

Moving Forward - Van Lunen Fellowship Project  
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The **Mission** of Milton Christian School is to be a safe, Christ-centered, financially viable learning environment that nurtures each child through development of their God given gifts, talents, and abilities on a foundation that is built upon the Lord in home, church, and school.

The **Vision** of Milton Christian School is to build a school that is a centre of Academic Excellence and Godly Instruction in the Town of Milton, and to be a Blessing to our community!

## **Enacting the Vision – Milton Christian School**

Milton Christian School began as a vision in the hearts and minds of a few Christian families living in the Milton, Ontario. They dreamed of an independent, interdenominational Christian elementary school, to serve the growing number of interested families in this rapidly growing Greater Toronto suburb. They envisioned a forward thinking, progressive Christian learning institution that could provide the essential link between home, church and school; while at the same time, embracing an open enrolment position and evangelistic opportunities to reach people with the message of God's love. This passion grew and affiliation with the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools followed. In April 2004, the Milton Christian Education Association was formed.

Moving quickly, the MCEA received its charitable status in early 2005. Within an incredible two week period, the MCEA secured the rental of facilities and hired its principal. In September 2006, the doors of Milton Christian School opened to its first students. Many existing Ontario Christian schools began in the 1950's or 1960's, and we are warmed by the rich history and dedication to Christian education shown by these founding parents. The story of MCS is equally inspiring; young families banding together to create a place of Christian, educational excellence for their children and their city.

Consistent and rapid growth has been the norm for both Milton Christian School and the now city of Milton, Ontario. Milton Christian School started in 2006 with only 11 students. The population of Milton at that time was a small 35,000 people. In its tenth anniversary year, Milton Christian School has a PreK to Grade 8 population of 205 students. The city of Milton, as of January 2016 is populated by 125,000 residents, making it the fastest growing city in Canada, only second to Las Vegas in North America. Milton Christian School currently leases space from the Town of Milton at 45 Bruce Street. This partnership was an answer to prayer for both sides.

The Town of Milton had recently closed its Public Library after new facilities were constructed and opened. From 1974 to 2011, The Milton Public Library stood on the site of Milton's first educational institution, the Bruce Street School. Through the efforts and cooperation of many individuals, the former Milton Public Library would become the new home of Milton Christian School in August of 2012. This beautiful 17,000 square foot space is very limited and its usefulness has been exhausted. With only six more years left in the Lease with the Town of Milton, the school has outgrown the space, and is looking to accommodate more students as interest in MCS flourishes. The greatest risk to Milton Christian School is doing nothing!

Centres for Christian education and Christian schools are a blessing to their communities. Cardus, a worldwide think tank, dedicated to the renewal of North American social architecture, recently released its findings from a specialized and detailed education study. The study was designed to determine the alignment between motivations and outcomes of Christian education, and to better understand the role of Christian schools in students' lives, in families, and in larger society.

Preliminary results show:

- Protestant Christian school graduates reported a greater sense of direction in life.
- Christian school graduates are more generous with their time and money, participating in far more relief and development work than their peers.
- In many ways, the average Christian school graduate has been found to be a foundational, reliable and indispensable member of society.

## **The Project**

The leadership of Milton Christian School, and the Milton Christian Education Association, dream of a dynamic new facility which will inspire our students and the community-at-large. In the long term, MCS strives to become the leading school of choice within the Milton community. Parents of MCS students are unanimous in their love and support of the school. Despite the cramped space, limited playground, lack of a library, a full gym and adequate storage space; parents are thrilled with the education their children receive through the dedicated staff of MCS. Teachers willingly "pack up" their classrooms each week to accommodate the weekend church community.

Stackable desks are used for some classes, along with portable smart boards and a rolling cart for laptops. The creative use of the available space is a constant challenge, but the energy and commitment to their work and their students is evident in the positive, flexible attitudes of staff and administration alike.

The driving question behind this Van Lunen Project is as such:

***How does the leadership, parents, students, members and community as a whole, begin to think more strategically about the future of Milton Christian School?***

The project for MCS will encompass and accomplish several important goals.

1. The Leadership of Milton Christian School must develop, articulate and cultivate the vision of the future.

The leadership of the school association must spend 80% of its time thinking about a school that does not yet exist. What will Milton Christian School look like in 5 – 10 – 50 years? If the leadership of the school is not thinking strategically about the future; then who is? The role of a school's leadership is to protect and direct the mission and vision of the school.

2. The Leadership must be transformed and energized to direct and protect the mission and vision of the school.

A flourishing Christian school is like a mighty sailing ship. There are proper places for the leadership of the school and other places for the operational staff and faculty. The leadership should position themselves within the 'Crow's Nest' of such a vessel, keeping an eye out for the pitfalls and risks along the journey, but also directing the path of the schools future.

