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Dear Friends of Ruffing,

It is with great joy that we share with you this annual report which reflects the strength and stability of the Ruffing community during the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Since 1959 when Mary Braun and James Ruffing founded our first Children's House, the Ruffing community has built upon its rich history of progressive Montessori education and prepared the next generation of learners with future-ready skills. True to Ruffing's Strategic Plan to strengthen community, provide innovative and experiential learning, amplify our commitment to sustainability, and usher in a new era for Montessori education, we celebrated several milestones this past year.

Our youngest learners (18 months-36 months) were welcomed into three beautiful new Toddler classrooms. The Outdoor Learning Environment (OLE) continued to evolve with the Green Committee's addition of a Gaga Ball pit, native and pollinatorfriendly plants, shade trees, an apple tree, and stone paths. Our Board of Trustees adopted Ruffing's first Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Statement, the Family Association (formerly the Parent Association) presented updated bylaws, our new website was launched, and the Great Kids' Race. relocated to Horseshoe Lake! We also implemented a new 6th Year math curriculum and 8th Years traveled to Quebec City in April, the first time we were able to take this trip since before the pandemic.

Applications and enrollment numbers remain robust thanks to the strength of our faculty who prepare environments in which the Montessori Method and home-like setting allow children and adolescents to develop their natural thirst for knowledge and intentional creativity, sense of order, structure, independence, and confidence. The waiting list for admission reinforces our longstanding commitment to progressive education, sustainability, belonging, and community building.

As we embark on the expansion of our campus with the bold new initiative for a Montessori-inspired creative space which will be located at the house on Shelburne, we are intentionally and thoughtfully preparing for a future that will inspire a designthinking approach to problem solving for our learners today, tomorrow, and generations to come.

Thank you for your generosity and continued commitment to Ruffing. Your partnership provides opportunities for each child for whom we have the privilege of educating.

With profound gratitude,

Kathie Freer Rebecca Holland Head of School

President. Board of Trustees

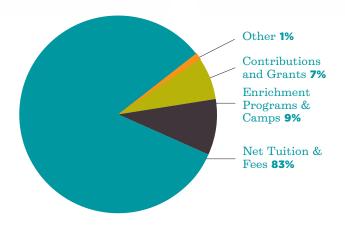


"We must educate adults to realize that we can only better humanity through the child. We must realize that the child is the builder of humanity."

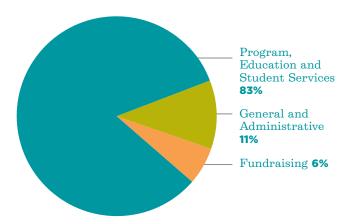
-Maria Montessori



Revenue



Expenses



A child playing with building blocks quickly learns that having a strong foundation is the key to building a structure that won't quickly crash to the ground.

Similarly, the strong financial foundation that Ruffing has maintained over the years has been critical to the school's leadership in Montessori education for over sixty years.

In my role as Ruffing's Chair of the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees, I am happy to report that the school remains in a strong and stable financial position. We continue to be aligned with our Strategic Plan, including our cash reserve and debtrepayment targets.

Maintaining a strong financial profile puts Ruffing in a position to attract and retain our amazingly talented faculty, the lifeblood of the school. It also allows the school to provide need-based tuition assistance to a growing number of our families. More than a quarter of Ruffing students received tuition assistance for the 2022-2023 school year, with over \$450,000 in total assistance granted, and we are on track to exceed that total in the current academic year.

Like most private schools, the vast majority of Ruffing's annual operating budget comes from tuition, and we recognize that the tuition that our families pay represents a major financial commitment. We are proud that over the years we have been able to keep tuition increases both modest and predictable. The average annual increase in Ruffing tuition over the past ten years has been less than 3%.

On behalf of Ruffing's Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees, I wish to extend a heartfelt thank you for your generous support of the school. The Ruffing community is a special part of all of our lives. Working together we can ensure that Ruffing's special brand of Montessori education endures for generations to come.

