

# ANNUAL REPORT

Annual Report for the year ended  
June 30, 2021





# CONTENTS

Chairman's Message	4
Director General's Message	6
Mission, Vision, Values	8-9
Organizational Chart	10-11
Educational Services	12-19
Therapeutic Services	20-27
Resource and Training Centre	28-31
Employment Services	32-37
Financial Results	38-41
Giant Steps Foundation	42-47
Giant Steps Autism Centre	48-53

# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



**NICK KATALIFOS**  
CHAIR OF THE BOARD  
GIANT STEPS SCHOOL

On behalf of the members of the board of directors and staff of the Canadian Institute for Neurointegrative Development, I am very pleased to present the 2020/21 annual report.

Giant Steps School and its Resource and Training Centre continue to dedicate themselves to helping the autism community. Our team of students, dedicated professionals, involved parents, and passionate volunteers are what make this school special. Collectively, we are all involved in implementing our school's mission: to offer high-quality innovative educational and therapeutic services to our students and to support the autism community.

I am proud to state that our staff has worked diligently to ensure a high quality of service. As a parent, it is so important that our children get the best possible care and services to support them in their development and education. The intensive, holistic and individualized program and community inclusion program –

all organized by Giant Steps, are critical to their development. Equally as important is the fact that they are in a safe and caring environment.

I am also very proud of all the work done through our Resource and Training Centre, which coordinates innovative projects and provides much needed services to the autism community across Quebec and beyond. Giant Steps has made a tremendous difference for many families, including my own, through the different types of services and supports they provide.

Finally, we are so excited to be moving forward with our project to build a new facility. The state-of-the-art Giant Steps Autism Centre represents the future of autism services in Quebec and beyond.



**OUR TEAM OF STUDENTS, DEDICATED PROFESSIONALS, INVOLVED PARENTS, AND PASSIONATE VOLUNTEERS ARE WHAT MAKE THIS SCHOOL SPECIAL.**



# DIRECTOR GENERAL'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to present the Giant Steps 2020/21 annual report. It was another year filled with achievement, advancing our exciting plans for the future, but also new challenges resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

We continue to demonstrate that we are truly leading the way in providing services that support the inclusion, education, and success of people on the autism spectrum. We continue to expand the resources and services we provide that support the lifespan needs of people with autism. Through capacity building and social innovation, we are working to increase awareness and acceptance of autism, provide autism training, and work to create a more autism-inclusive society... to change lives.

We also worked to further develop and deliver leading-edge educational and therapeutic services for our students that foster achievement and prepare them for the future. It is an honour and pleasure to be given the chance to steward

this exceptional organization and collaborate with our partners to improve the lives of people on the autism spectrum.

In this Annual Report, we highlight the incredible work of our team, the achievement of our students, the strategic vision of our board, and the community impacts our projects and initiatives have made. We also update on the impacts of the ever-evolving impacts of the Covid pandemic on our services.

I want to thank our staff team for their dedication and exceptional work, our Board of Directors for their leadership, and of course the students and their families who trust us to help them to reach for, and achieve, their dreams.

**SEIUN THOMAS HENDERSON**  
DIRECTOR GENERAL  
GIANT STEPS SCHOOL



The 2021/21 school year was our second year of providing services to our students, while adapting to the evolving Covid pandemic. This included providing online services to some of our students, while still offering in-person school to most. We also needed to continually update and shift as the health and safety recommendations and protocols continued to change. Our students, staff, and parents were exemplary in their ability to adapt and thrive within this stressful context.

In February 2021, we experienced our first Covid outbreak at the school. This led to the closure of the school for a short period of time during which we worked very closely with the public health agency to ensure that we were doing everything possible to keep everyone safe and healthy. Having a full-time school nurse was also exceptionally helpful in this regard.

The new reality of offering services and supports to our students that are not always able to follow the proposed covid health and safety protocols, while often challenging, also served to band our community together more than ever and ultimately made us stronger and better.

# MISSION, VISION VALUES



## Our Mission

To offer high-quality innovative educational and therapeutic services to our students and to support the Quebec autism community.

## Our Vision

To be a leader and hub for the development and provision of services supporting the education and success of people with autism spectrum disorders.



## Our Values

Giant Steps affirms the importance and necessity of providing equitable and appropriate opportunities for all people to learn and be successful. In order to always do our utmost to contribute to creating learning environments of mutual respect where diversity and strengths are nurtured and differences are respected, the following values will guide us:

**Diversity & Inclusion:** We value diversity and unique contributions and foster a trusting, open and inclusive environment where each person is treated with respect. The inclusion of diverse learners promotes excellence in education and allows learners to achieve desired outcomes. We recognize that differences and diversity contribute to the richness of group learning environments.

**Community:** Community is built and sustained by a climate of equity, fairness, safety and trust and the recognition of, and response to, the individual needs of its members. We are committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure excellence in the area of autism

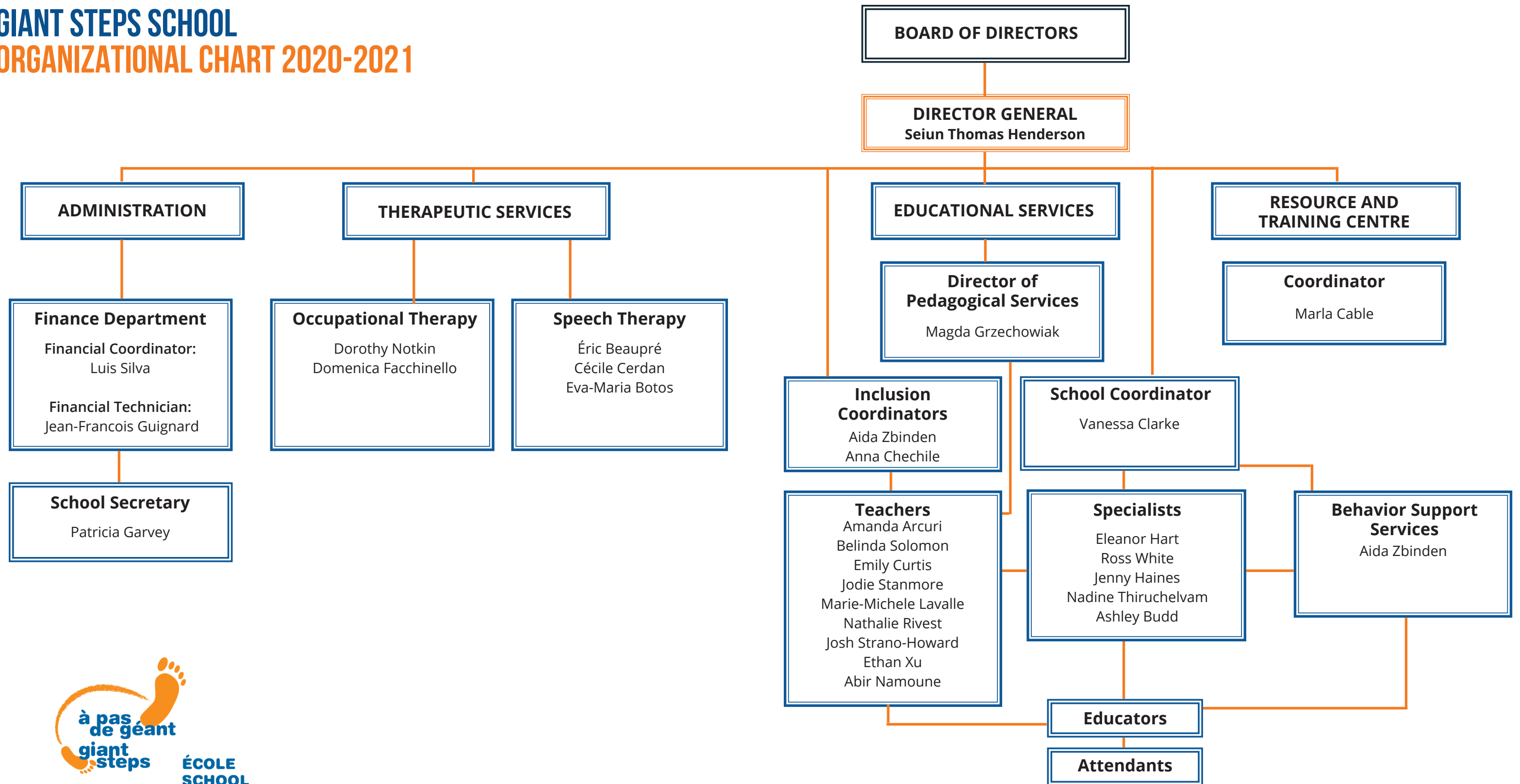
and education. We believe that learning communities are strengthened by the mutual respect of the unique humanness and contributions of its members.

