatment for language, communication and learning differences.



Assessment

To observe, measure and describe a child's strengths and challenges to determine what their learning needs are, if any.

Treatment

Individual and group settings, virtual or in-person sessions to help a child learn by practicing and expanding on skills in a positive, engaging way.

Knowledge Exchange

Workshops, training, mentoring and knowledge-exchange to better equip parents and clinicians to help children and youth.

Mission & Vision

Mission

Our mission is to understand and support children and their families from preschool to young adulthood with difficulties in speech, language, learning, and literacy through assessment and treatment programs.

Vision

As learning and communication leaders, our vision is to reduce the long-term risks and difficulties that children and youth face and enable them to reach their full potential and be successful members of society.



Impact of Giving

Our dynamic team works at our clinic, in-person or virtually, and on site at schools, community centres and more.



550+

children served at our Westmount clinic and virtually for assessment, treatment and specialized education services



50+

parents and community members in workshops at the Westmount Public Library

The "Blue Door" house has become a second home for our two boys. Over a span of ten years and still counting, we were privileged to be paired with not only expert staff, but caring and supportive staff that really understood the challenges our boys faced at different grades. As parents, the staff at MFC have become trusted partners to help better support our boys at home. Homework time is a challenge, but we are all more confident tackling assignments knowing we have our strategies and brain frames never far by! - Sylvia

Impact of Giving

Our **AFTER-SCHOOL** support programs give students the tools they need to be the best learners they can be.



35+

students from grades 5 - 11 and CEGEP completed the Taylor Adolescent Program (TAP)



5

New: students in our pilot TAP français program



57

students supported one-on-one in the Success and Independent Learning (SAIL) program

“

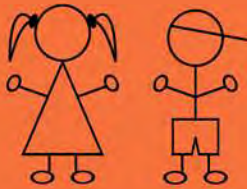
When I went to TAP it was the first time people treated me like I wasn't a problem. It was the first time somebody told me I just think differently and have my own way of looking at things. It's what makes me so creative and that's going to be really useful when I'm older.

I do hard work with the tutors. They show me tools for my work and help me communicate with my teachers so it's not so stressful. But mostly they make it fun to learn. I wish school could be like this.

”

Impact of Giving

Our **SUMMER PROGRAMS** offer additional learning opportunities for children and youth to help prepare children for success at school and in social contexts.



25+

children from preschool to high school in our summer groups

“

I have only great comments to make! This is my child's second year at this camp. She loved it more this year and she learned so much -- it's the perfect way to transition to grade 4 and make sure she's ready and feels confident to start this new year. - Mom

”



Impact of Giving

Our **PARTNERSHIPS** with Indigenous communities allow us to share our expertise while respecting the culture and responding to the needs within the various communities.

Did you know?

The Covid-19 pandemic hit Indigenous communities particularly hard. To fill the gap in services the MFC provides:



- Psycho-educational assessments (both virtually and on-site at schools outside of Montreal and in remote communities)
- Speech language screeners
- Treatment goals and monitors student progress
- Training to speech aides working in the community so that they can provide therapy to their population
- Explicit teaching of narrative skills to kindergarten and grade one students

Narrative Project

Telling stories is a powerful tool because it forges connections among people, and between people and ideas. Stories help convey the culture, history and values that unite us. For children, storytelling is very important for their social, emotional, and cognitive development, especially for communication and literacy skills. This program helps to develop narrative structure to all the students in the class with or without learning disabilities. Research shows that narrative skills are a predictor of academic success.



Gift of Speech

Annual Campaign

We all want our children to succeed in school, reach their full potential, and become successful members of society. We assume that if there are learning issues or problems, our schools will identify and fix them. Too often, that is not the case.

At The Montreal Fluency Centre, our donors give young people, from preschool to college, the **Gift of Speech** and allow every child's **Voice to Find Its Strength**.

How is your donation to the **Gift of Speech Fund** used?

- You ensure that no child falls through the cracks in the system.
- You create a nurturing and secure environment that fosters learning.
- You meet the most urgent needs of our children and youth with
 - the best multidisciplinary staff,
 - advanced assessments and treatment,
 - after-school and summer programs.
- You provide the tools they need to excel.
- You ensure that no family is turned away because of financial constraints.

YOU provide everything they need to become the best learners they can be.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

- Nelson Mandela

Gift of Speech

Annual Campaign

Our **GIFT OF SPEECH CAMPAIGN** was the highlight of the fall.

The Molson brothers once again generously donated two prestige tickets to a Montreal Canadiens hockey game to encourage both new and loyal donors to give their best gifts. Teresa and Tony Fata also joined in for a second year by donating a pair of tickets. The winners were absolutely thrilled.

“

As a first-time donor, I was surprised I won the Habs tickets! I just wanted to give to the MFC to help kids get the help they need for communication and learning. It was a bonus to see the Canadiens play. A real win-win situation. ”

- Melissa Polizzi



A big **THANK YOU** to the Molson brothers, Teresa and Tony Fata, and everyone who donated!