Keven Larkin Treasurer Board of Trustees The 2022-2023 school year was filled with many Ruffing Family Association events that helped bring our community together. Coffee on the Lawn for each level kicked off the school year, followed by our beloved Pumpkin Party. This year, students and staff voted on the costume Kathie wore at the Pumpkin Party which was a pumpkin! The Chili Cook Off and Multicultural Week returned in January, and we were able to show our appreciation for our faculty and staff several times during the year by hosting a brunch in November, a Chipotle lunch in March, and a food truck for lunch in June.

Other Family Association Highlights:

- A book discussion was held in which community members read *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, and participated in a discussion led by Middle School faculty Kelly O'Melia and Melissa Sanders.
- Black History Month was celebrated by our community with a performance by Djapo Cultural Arts Institute featuring Ruffing students, Adinkra face painting, highlights of Black inventors, and a virtual reality simulation by NASA GVIS Lab.
- A Toolbox Presentation was led by Dr. Tori Cordiano, a clinical psychologist, who spoke to community members about adults supporting their children's development and wellbeing.
- A Toolbox Presentation on family digital wellness was given by Ruffing's Director of Student Care Josh Chefitz.
- Successful community clothing and book swaps were held.

The Ruffing Family Association would like to thank all of our community members for their engagement and support throughout the 2022-2023 school year. It would not have been a success without all of you!

The Ruffing Family Association

RUFFING FAMILY ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

2022-2023

Katie Wozniak, President

Gretchen Haremza, Vice President

Yolanda Hamilton, Treasurer

Bryce Carsone Smith, Secretary

Micah Arafah, Classroom Family Coordinator

Rachael Strauss, Classroom Family Coordinator



Thank You to All 2022-2023 Donors

(7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023)

KEY

^ Board of Trustees

+ Deceased

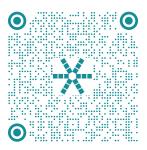
* Faculty/Staff

Questions regarding gifts to Ruffing? Please contact Development & Database Manager Kelly Serra at kellys@ruffingmontessori.net.

Please excuse any errors or omissions.

To Make a Gift. to Ruffing:

Please use the remittance envelope included in this report, scan the QR code below, or visit ruffingmontessori.net/give.



MONTESSORI FOUNDERS SOCIETY (\$1.000+)

\$100,000+

Ann and David[^] Lavelle

\$10,000+

Maureen Harrington and Gordon Maas Charlotte and John Newman

\$5,000+

Alexandra Hanna Nancy and Neal Lavelle The Marie Richardson Memorial Fund of The Cleveland Foundation Allayne and Kevin Stephans

\$2,500-\$4,999

Anonymous (2) **AHS Foundation** Carfagna Family - Magis Foundation (in honor of James '98, Michael '95, Anne Parris '04) Katarina and Charles Druesedow Mary Beth Majoros and Kirk Schmink Lori and Paul Postak Nicole and Andrew Walton

\$1,000-\$2,499

Richard Skove

Ankur and Robert Stein

Stefanie^{*} and Gary Sugar

Anning & Doris Smith Family Foundation (in honor or Claire Zehnith '14 and Audrev Zehnith '17) Beth Bluestone '95 and Richard Rund Natalie Bluestone[^] Kathleen Burke and William Gaskill Rita and Peter Carfagna Julie Comber-Martin* and Pete Martin Genevieve and Walter DeSocio Rosie Ford* Kathie* and Neil Freer **GBX Group LLC** Lauren and Zachary Guren Julie* and Chris Haffke Rebecca[^] and David Holland Erin Holston Singh and Sanjay Singh Rubina and Muhammad Hussain Teresa and Jeff Karlovec Neeta and Raieed Kishore Elizabeth and Keven Larkin[^] Yuliva and Eric Litvak Toddy and James McMonagle John Newman[^] '86 Sue and Lauren Pacini Bette* and John Posch Norma and Samuel Savin Kelly* and Alessandro Serra

Ethel Smith-Bowen and Scott Bowen

Sydnia[^] and Haig Tcheurekdjian Kaori and Shinya Unai

GRANITE:

\$500-\$999 Amanda and Chris Bellows Cara Berg Kathleen Berkner and Kurt Runge Vanessa Coterel and Michael Deemer Kristin Exline Corinna and Yngve Falck-Ytter Mala and Sanjay Garg Debbie and Peter Guren Nancy and Peter Hildebrand Shelley and William Krug Amy Laughlin and John Wiedemer Debra* and Dave Mitchell Sonal^{*} and Christian Moratschek Hollis and Cesar Munoz Lisa and Derek Navracruz Paul Osenar '84 Corrin and Michael[^] Sebold Melissa Skilken-Hill[^] and Brian Hill

Cynthia and Christopher Trotta

Yuhua You and Yijin Hu

Andrea and Michael Zadd

GREEN: \$250-\$499

Kristie Beck and Todd Burger Carla Boddy '84 and Bryan Moore Alyson and Michael Carfagna '95 Maria DeRyke The Engstrom Family (Seth^) Joshua Furey '19 Rita and Ted Grabowski Gretchen and Jason Haremza Stephanie Madewell and Sean O'Hagan Paloma Magistrati and Paolo Gelain Leslie Marcuse and Lisa Savin '95 Catherine and Brian McAllester Amy and Chris Pinkerton Marsha Pinson Stephanie and David Reznick Nancy and Jim Schade Barbara and John Schubert Joanne Siegel and Walter Thiem Christine and James Wamsley Stacey Weiher* Pippa Winder and Steve Killpack Katie and Chris Wozniak

BLUE: \$100-\$249

Anonymous (2) Caral and James Aguilar Megan Alban* Thomas Anderson The Arafah Family Lynn* and David Baird Priva and Jonathan Barra Kate Bennett*

Mara Beveridge and Luke Laffin

Patty Briggs*

Cindy and Edward Brzuski Tina and Lauren Caldwell Marilyn and Jerome Cargile Darlene and James Cassidy

Colleen Coakley

Patty* and Christopher DelaCruz

Lisa DiNovo*

Mary Kay Fink and Nicholas Underhill '77

Jeanne and Robert Fleischhacker

Hannah and Ryan Francis Christine Francisco*

Beth and Aaron* Gray

Susan Gray Amy Guy

Mary Ann Haberman

Yolanda and Garnett Hamilton Sharon Herene and J. Shorey

Mahwish Irfan and Ehsan Balagamwala

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Tyler Katz '90 and Joshua* Chefitz

Rosemary and John Kelly Melanie[^] and Craig Knowles Hallie and Eric Kogelschatz

Michelle and Alexander Kolbe Mary and Dave* Kosky

Juliet Kostritsky and Brad Gellert

Jing Lauengco Joanne and Jim Lint Erin Mandalfino*

Mary Kay and John Marcuse Barbara and Richard Margolius Jennifer and Dale Markworth

Linda McDonald

Tia Melton

Julie and Andre Mileti

Maureen Moir

Gladys and Kofi Moore Patricia and J. Broock Munro Cynthia and Brian Murphy Kelly* and Sean O'Melia
Julie Peak and Sam Haywood

Mehreen Pervez*

Penni and Stephen Powell

Marianne Prébet and Jagan Pillai Meredith* '97 and Scott Prince

Danielle Reavis*

Michelle Rose and Daniel Farmer

Mary T. Sampson Maxwell Schubert '13

Vel Scott

Karen and Cary Seidman Danielle and Michael Skoczen Margot and Joel Slamkowski

Liesl Stalzer-Callahan* and John Callahan

The Strauss Family (Philip '80)

Jeff Teeter*

Heather and Charles Thiltgen Angela Ting and Byron Lee Daniel van Heeckeren '18 Nicole and Andrew Vassil Janet and Spencer Wells

Anna Winfield

Susan and Randy Wischhusen Hadley Wood and Jeff Hardacre

ORANGE: Up to \$99

Anonymous (2)
Melanie Alban
Jennifer Armstong
Joanne and Michael Bailis
Penny and Brian Benchek
Nina and Bradley Berr
Bolin Niu and Howard Chen
Diane and James Chesko
Margan and Adam Davis

Mark Deeter*
Hannah Downer*
Patricia Doyle

Kathleen and John Fant Christian Freer '09 Emma Freer '08 Mia Freer '13 Alby Glassmeyer* Alissa and Jacob Glenn Barb and Ross Gray Katie* and John Hannon Janyce Hyatt