**Awareness:** We are dedicated to increasing awareness of autism in the community by providing targeted educational programs and advocating for the needs of individuals on the spectrum. Our school contributes to the discovery and development of innovative educational and therapeutic services that support learning in autism via our transdisciplinary team of experts and through our research partnerships.

**Achievement:** Access to facilities, services, resources, instruction, educational materials and the technology and information needed to succeed in and out of the classroom is foundational to building equitable and successful learning communities. By fostering strengths and supporting needs, we are committed to supporting the social and academic achievement of all of our students.

# GIANT STEPS SCHOOL

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2020-2021





# EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

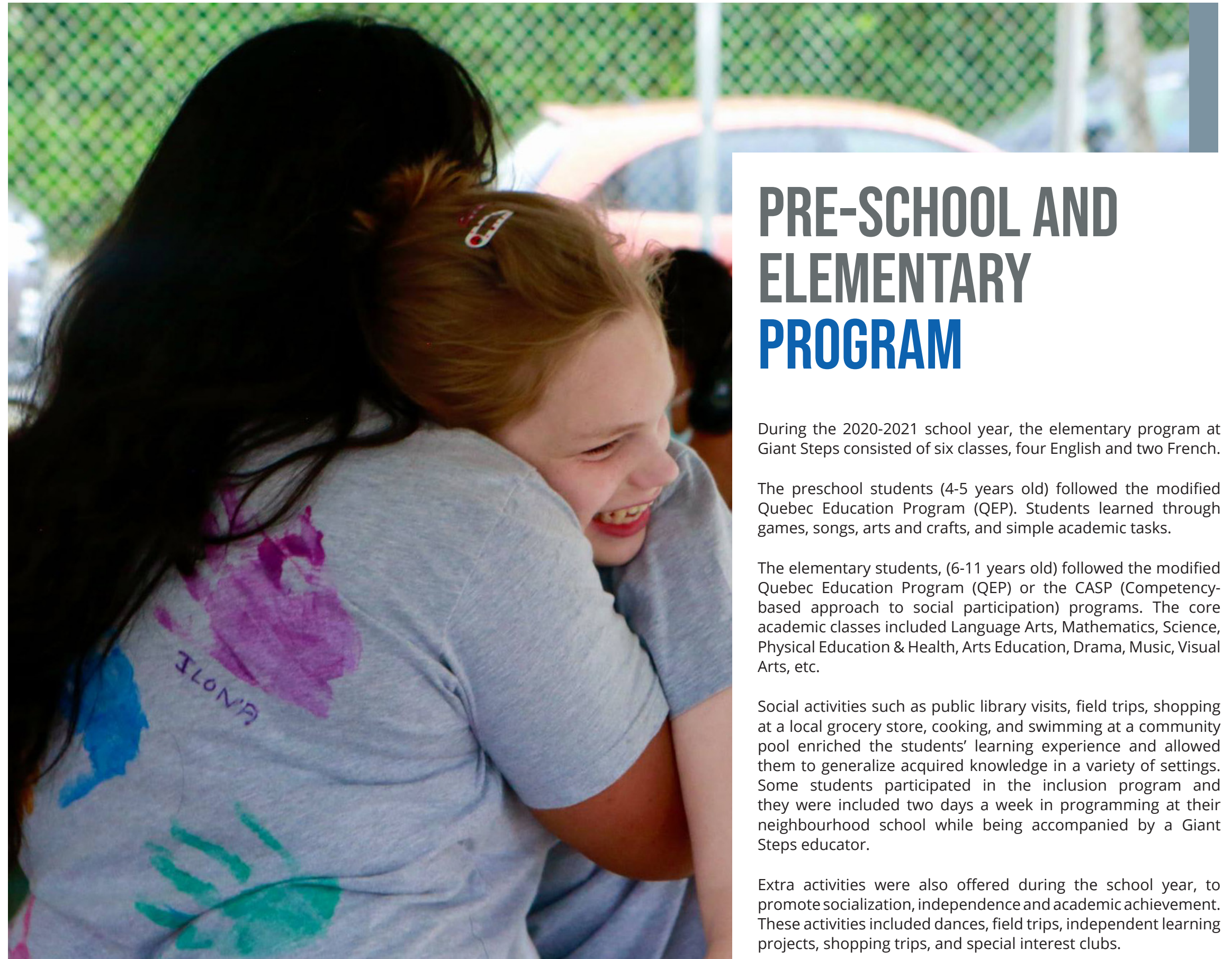
# PEDAGOGICAL SERVICES

The 2020/21 school year was a busy one as we continued to develop and refine our academic program and resources.

The school invested in many new academic resources and adapted pedagogical supports. We also continue to expand the integration of technology in the classroom.

Our teachers continued to develop innovative programs to support our students' learning, including distance learning in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the year, we worked diligently in collaboration with the school psychologist to administer academic, cognitive, and adaptive functioning assessments to our students. The results of these evaluations helped us to accurately choose the programs that best met our students' needs.

