



Equinox School Council ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022

EQUINOX SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS 2021-2022

Chair & Communications Lead: Carrie Klassen

Vice Chair/Meeting Host: Ben Blakey

Secretary: Lichia Liu

Treasurer: Genevieve Kenny

General Members:

Andrea Schneider

Alanna Goldstein

Anna Mancuso

Brad Lucifora

Denise Handlarski

Sonia Castiel

*And special thank you to Angela Match for volunteering as our school's
Alternative School Advisory Committee Representative*



NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Equinox Community,

We returned to the school last year, a little worn, a little more tentative, more tender. It was a year of coming back together.

As a school council, our priorities for 2021-22 were about nurturing connections and meaningful relationships. We welcomed outside educators to plant seedlings with us in the food gardens. We watched how the corn stalks trellised the beans in the Three Sisters Gardens and learned something about meaningful support. We invited a chef educator to teach a curry recipe and more, and our children packaged up their cooking to share dinners with other families. We translated our outdoor kindie registration flyers into the languages of the community and posted them as invitations to neighbours. We sang in the yard together, goodbyes to some beloved staff, whose legacies continue.

I think we found our way, a little at a time. And we sowed seeds that will continue to grow.

Carrie

CARRIE KLASSEN

Equinox School Council Chair 2020-2021





INVESTMENTS

Because school council was conservative in spending during the 2020-2021 year, there was a significant carry-over to 2021-2022, which needed to be spent. The balance on hand as of September 29, 2022 was \$8,996.73. The treasurer's full finance sheet of Equinox School Council account spending is [here](#) but there are a few larger investments worth highlighting.

Our **music room** was in need of attention and our council was glad to be able to provide new sets of wooden rhythm sticks and bushwackers for music-making, as well as a rolling guitar rack to protect the instruments already in the school collection, and a rolling white board so the musicians and their instruments would be spared chalk dust.

For **outdoor education**, school council provided staff with wagons (to cart learning materials to the yard and Monarch Park), as well as tarps, and ropes. As part of our **food justice** programming, food gardens in the yard were expanded to include two new stock tanks, and garden educators from Green Thumbs and Green Thumbelina Earth Stewards led classes in planting Three Sisters and accessible snack gardens, all of which was paid for by the Whole Kids grant council secured.

The spending of a Live Green grant from long ago was finally completed with the purchase of beautiful cedar storage for the outdoor kindie fort.

The largest investments of time were the securing of the outdoor classroom benches and tree stumps, the organization of additions to the classroom libraries, and the handling of incoming and outgoing parent/guardian communications.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

As a council, we were intentional about limiting our asks for financial support, given many in our community are experiencing financial uncertainty and because conservative spending in the previous year plus secured grants meant we were reasonably well-resourced for school needs.

Equinox School Council invited families to join our [FlipGive online shopping cashback fundraiser team](#), and our [Mabel's Labels giving program](#). To build our classroom libraries to include diverse authors, illustrators, characters and storylines, we invited families to donate secondhand or new books from the titles needed, or to make a financial donation if they preferred. We also posted Teacher Wish Lists that families could help fill with items they had to gift.

With all school council-led fundraising, our council earmarked 20% to Toronto Foundation for Student Success in keeping with our commitment to SURJ Toronto.

An anonymous private donor paid for our food justice programming and Camille Meyers' cooking lessons in the school kitchen.

While not a school council fundraiser, the parent volunteers who organize the weekly egg sales on Ashdale support local farmers and they donate the profits to a fund school council stewards. Our community is very, very grateful to the volunteers who began this program and to the volunteers who give so much of their time and care to continue it. (It's a lot of work!) And to everyone who buys those lovely eggs. In the 2021-22 school year, Team Egg donated \$4,226.75 between September and February. If you would like to join the families making this support possible and/or are interested in purchasing eggs, email thursdayeggs@gmail.com.