Susannah Hyatt* and Barry Mita Hildur Jonsson and Brian Schriefer

Lauren* and Richard Kekic

Kaitlynn Kuivinen* Grace LaPrade* Zachary Litwinowicz* Alyssa Lizzini*

Joanne McKell and Benjamin Seligman

Elizabeth Mease Maryanna Mileski* Betsy Moss* Colleen and John Munro

Kelly and Peter Nagusky

Pinar Odabasi Tasci and Murat Tasci Jane Peterson and Philip Star Emily and Christian Poppert Susan Radbourne and Mary Brigid

Gayle and Harold Rager Lynda and Paul Rippner

Salesforce Holly Scott

Barbara and Terry Shockey

Constance Skingel

Susan and Thomas Skove Lily Skove Hellmuth '96 and

Theodore Hellmuth Anne and Allen Springer Matthew J. Stefan '16 Matthew Strauss '84 Brooke Strong Grace Teeter* '08

Molly Toussant and Josh McLaughlin

Sarah and Jon Tuggey David Waski*

Kate Wright*

Thank You to the Class of 2023!

Ruffing would like to thank the families of our Class of 2023 who presented the Middle School with a generous gift of \$4,000 at Ruffing's 8th Year Graduation ceremony. The gift will be used to transform the Middle School's outdoor space from a simple patio to an "outdoor home" where students and faculty can both gather and work. Middle School students have been involved in the planning and will be integral in the execution of beautifying the outdoor space and making it a more comfortable environment in which to work and enjoy the outdoors. Thank you to the following generous donors who made this idea a reality:

Rima and Rami Akras Sarah and Omarr Aleem Carrie Gladstone and David Edelman Vanessa Hildebrand and Lee Hoffer Rubina and Muhammad Hussain Eva Rajki Johnson '88 and Geoffrey Johnson Joanne McKell and Ben Seligman Sarah and Edward Peck Amy and Chris Pinkerton Brooke and Hugh Slater '92 Pauline Terebuh and Jeffrey Ustin Melha and Jason Woods Elizabeth Zabell

2022–2023 The Ruffing Fund By the Numbers

\$116,043

DOLLARS RAISED for The Ruffing Fund

324

NUMBER OF GIFTS to The Ruffing Fund

210

NUMBER OF DONORS to The Ruffing Fund

\$553

AVERAGE DONATION TO THE RUFFING FUND (ranging from \$5 - \$10,000)

324

NUMBER OF STUDENTS supported by The Ruffing Fund

50

GIFTS TO THE RUFFING FUND made on our Day of Giving (totaling over \$17,000)



What is The Ruffing Fund?

The Ruffing Fund is an annual giving campaign that enables the Ruffing community—including current and former families, faculty and staff, alumni, grandparents, board of trustees, and friends—to demonstrate its support for our school. The Ruffing Fund picks up where tuition leaves off, providing operational flexibility to the school. Gifts to The Ruffing Fund enhance the people, programs, and activities of our Ruffing community.

The Ruffing Fund is what helps us uphold The Ruffing World of Difference and makes us stand out from the rest. It is the breadth of our green and sustainability initiatives, a humanities curriculum with a foundation in peace education, and the commitment of service and social responsibility our students learn from their earliest years. The Ruffing World of Difference inspires the changemakers, the educators, the creators, and the global citizens of the next generation.

Whereas \$116,043 was raised for The Ruffing Fund, another \$5,005 was raised in restricted giving and designated to The Gordon L. Maas Enlightened Generalist Fund, Montessori Model United Nations, and Middle School Building Improvements, while another \$12,207 was generated from established endowed funds. All funds raised supported critical areas like tuition assistance, Family Association activities, field trips, and professional development opportunities for teachers.



WHY GIVE TO THE RUFFING FUND?

Your gift to The Ruffing Fund demonstrates your belief in The Ruffing World of Difference and the profound impact it has on people, programs, and activities. Every level of our school, from the Toddler Community to the Middle School, benefits from gifts made to The Ruffing Fund.

PEOPLE

100% of students, faculty, and staff benefit from The Ruffing Fund through tuition assistance, continued Montessori training, and guest educators.