Our highly individualized education programs are developed by the multidisciplinary team for each student, following the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (MEQ)-approved programs. We continued to implement the modified Quebec Education Program (QEP) – Preschool and Elementary Education, and CHALLENGES – An Educational Approach that Facilitates Social Integration. As of September 2019, the French version of the CASP Program was finalized and became the "Programme éducatif CAPS-I – Compétences axées sur la participation sociale".



## PRE-SCHOOL AND ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

During the 2020-2021 school year, the elementary program at Giant Steps consisted of six classes, four English and two French.

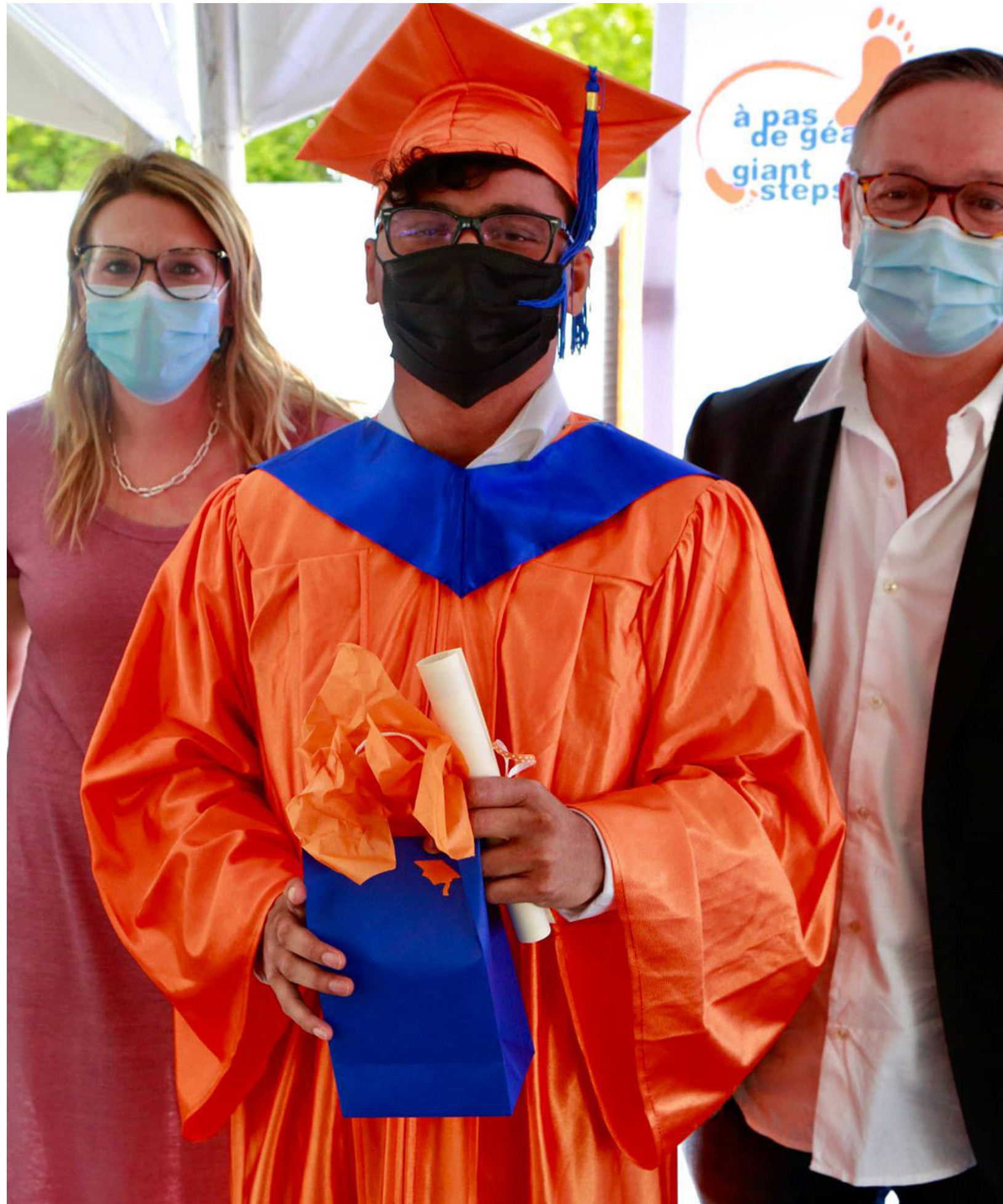
The preschool students (4-5 years old) followed the modified Quebec Education Program (QEP). Students learned through games, songs, arts and crafts, and simple academic tasks.

The elementary students, (6-11 years old) followed the modified Quebec Education Program (QEP) or the CASP (Competency-based approach to social participation) programs. The core academic classes included Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Physical Education & Health, Arts Education, Drama, Music, Visual Arts, etc.

Social activities such as public library visits, field trips, shopping at a local grocery store, cooking, and swimming at a community pool enriched the students' learning experience and allowed them to generalize acquired knowledge in a variety of settings. Some students participated in the inclusion program and they were included two days a week in programming at their neighbourhood school while being accompanied by a Giant Steps educator.

Extra activities were also offered during the school year, to promote socialization, independence and academic achievement. These activities included dances, field trips, independent learning projects, shopping trips, and special interest clubs.





## HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

During the 2020-2021 school year, the Giant Steps high school program was composed of two classes, 1 English, and 1 French.

The students in Secondary Cycle 1 (12-15 year old) followed the CASP program, which consisted of English/Français, Mathematics, Physical Education & Health, Arts Education, Communication Technologies, Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts.

The Secondary Cycle 2 students (16-21 years old) followed the CHALLENGES program, which consisted of English/Français, Mathematics, Social Studies, Personal and Social Education (Home Life, Personal Growth, Transportation and Leisure) as well as Preparing for the Job Market (Introduction to the World of Work and On-the-Job Work Placements).

## ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Giant Steps school and the EMSB have continued to collaborate to offer a full-time program for adults with autism.

During the 2020-2021 school year the program moved from the Marymount Adult Centre to the Saint-Laurent Adult Centre, where the staff and students enjoyed their new and larger facilities.

The program offers a creative, educational, and therapeutic bilingual environment where participants can come to acquire skills and knowledge, work on self-directed learning projects, socialize and take part in community-based activities.

# LIFE SKILLS & EMPLOYMENT READINESS

The Life & Employment Readiness Skills department strives to guide and help students learn essential skills for their daily functioning, including social, vocational and activities of daily living within the community. While developing these skills, the emphasis is put on spotlighting the students' strengths, successes, contributions and efforts, in order to develop their self-esteem and competence. The program provides students with the opportunities to think, advocate and communicate, in order to prepare them as they grow and develop into adulthood.

Due to COVID-19, external work experience programs were put on hold. Nevertheless, fifteen students participated in weekly internal school-based employment skill-building opportunities and activities.