3. The association needs to provide "real school" facilities, including office space, classrooms, playgrounds, a gym and library.

The leadership of Milton Christian School needed to identify suitable land for the future permanent erection of appropriate facilities to meet the needs of a dynamically growing population. Attempting to do this in the city of Milton, with its supersonic development speed; seemed impossible

4. The forward thinking administration of MCS will be given the space to continue meeting the needs of the families it serves.

One of the dynamic, successful and identified elements of Milton Christian School is the partnerships it has developed within its community. There is a tremendous need for community space within the city of Milton. MCS currently generate a large portion of its planned and budgeted revenue through facility rental. Innovative and creative revenue generation methods must continue into the future of a new school.

5. The MCEA will secure suitable land.

A beautiful, 2.5 acre piece of land was identified in the heart of Milton. The land is surrounded by wonderful amenities such as playgrounds, basketball courts, soccer fields, baseball diamonds and public parking. The MCEA from December 2015 and February 2016, collected \$1.5 million, and acquired 7419 Tremaine Road, in Milton, Ontario.

## **The Proposal**

### **1.1 Vision and Scope – Milton Christian School**

The Milton Christian Education Association (MCEA) proposes to develop the **7419 Tremaine Road** property for the primary purposes of a private, Christian school for students in grades Pre-Kindergarten to 12.

Milton Christian School currently leases the former Milton Public Library for this primary purpose, but also for providing space to several community groups and organizations who require program space. The intended and proposed use of the **7419 Tremaine Road** property, would provide community space to those groups in a continued and enhanced manner.

## 1.2 Intended Uses - Programs and/or services to be offered and benefit the Milton Community

### Primary Services:

- Christian elementary school - Grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12 (400 students)
- Before and after school programs
- Learning Centre (Specialized Tutoring and Instruction)
- Afterschool Home Work Club
- March Break and Summer Camps

### Secondary Services:

- Operation, possible sub-lease, to other non-profit organizations with similar core values and vision which will serve the Milton community. (IE. Milton Community Resource Centre, Portico Community Church.
- A unique event space for performances, theater groups, concerts, etc.
- Reading Buddies program would make use of a community room where students at Milton Christian School would read with seniors from the local community.
- Midweek children's program offering varied opportunities such as sports, creative art, baking, musical and dramatic arts, and also special themed nights covering topical areas of interest for kids (IE. Self Defense and Anti-bullying, etc.).
- Weekly youth programs for students in grades 6-12 offering opportunity for middle and high school students to participate in structured activities in a safe and supervised environment. Activities such as video gaming, sports, creative arts, and cooking would be available. There would also be outings planned for students to various fun and educational destinations as well.
- For adults, courses on finances and budgeting, marriage enrichment, and parenting will be available, and the potential exists for other types of helpful teaching as well (IE. ESL).

## 1.3 Intended Building Size

- Milton Christian School proposes to maximize the use of the available land with a 3 storey building, with basement, 40,000 to 60,000 square feet, possibly erected over 2 phases.
- The Milton Christian Education Association would seek site approval allowing the erection of building on 50% of the lot.
- Milton Christian School would actively partner with other community service organizations, and rent/lease space to such organizations where it was mutually beneficial, fiscally responsible and like-minded in its core values and desire to serve the community of Milton.
- Specifically, Milton Christian School would sublease the a portion of the proposed space to the Milton Community Resource Centre for the purpose of providing Early Learning and Care programs.

## 1.5 Timing

Milton Christian School would propose to develop a 3 year Capital Campaign plan to raise the capital to complete phase one of the project somewhere between September 2019 and September 2020.

## 1.6 Amenities

- Milton Christian School proposes to erect a very uniquely designed, accessible, and LEEDS certified facility, that would meet the needs of many community groups within Milton. Such a facility would have:
  - A 400-500 seat auditorium/event space
  - A Gymnasium
  - 20-25 High-Tech and versatile classroom spaces

- A commercial kitchen
- A state of the art library/technical space

### 1.7 New or Expansion of Existing Services

- Milton Christian School currently leases space from the Town of Milton at 45 Bruce Street, the former Milton Public Library. This proposal is for the purposes of expanding an already existing service.
- Milton Christian School currently or historically rents space to the following groups:
  - The Milton Community Resource Centre – 75 spot Nursery School
  - Portico Community Church (Wed evenings, Friday evenings, Sunday Mornings)
  - Milton Seventh Day Adventist Church (Saturdays)
  - 4 different exercise and fitness groups (Gymnasium – weeknights)
  - The Milton Air Cadets (Monday, Wednesday, Friday evenings)
  - Milton Camera Club
  - Professional Summer Camp (Summer Months)