SELECT PROJECTS

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

- expanded the stock tank vegetable gardens so more classes could garden
- provided wagons and other outdoor classroom equipment for lessons in the yard and other green spaces
- secured two new permanent outdoor classrooms with benches and negotiated more on the way
- supported Bird Festival at Ashbridges Bay with honorarium for storyteller who shared bird tales from around the world
- foraged willow branches for solstice archway project
- tended Native Ecology Learning Garden
- established relationship with Green Thumbs garden educators and sponsored their gardening workshops
- engaged a team of garden stewards to care for the learning gardens over the summer (THANK YOU!)

ARTS

- significant investment in the Music Room with new instruments, instrument storage, and rolling white board
- sponsoring visits from musicians & storytellers
- creative cooking lessons in the school kitchen

CULTURAL LEARNING

- welcomed Green Thumbelina Earth Stewards to guide students in planting and tending Three Sisters Gardens and sharing stories of the plants
- invited Metis artist and educator Alyssa Delbaere-Sawchuk to teach Metis songs, share artifacts and stories, and speak to older grades about the harms of colonization
- sponsored a memorable fruit tasting with Camille Mayers who shared their personal food stories around flavours from Afro-Caribbean and Asian diaspora (and so did Vu!)
- prioritized the hiring of Black, Indigenous, and queer guest educators to give students exposure to broader lived experiences and representations of excellence than staff alone can provide

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

- continued to support school Terracycle PPE recycling program
- encouraged community resource sharing instead of purchasing new supplies wherever possible (books, classroom supplies, etc)
- community lending library of books for parents/guardians and teachers - resource sharing

SELECT PROJECTS *continued...*

MUTUAL AID & GIVING

- hosted Equinox & Roden skate share
- collected rain and winter gear and clothes for the Equinox & Roden sharing bins
- created student-prepared meal share
- coordinated canned good collection for local food bank every week in December
- financial donation to Red Door Shelter during their urgent winter appeal
- purchased Green Thumbs seedlings to sponsor their workshops in other communities

ADVOCACY

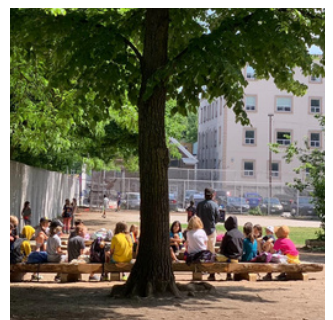
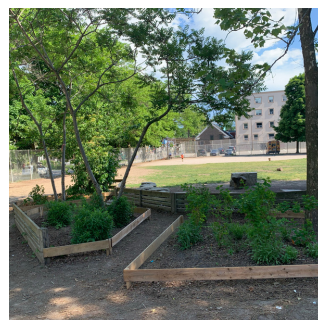
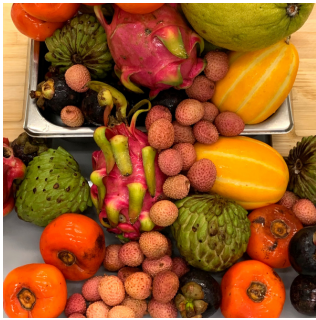
- asked that MetroLinx welcome opportunities for genuine, fulsome conversations with and input from affected communities along the railway and the proposed train yard sites of GO expansion - especially TPark residents, consider alternate proposals for ravine construction that reduce the harm to the rare urban wetland of Small's Creek and Williamson Park ravines, complete ecological restoration plans that are fully supported by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, include a beautiful second, lower retaining wall to create a deeper soil bed with more sunlight that will support the growth of plants that can shade the vital wetland ecology below

COMMUNICATIONS

- sent online survey to families to collect input and establish council priorities + published report of responses
- with Jodi's help, sent 17 school council emails to families
- contributed content to 10 school newsletters
- published approximately 150 Instagram posts
- published approximately 250 original Facebook posts
- updated school council website
- hosted quarterly community zooms
- posted partially-translated posters in the community to welcome neighbours to learn about our outdoor kindie during registration period

HEALTH & SAFETY

- continued to promote best practices learned through our collaboration with staff and students in an air quality research based on CO2 readings
- supported independent Roden/Equinox RAT distribution program
- continued to push (respectfully) for completion of long-promised carpet replacement on third floor



some pictures from some of the year's council-supported projects