**ASHLEY BUDD**  
TEACHER



# PLAY & SOCIAL SKILLS

The 2020-2021 school year was full of success and accomplishments for the students. In Social Skills class, the students were given many opportunities to explore a variety of social activities and experience positive social interactions with peers. The department offered weekly one-hour sessions to all the students (ages 4-21) offered either in an individual session or in a group format. The social department continued to introduce interest-based activities to promote student engagement. The specialist organized themed activities throughout the year for all the students, taking into consideration their sensibilities and interests. Daily bilingual social sessions were continued during the Covid period.

The social department continued to supervise Special Care Counselling (S.C.C.) students from Vanier College. This year, we supervised 2 students each, for a three month duration, four days a week.

**JENNY HAINES**  
PLAY & SOCIAL SKILLS

# COMPUTERS & TECHNOLOGY

Each student at Giant Steps has a regularly scheduled bi-weekly computer period. This time is used to address and complement academic goals but equal emphasis is also placed on creating a foundation for meaningful and functional use of technology in daily life. iPads are used extensively but use of desktop and laptop computers remains an important aspect of the training each student receives.

Communication, on many different levels, is another essential component of the work done by the Department of Computers and Technology. Increasingly more of our students are using iPads for communication and I have been closely involved in purchasing, setting up and monitoring the use of these devices, working in conjunction with the Speech Department. Technology can also be an excellent medium for other forms of communication and students are encouraged to express themselves through text, graphic arts, photography, video and animation.

One of my major ongoing goals is to establish continuity between computer sessions and classroom work, and this has been greatly facilitated by a grant received from Telus. This grant enabled us to purchase an assortment of iPads, Chromebooks and other equipment, creating an Active Learning Kit to be used by all the classrooms. This has been a big step towards integrating technology more fully into the daily classroom routine, and is laying the foundation for further exploration of creative methods to complement and support the unique and diverse learning styles of our students.

**ROSS WHITE**  
COMPUTERS AND IT DEPARTMENT



# THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

# SPEECH THERAPY

In the 2020-2021 school year, students were given Speech Therapy in two blocks of approximately 14 weeks. The first block ran from September to December and the second one took place from February to May.

We continued individual and small group follow-ups. We also offered classroom consultation services which were used for student observation, suggesting recommendations, training classroom staff (teachers, educators, attendants and interns) and making and adapting visual aids/materials etc. Direct interventions with students were also carried out in the classroom setting. As usual, throughout the year, time was also spent programming and maintaining student and classroom iPads in collaboration with the computer science department. In February, we provided training to all staff on reading. Finally, we

received two interns in Speech and Language Pathology from University of Montreal and another one from McGill University in the fall.

**ÉRIC BEAUPRÉ**  
**EVA-MARIA BOTOS**  
**CÉCILE CERDAN**  
SPEECH THERAPISTS  
GIANT STEPS SCHOOL



## Services for students:

- 22 children were seen individually every week during one intervention block.
- 44 were followed in small groups (2 to 4 students) in either block 1 or 2 with two speech therapists.
- 15 students were seen in a classroom setting.
- Support was also offered to parents of children who benefited from distance learning given the context of the pandemic.

# MUSIC THERAPY

The main objectives in music therapy are to provide opportunities for musical expression and social interaction that promote and develop each student's intention to communicate and engage. Music therapy also supports the cognitive, social, emotional and sensory development of each student.

To achieve this, we encourage a variety of modes of expression including movement, dance, playing musical instruments and corporal organization. Music therapy also supports the physical, social and emotional needs of the students by developing proprioception, regulation and modulation.

At the beginning of the academic year, we establish specific individualized objectives for each student that are worked on throughout the year. We also provide supervision on an annual basis to a music therapy student from Concordia University during their internship, and we are continuously expanding our musical activities and exploring new resources and therapeutic approaches.

This year, in order to comply with health and safety protocols during the Covid-19 pandemic, the department is providing services to students by group sessions.

**ELEANOR HART**  
**NADINE THIRUCHELVAM**  
MUSIC THERAPISTS  
GIANT STEPS SCHOOL



# OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Our Occupational Therapy school services continued to be adapted according to the limitations of the government regulations during Covid-19 and the Ordre des Ergotherapeutes du Quebec. The Covid-19 working conditions required that Dorothy Notkin erg., continue to work from home., while Domenica Facchinello was the sole in-house therapist.

Our top priorities for occupational therapy services for this school year are: Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD); fine motor skills and tool use; and cognitive perceptual learning, and ocular-postural difficulties.

The referrals pertaining to Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), deal with students who are experiencing challenges in how the central nervous system organizes messages received from the senses and subsequently develop and integrate into appropriate motor and behavioural developmental responses. When sensory processing is not organized and interpreted correctly into successful and appropriate responses our students experience a “neurological traffic jam”. Consequently, it creates many daily challenges in performing school related tasks such as dressing, eating, toileting, and handwriting. SPD symptoms may also include poor coordination, clumsiness or delayed gross and/or fine motor skills. Students with SPD may also have symptoms that result in emotional, behavioural, social or Attentional challenges.

The referrals pertaining to fine motor skills and tool use were addressed as well since quality hand function allows

students to explore and manipulate their environment and provide opportunities to learn. Without it, autonomy in all areas of daily life skills becomes very challenging when fine motor skills are lagging. Areas that are affected are holding their pencil and printing skills, cutting with scissors, shoe-tying, zipping a coat or lunch box and opening containers. In a classroom setting, proper hand functioning is essential for participation and success in academic tasks.

The referrals pertaining to the cognitive perceptual learning refers to developing skills in cognitive “executive function” (attention, concentration, memory, organization, decision-making and problem solving) as well as perceptual function (spatial orientation, visual discrimination, figure ground, depth, color, size and shape perception, body scheme, right/left discrimination) which are fundamental in academic learning such as reading, writing, communication, expression, mathematics, science etc. Without proper functioning of perceptual cognitive skills our students face major challenges in the classroom. They have difficulties paying attention, remembering, organizing, understanding, task completion, classroom pace, problem-solving, cognitive flexibility, reflective thinking and reasoning.

Our top priority referrals were implemented by providing effective and evidence-based interventions to best service the needs of our students. Our occupational therapy service delivery model included: direct individual therapy; small therapy group; and consultation/education and zoom sessions with staff and students.

This year we were limited in our ability to do two favourite programs: the “Motor Lab” program as well as the “Perform Center” activities for the older students.

We also provided teacher/educator OT, in-service training programs in person, for sensory modulation and calming techniques for the students. This also proved very beneficial for the students, which allowed them to add these tools to their repertoire when feeling unsettled.

Dorothy also provided Zoom sessions and consultations to the parents of the students who were being home schooled.