Thanks to your support, we were able to give out 30% more financial bursaries to our students.

Donor Spotlight

Louise and Alan Edwards Foundation

Our donors make everything we do possible! For over twenty years, the Louise & Alan Edwards Foundation has been a key supporter, partner, and all-around champion of the MFC and its mission. It is not an exaggeration to say they are at the core of the Centre's success as a learning and communication leader in our community.

Because of their generous gifts, thousands of children have been helped through our Taylor Adolescent Program (TAP.) **The result** – a graduation rate higher than the provincial average for high school and CEGEP students instead of dropping out. And hundreds of families have received bursaries to help cover the costs of assessments and treatments. **The result** – more families getting help for their children before it is too late, instead of waiting on lists in the public system.

The Foundation was established in 2000 by philanthropist and proud Montrealer Alan Edwards. Today, his children Jane and Eric are carrying on his legacy.

“We are pleased to continue our father’s wish to give children the best chance of success in school by providing them with lifelong strategies and tools for independent learning. The Montreal Fluency Centre is a beacon of hope for families. Their team goes above and beyond with their unique programs, dedication and passion for their work.”



Source: La Presse, 2021

Donors Want to Know

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: "Why aren't the MFC's assessments, treatment and programs free of charge?"

A: Families play a key role in their children's growth, and it's important for them to be involved. We ask everyone to pay a small fee, which depends on various factors. This fee helps make sure everyone stays committed.

Q: "Is there a long waiting list?"

A: No. Typically, we are able to see a child in 3 months or less.

Q: "Who can apply for a bursary (a financial gift) to help cover the cost of services and programs?"

A: Any client of the MFC can apply for a bursary. The bursary program covers up to 50% of the cost of assessment and up to 75% of treatment. The amount of subsidy available varies according to family size and annual income. All information is kept confidential.



Q: Should I wait to see if the problem resolves itself or if the school takes care of it?

A: We encourage parents to follow up promptly: the sooner your child starts, the better!

Q: Who provides the money for the bursary fund?

A: Our Donors! Thanks to the wonderful support of the Louise and Alan Edwards Foundation and other generous donors, the Montreal Fluency Centre can offer financial assistance to families to assess and treat their children.

**For more information visit our website:
www.montrealfluency.com**

Our Team

Executive Director

Sandra Furfaro

Speech-Language Pathology

Katherine Bavaro, M.Sc, S-LP
Antionietta Conte M.Sc., S-LP
Andrea Gingras M.SLP, S-LP (C)
Julia Levy M.A., CCC-S-LP
Kaylee Miller, MHSc., S-LP
Gillian Nyberg MCISc, S-LP
Sophia Passarelli MHSc., S-LP,
Catherine Rebellati M.Sc., S-LP (C)
Yael Shaffir M.Sc (A), S-LP(C)

Psychology

Marlene Desjardins PhD
Jillian Budd, PhD Candidate
Joseph D'Intino, PhD
Nesma Etoubashi, PhD Candidate
Ioulia Koniou, PhD

Educational Therapy

Sarah Akkad, Learning Coach
Bryan Alexandre, Learning Coach,
BLITZ coordinator
Selva Asgharizadeh, Learning Coach
Safia Belhattab, Learning Coach
Ella Christiaans, TAP & SAIL coordinator
Cemre Kurun, Learning Coach
Paul Marasigan, Learning Coach
Marie-Ève Sauriol, Learning Coach, BLITZ
coordinator
Chelsea Tannahill, Learning Coach

Administration

Jessica Haddad, Office Coordinator,
Receptionist
Linda Sullivan, Executive Administrative
Assistant
Kaveri Tharmalingam, Administrative
Assistant



Volunteers

*The MFC is volunteer led, staff driven. A huge **THANK YOU** to the more than 65 volunteers that make our work possible every year. Your time makes the difference!*

Board of Directors

James Officer, Board Chair
Past Director and Current Board Chair of
McGill Explorations

James Feith, Board Vice Chair
Elementary Education Specialist
CreatorEDU Inc.

Peter Malouf, Board Treasurer
Mayor of Town of Mount Royal
Private Equity Investor, Entrepreneur

Sophie Bossé, Board Director
Vice-president, Legal affairs
Investissement Québec

Sandra Furfaro, Executive Director
Montreal Fluency Centre

Acknowledgments

Report produced by Sandra Furfaro, Karen Mitchell and Linda Sullivan.

The Montreal Fluency Centre gratefully acknowledges contributions, quotes and photos from staff, volunteers, clients, and professionals.

Le Centre de la fluidité verbale de Montréal | The Montreal Fluency Centre
4626, rue Sainte-Catherine Ouest, Westmount, Qc H3Z 1S3
Tél. 514-489-4320 | fluiditemontreal.com | montrealfluency.com
[Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