### 1.8 Indication of Service Delivery Model

- Milton Christian School currently implements a fee for service model in which enrolling families pay tuition for education and other services.
- Milton Christian School rents out its facilities to other like-minded community groups who desperately require unique meeting space

### 1.9 Length of Time in Milton Community

- 2004 – MCEA established with a small handful of Milton families.
- 2005 – MCEA receives Charitable Status from Corporations Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency
- 2006 – Milton Christian School begins with 11 students, enrolment of 18 by the end of its first year of operation.
- 2007 – Student Enrolment - 35 / Families Served - 22
- 2008 – Student Enrolment – 55 / Families Served - 40
- 2009 – Student Enrolment – 72 / Families Served - 46
- 2010 – Student Enrolment – 75 / Families Served – 50
- 2011 – Student Enrolment – 86 / Families Served – 57
- In September 2012 – MCS begins operations at 45 Bruce Street after a \$350K renovation of the former Milton Public Library. MCRC begins a 75 student Nursery School.
- 2012 – Student Enrolment – 125 / Families Served – 83
- 2013 – Student Enrolment – 140 / Families Served – 89
- 2014 – Student Enrolment – 165 / Families Served – 98
- 2015 – Student Enrolment – 185 / Families Served – 134
- 2016 – Student Enrolment – 205 / Families Served – 158

### 1.10 Audience Served / Target Market

- In March 2007 Statistics Canada's 2006 Census Report identified Milton as Canada's fastest growing community. In addition, the most recent Census data revealed that Milton is one of the most unique communities in Ontario, if not in Canada. Milton has been designated as a growth centre through the Government of Ontario's Places to Grow Act. The best planning estimates project that Milton's population for the year 2021 will surpass 180,000.

- While Milton's rapid growth has become well known over the last year, Milton has also evolved into one of the most educated, diverse and blossoming communities in Canada. In fact, Milton is the only community in Ontario with top-10 standings in three distinctive categories: Growth, Median Age and Educational Attainment.

The Heart of a Growing Community • October 2008

- Milton Christian School is a very diverse community, serving families of all cultures and faith backgrounds.
- Unlike the rest of the province and the country as a whole, Milton is getting younger and with a median age of 34.4 years, sits as the second youngest community in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Currently, nearly 36% of Milton's population consists of adults between the ages of 25 to 44, while 13% of Milton's population consists of children between the ages of 5 and 14. This paints the portrait of Milton as a community of young, educated adults and young families with children.

The Heart of a Growing Community • October 2008

- These young families will be looking for excellent educational centres for their children – and they will find them at MCS. The Board of Directors of Milton Christian School is 100% committed to their vision to expand the school through the acquisition of new facilities, and continued development of programs which meet the needs of families. The board consists of well-connected Milton business people, strong supporters of education and people who believe in the future of Milton and their place in it.

### 1.11 Evidence of Past Accomplishments

- Milton Christian School has experienced unprecedented growth, making it the youngest and fastest growing independent Christian School in Ontario.
- Milton Christian School is as diverse as its home community. MCS currently serves over 200 students, from 158 different families, from over 32 cultural and ethnic backgrounds. It has naturally served new families making Milton home as over 65% of its participants have been living in Milton 5 years or less.
- MCEA has experienced significant organic growth without intentionally marketing the school.
- Milton Christian School currently employs over 20 teaching and support staff.
- Milton Christian School has hosted and participated in a wide variety of community events, fundraisers, humanitarian efforts, and academic and athletic competitions.
- MCEA has received over \$700,000 in charitable donations since 2005.
- MCEA has collected over \$4 million in tuition revenue since 2006.
- MCEA has generated over \$800,000 in other revenue since 2007 through programs such as a summer camp, before and after school program, specialized tutoring, hot lunch program and facility rental.
- MCS administrators are empowered by their Board to actively meet the needs of their families. When challenged with a new opportunity, MCS staff respond with creativity and flexibility, and are ready to implement unique solutions. Some examples include the development of an American History class to accommodate an international family, and the addition of a Spanish program which evolved to include all students
- Flexibility and responsiveness are two of the many strengths of this school, designed to be a centre of educational excellence in the city of Milton
- A typical public school year encompasses 940 hours. MCS offers 1040 hours of instruction, giving teachers significantly more time to enact unique programs designed to explore student gifts and abilities and equip students for the future
- At Milton Christian School we begin with the end in mind. We see each child as an individual and encourage them to develop their gifts and abilities. The staff promote cross grade connections, fostering leadership in the older students, and a feeling of safety and connectedness in the younger students.