We continue to supervise Occupational therapy students at the master’s level, from McGill University School of Physical and Occupational therapy and l’Ecole de

readaptation de l’Universite de Montreal, formation en ergotherapie. We are delighted and fortunate to be able to help students complete their occupational therapy placements in our department.

We are sorry to report that our long time beloved, occupational therapist Rosemary Maratta erg. handed in her resignation as of December 2020.

**DOROTHY NOTKIN, ERG.**  
**DOMENICA FACCHINELLO, ERG.**  
**ROSEMARY MARATTA, ERG.**

**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS**  
**GIANT STEPS SCHOOL**





# BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

The main objective for the 2020-2021 school year was to support class educators in taking charge of their students' behavior. We encouraged and guided them to recognize students' needs for sensory processing, self-regulation and self-control. Being for the most part adequately trained, our primary goal was above all to give back to class teams the confidence and responsibility to achieve it.

Our service model, CPI, and our collaborative problem-solving approach to preventing and managing challenging behaviors have helped school class teams create meaningful and positive learning environments for students. Our behavioral program focused on communication, self-determination and positive peer-to-peer interactions, but most importantly, prevention. In collaboration with the teams responsible for each class, we have prepared and implemented an active prevention plan (APP) for each of the students in the school. We strongly believe that by providing staff with specific and concrete tools as well as effective techniques, they are better able to control their own anxiety and thus better intervene in difficult situations. In addition, it allows the staff to give "an optimum of care, well-being, protection and security to all those concerned."

We also worked directly with students to help them recognize and communicate their needs and / or wants more effectively so that together we could look for the strategies and ways they need to manage their emotions and behaviors in the face. difficult situations. For some, this allowed them to live positive interactions and experiences and increase their self-esteem and confidence. Our vision also calls for teaching students the skills to manage their own energy levels, their emotions and therefore their behavior.

This is how, over time, they will learn to self-regulate and to experience previously scary situations positively. More specifically, as a school, we place an emphasis on learning about experienced emotions, identifying them and using the tools to help them stay calm and safe.

By taking these factors into account, we can be proactive and focus on preventing difficult behaviors. We have incorporated effective strategies to avoid or defuse difficult behavior, such as reducing or modifying the level of sensory stimulation, explaining sudden changes in routines or expectations, reducing information or emotion overload; develop coping skills and foster the ability to solve problems and find solutions.

To do this, many classes integrate daily self-regulation and emotional awareness programs including The Zones of Regulation®, MeMoves™, Brain Gym® PACE, Therapeutic Listening®, Rhythmic Movement Training (RMT) and Active Qigong as well as guided imagery to encourage calm, focus and receptivity to learning.

In addition, individualized cognitive strategies such as interactive social stories, comic book conversations or regulation zones have been proposed to promote socio-emotional regulation and cognitive social development.

In general, the behavior team was made up of an intervention agent as well as a field coordinator at all times to offer support in the classes to promote favorable environments and ensure a learning climate. positive in classrooms for all students. During the weekly meetings, the coordinator of the Resource and Training Center as well as the coordinator of school services were also present. Depending on the need and at the request of the teachers, an interdisciplinary meeting could take place to discuss difficult situations and adjust the PPAs taking into account the learning style and the communication and adaptation skills of the student. Finally, a "Code Blanc" crisis prevention intervention team was made up of 11 staff members, trained specifically to intervene in a major crisis situation.

**AIDA ZBINDEN**  
**BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**  
**GIANT STEPS SCHOOL**



# RESOURCE AND TRAINING CENTRE

# TRAINING AND RESOURCE CENTRE

*SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY SINCE 2005*

Through critical partnerships and synergies with community stakeholders, the Giant Steps Resource and Training Centre provides a comprehensive network of supports, training and consultation services for people with autism and their families, professionals, and the community at large in both French and English. The 2020-21 school year was filled with many exciting new projects and collaborations and interruptions due to COVID-19. We continued to support professionals, families and individuals through an online platform.

## TRAINING

The Resource and Training Centre developed an innovative and free set of online training resources for first responders on how to intervene in emergency situations involving an autistic individual. Through a generous grant from Autism Speaks we are creating a bilingual Cyber security online training program for families, professionals and autistic individuals.

Through a grant from the Public Health Organization, we have partnered with McGill University, RTSA-TACC and the Azrieli Center for Autism Research (ACAR) to participate in the Master Trainers' Training for the World Health Organization Caregiver Skills Training Program (CST).

We will continue to build upon our proven leadership in areas of capacity building and resource sharing and will work to ensure an increasingly autism-inclusive society. We:

- Had information booths at many conferences and events.
- Participated in the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorder Alliance (CASDA) annual leadership summit, working to create a federal autism strategy.
- We provided consultation and training services through a new program called adap360 to private schools across the province, with the Fédération des établissements d'enseignement privés, and supported by the Ministère d'éducation et de l'enseignement supérieur.
- Collaborated with people with autism, engaging them as trainers and Consultants.

## INNOVATION

The Centre is involved in many projects that advance autism innovation both here at Giant Steps and beyond. We:

- Collaborated with L'académie de la Nonviolence, to offer Chindai sessions to our students to help build self-regulation skills, relationships, interconnectedness, and self-awareness. Partnered with the Fondation Dr Clown to integrate relational clowns into Giant Steps' classrooms and therapies to work to improve student engagement and wellbeing.
- Partnered on the development and testing of mobile applications, including Jooay and Mylène.
- Collaborated with PIXCOM for their television show titled 'Autisme, bientôt majeur.



## SERVICES FOR AUTISM PROFESSIONALS

- Organized and coordinated the placement of fieldwork students and interns from a variety of colleges and universities in programs including speech therapy, occupational therapy, education, special care counselling and psychology.
- Planned the professional development days, and training in CPI - Nonviolent Crisis Intervention® for our staff.
- Created adapted resources for our students.
- Offered multiple training opportunities for autism professionals from across sectors.

### MARLA CABLE

RESOURCE COORDINATOR

GIANT STEPS RESOURCE AND TRAINING CENTRE





# ADULT EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

# POLARIS ENTERPRISE

Giant Steps launched the first cohort of the bilingual, industry-based, adult education and employment program to prepare autistic adults or adults with an intellectual disability, aged 21 and older, for general employment as well as for job-specific employment with Loblaw Companies Ltd (Maxi / Provigo in Quebec).

The multi-faceted project was developed via key partnerships between Giant Steps Montreal, George Weston Limited (Loblaw Companies Ltd), Wagar Adult Education Centre (English Montreal School Board), the Transforming Autism Care Consortium (TACC) and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

The cohort of ten students was based at the Wagar Adult Education Centre where Maxi installed a fully-functional mini-market allowing students to practice certain skills before commencing their work placements in six different Maxi and Provigo retail stores across the island of Montreal. A second set of work placements took place at the Provigo Laval Distribution Centre where participants got hands-on experience with the various positions available within that environment. Several participants were offered a job by Maxi and Provigo, upon completing the ten month program.

Throughout the year, Giant Steps was invited to present the Polaris Enterprise initiative to various stakeholders throughout the Loblaw organization, including senior management in human resources and the Able at Loblaw inclusion committee. With the success of the Polaris initiative and the national media coverage that it attracted, Loblaw is exploring the possibility of launching a similar initiative across Canada.

**ANDRE PEREIRA**  
PROJECT MANAGER, ADULT SERVICES  
GIANT STEPS SCHOOL



**P O L A R I S   E N T E R P R I S E**

2 0 2 0 - 2 0 2 1

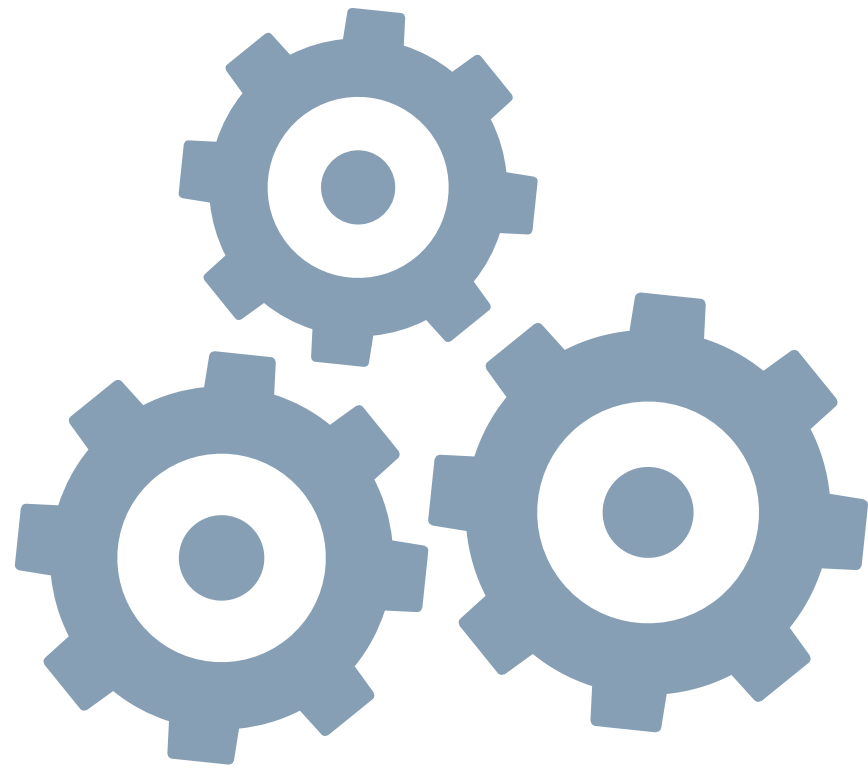
# READY, WILLING AND ABLE

As of October 2019, Giant Steps School has been overseeing the Ready, Willing and Able (RWA) program in Quebec in partnership with the Quebec Intellectual Disability Society (SQDI). Implemented in 2014, this national program, funded by the federal government, aims to increase the employment readiness for people with autism and intellectual disabilities. At the provincial level, in collaboration with a network of partner employability organizations, RWA enables hundreds of job seekers to obtain and maintain employment in an inclusive context, earning the same salary and benefits as all other company employees.

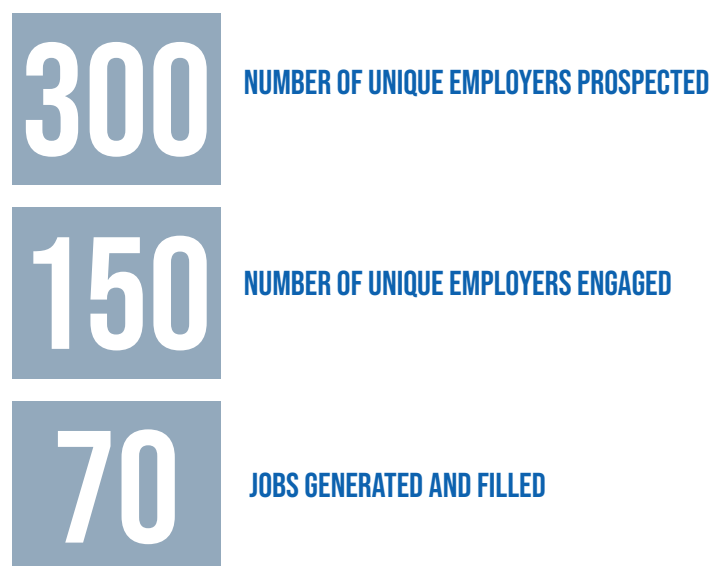
In addition, RWA supports post-secondary students in the pursuit of their studies and helps self-employed workers get their entrepreneurial projects off the ground.

Giant Steps, through RWA, sensitizes and equips employers to recognize the skills of this undervalued workforce and promotes the full potential of these talented employees.

**AMÉLIE DURANLEAU**  
PROVINCIAL COORDINATOR  
READY, WILLING & ABLE



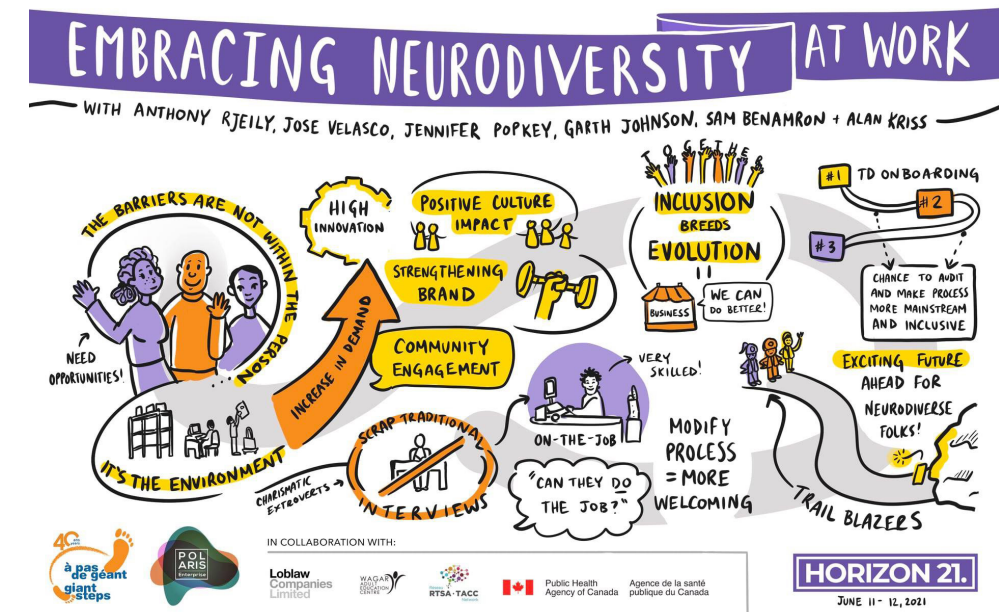
## GIANT STEPS 3-YEAR TARGETS FOR QUEBEC:



# HORIZON 21 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

In June, the HORIZON 21 virtual conference and exhibition took place under the theme of Accelerating Employment Opportunities for Autistic Adults. The successful event featured over 30 speakers and panelists from around the world, including keynote presentations by Randy Lewis and Wanda Deschamps, as well as many thought leaders from the neurodivergent, academic and business communities.

A session highlighting the Polaris Enterprise pilot project experience was also featured, with various partners participating including Loblaw Companies Ltd, Wagar Adult Education Centre (English Montreal School Board), and the Transforming Autism Care Consortium (TACC).



## NAVIGATE THE NEW NORMAL

Giant Steps received funding under Ready, Willing and Able's Employment Recovery Project to build a bank of bilingual, first-person testimonial videos that spoke to the various challenges, barriers and facilitators involved in seeking, getting and maintaining employment during the COVID-19 pandemic in Quebec. Seven videos were produced featuring a diverse group of autistic men and women who shared their stories and let us into their personal lives.



# FINANCIAL RESULTS

# FINANCIAL RESULTS

## STATEMENTS OF OPERATIONS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021

It is with great pleasure that the school presents for the eighth consecutive year financial statements which demonstrate an excellent financial situation.

The audited financial statements as of June 30, 2021 show that despite the pandemic, the School has been able to maintain an excellent financial balance.

Thanks to the exceptional results obtained during the 2020-2021 school year, we are in an excellent position to undertake the construction of the future Autism Center.

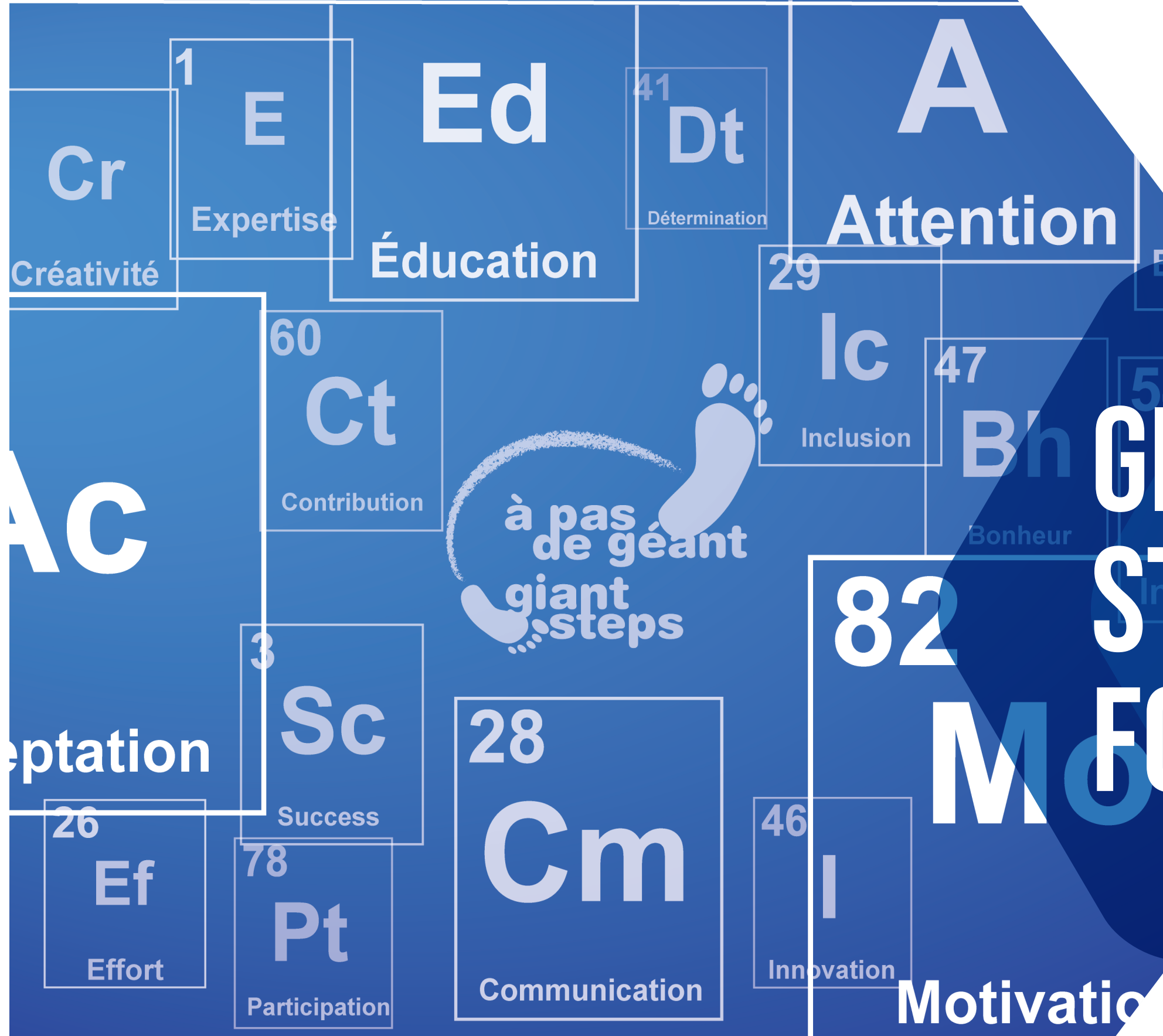
The surplus obtained will be used to increase the level of educational and therapeutic services compared to before the pandemic and even add staff to the classes, including a nurse and additional attendants.

Finally, thanks to the efforts of all the stakeholders who have the school at heart, administrators, employees, parents, volunteers, students, donors etc. the school is in good shape financially and we are looking at an exciting future, with regards to the construction of the Giant Steps Autism Center.

**LUIS SILVA, CPA, CGA, MBA**  
FINANCE DIRECTOR  
GIANT STEPS SCHOOL

<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	
		<b>REVENUE</b>
		Subsidies
2 253 761	2 087 341	School Boards
1 882 844	358 727	Federal government grants
1 164 175	1 058 101	Other organizations
		Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur
264 978	388 050	Childcare and supervision
103 350	126 065	Donations from Giant Steps Foundation – Montreal (note 9)
		Unrestricted
300 000	435 000	Assigned to specific purposes
57 342	59 379	Amortization of deferred contributions related to capital assets (note 8)
37 265	38 058	Other income
6 500	24 983	
<u>6 070 215</u>	<u>4 575 704</u>	
		<b>EXPENSES</b>
521 996	415 359	Teaching activities – Appendix A
2 749 788	2 841 467	Support activities for teaching – Appendix B
1 470 999	912 705	Administrative activities – Appendix C
166 843	144 532	Management of Capital Assets – Appendix D
5 203	5 601	Interest and bank charges
73 253	79 058	Amortization of capital assets
<u>4 988 082</u>	<u>4 398 722</u>	
<u>1 082 133</u>	<u>176 983</u>	EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES BEFORE EXPENSES RELATED TO THE FUTURE GIANT STEPS CENTER
-	(24 012)	EXPENSES RELATED TO THE FUTURE GIANT STEPS CENTER – Appendix E
<u>1 082 133</u>	<u>152 971</u>	EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES

# ÉLÉMENTS DE SUCCÈS ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS



# GIANT STEPS FOUNDATION

# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It continues to be an honor to serve as chairman of the Board of Directors of the Giant Steps Foundation. This past year has been particularly challenging with covid-19 disrupting how we fundraise and continue to build strong ties with the autism community. Still, throughout 2020-2021 we have been able to maintain our fundraising events, albeit virtually, and reach our financial goals. I am extremely proud of all that has been achieved despite the pandemic.

In addition to our annual activities, the Foundation launched a capital campaign to build a state-of-the-art Autism Center slated to open in the fall of 2023. With the support of an exceptional campaign cabinet we were able to raise of over \$20 million in six months and garner tremendous public support. I would like to acknowledge all of those who have worked tirelessly on this campaign and thank our donors for their generosity, loyalty and trust. This ambitious project, that will change the lives of individuals with autism, and their families, is only possible thanks to you!

As the fiscal year ends, the pandemic is not over. While more challenges may lie ahead, I know we are more motivated than ever to support the Montreal autism community in all the ways it needs and deserves. Lastly, I would like to thank our team, board members, cabinet members and volunteers for their dedication, flexibility and focus all year long.

**PIERRE SIMARD**  
CHAIR OF THE BOARD  
GIANT STEPS FOUNDATION



# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It has been a great privilege to serve as the Director of the Giant Steps Foundation again this year, despite all its challenges. The year was marked by working remotely, organizing virtual events, and building relationships with new donors online. But mostly, for me personally, the year stands out as a great example of people coming together for an important cause.

Just when we needed it the most our incredible donors showed up with their unwavering support. At a time when they had limited interaction with the school and its activities, they shone through with great generosity and loyalty.

Not only did we successfully navigate the difficult context with our donors' help, but we also launched an ambitious project, to build a state-of-the-art Autism Center and the \$50 million campaign attached to it. Many volunteers and donors came forth, for this historical project, putting in countless hours, to help us achieve our dream of finally offering the autism community the life-long service it deserves.

Seeing what we've accomplished so far offers me the great joy of looking to the future with optimism!

**TRACY PENNIMPEDE**  
DIRECTOR  
GIANT STEPS FOUNDATION



# FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

There is no denying that Covid-19 has impacted our organization and the way we work. Despite this, our ability to adapt, combined with our incredibly loyal donor base, has produced results of \$985,000 raised, which is comparable to non-pandemic years.

We held our online Charidy campaign in the fall which generated a whopping \$522,077. Our annual mailing grossed just over \$50,000 and our grant applications to private foundations generated close to \$175,000. We held our annual auction online in May 2021 in which our donors were invited to contribute an amount equal to the ticket price they would have paid had the in-person event been held. The event was a great success netting close to \$165,000. Lastly, parents donated over \$20,000 as a voluntary contribution to the school.

The capital campaign, which was publicly launched in March 2021, has been off to a great start. This year we raised \$20 million for the construction of the Giant Steps Autism Centre, a model for autism services here and around the world. It will allow Quebec to become a leader in the field of education, research, and services for people with autism. We are grateful for the enthusiasm and commitment of our Board and Cabinet Members without whom this project would still only be a dream.

We look to the future with renewed optimism having overcome a difficult and unpredictable year. We know more than ever that we are supported by the very best donors and volunteers, caring members of the autism community. We could never thank you enough!

**GIANTS STEPS FOUNDATION**  
**STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES**  
**YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

4

	<u>New Center Fund</u>	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>2021 Total</u>	<u>2020 Total</u>
<b>INCOMES</b>				
Fundraising activities	\$ -	\$ 686,790	\$ 686,790	\$ 386,360
Donations from corporations and fundraising campaigns	3,016,579	207,947	3,224,526	1,414,540
Donations assigned to specific purposes (note 7)	-	23,652	23,652	66,392
Other donations	-	39,189	39,189	62,214
Federal subsidy	-	13,923	13,923	-
Donations in kind	-	27,717	27,717	-
Investment income (note 8)	14,274	5,835	20,109	7,091
	<u>3,030,853</u>	<u>1,005,053</u>	<u>4,035,906</u>	<u>1,936,597</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Donations to the CINID				
Unrestricted	-	300,000	300,000	435,000
Assigned to specific purposes	69,436	-	69,436	24,012
Administration	16,664	163,797	180,461	143,906
Professional fees	72,608	-	72,608	69,410
Fundraising activities (note 9)	70,249	41,461	111,710	201,584
Advertising, promotion, and relocation	6,864	-	6,864	288
Bursaries	-	6,000	6,000	5,500
Interest and bank fees	-	1,946	1,946	2,051
	<u>235,821</u>	<u>513,204</u>	<u>749,025</u>	<u>881,751</u>
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES</b>	<u>\$ 2,795,032</u>	<u>\$ 491,849</u>	<u>\$ 3,286,881</u>	<u>\$ 1,054,846</u>





# GIANT STEPS AUTISM CENTRE

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

Giant Steps has begun an ambitious project that will see the construction of a state-of-the-art Autism Centre. Upon consultation with the community and leading experts in the field, Giant Steps was able to formulate a project that will transform the autism community and provide services throughout the lifespan based on four pillars:

- A larger School with expanded services
- An Adult Education and Employment Training Centre
- A Community and Training Centre
- A Research and Innovation Hub.

The new Centre will be the first of its kind in Canada and a model for autism services here and around the world. It will allow Canada to become a leader in the field of autism education, research, and service delivery to the community.

This purpose-built building, designed by Provencher\_Roy, a leading architectural firm, will address the specific needs of individuals with autism, and allow us to support their changing needs throughout their lifespan.

Through our partnership with Technopôle Angus, we have secured a piece of land in the Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie district, a new development in Montreal. After a year of responsible planning, focused strategizing, and diligent stewarding, we estimate the total turnkey project cost at \$51.4 million, with a significant portion coming from government sources. An additional \$3 million will also be raised to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Centre.



**\$51.4 M**  
PROJECT COST



**\$20 M**  
RAISED TO DATE

**GIANT STEPS  
5460 AVE CONNAUGHT  
MONTREAL, QC H4V 1X7**

**514-935-1911**

**GIANTSTEPSMONTREAL.COM**