PROGRAMS

Ruffing's award-winning green and sustainability initiatives, along with other programs like peace education and community outreach, are enhanced by The Ruffing Fund donations.

ACTIVITIES

The Ruffing Fund offsets the cost of field trips, community service opportunities, and school events.

Gifts to The Ruffing Fund are unrestricted for operational needs. A total of \$116,043 was raised through the annual fund and was used as follows:

30%

faculty professional development

30% tuition assistance

18% transportation for field trips

12%

family association/school events

10%

enhancements to the OLE



THE RUFFING WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

SOCIAL





LEADERSHIP IN





Read on for a glimpse into how these six tenets are brought to life at Ruffing.



Each year, the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) hosts an annual conference for Montessorians to gather, present, and discuss topics related to Montessori education. At the 2023 conference held in Baltimore, Maryland, educators and fellow Montessorians gathered to discuss ideas, pedagogy, and classroom experiences. The theme of the conference focused on peace, an integral part of Montessori education.

As an AMI trained individual, I was able to attend a two-day long course at the conference which focused on music in the primary classroom. It is the goal with the young children I work with at Ruffing to use music as a conduit to conduct peace throughout their lives. Whether it is singing while working, sharing a song together, or listening to the tones of the bells, music is always flowing. We gather to sing in the classroom "body, mind, and spirit" and the students work together in these special, shared moments. The conference gave me time to reflect on what it is that I do in the classroom each day and gave me new tools to try with the children. I came back excited to engage and share with the students (and my colleagues at Ruffing) all of the lessons, songs, ideas, and materials I acquired at the conference.

Contributions to this piece were made by Ruffing Children's House Assistant and Children's House Level Leader Chrissy Francisco.

The importance of social responsibility is woven into the fabric of the work of our faculty and students. Students engage with teachers and peers to learn about the significance of ethics and what is right, with an emphasis on how anyone can impact change and make a difference when thoughtful ideas are put into action.

Microeconomy is the Middle School entrepreneurial business program at Ruffing that educates students about financial independence and provides opportunities for them to understand through experience the importance of earning money, saving and investing money, and helping others by supporting causes that are important to them. Each year before winter break, 8th Year students sell to Ruffing community members a variety of products, many of which they have helped design or construct themselves. They also host a Dodgeball event that has a pay-to-play component, and the funds raised during this beloved annual faculty and student tournament are donated to a local cause of significance to the students.

The Middle School students research local groups and communities and come together to nominate the causes that are nearest and dearest to them. The students vote on where their hard-earned dollars will go and who will benefit that year from their philanthropic efforts. Last year, the students came together to support Healing

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Art Missions, a non-profit that focuses efforts in rural Haitian communities, providing healthcare services in the southern peninsula, supporting a school, and operating a clean water and basic healthcare program in a region outside Port-au-Prince.

Contributions to this piece were made by Ruffing Middle School Director Kelly O'Melia.



PEACE EDUCATION

Peace is embedded in the lessons we share with the students of all ages at Ruffing. Books on the topic of peace and the importance of peaceful behaviors can be found throughout the school and are accessible to the students at all times to remind them of the importance of peaceful mindsets and actions.

The guides at Ruffing have an incredibly important job as teachers of the next generation. They consistently remind students, "You have the power to make change," and stress the importance of giving people space to be themselves with an emphasis on grace and courtesy as important tenets of Montessori education. Teachers talk with the students about the challenges they encounter in daily interactions with peers or within relationships, and provide students with ideas for solutions, helping them learn how to come to successful resolutions on their own.

Every September, Ruffing faculty, staff, and students gather on the International Day of Peace to light the school's peace candle and sing "Light a Candle for Peace" as the Head of School shares inspirational reminders of the importance of being kind and compassionate with others. We also highlight the importance of peace with a Middle School activity in which the 7th and 8th Year students are asked "What does peace mean to you?" and based on their answers, they create artwork for their own Peace cards which are sold as part of the school's Microeconomy program that helps to benefit local organizations in need. Every other year, Ruffing Middle School students visit the United States Institute of Peace on the Mall in Washington, D.C.

Contributions to this piece were made by Ruffing Art Specialist and Middle School Humanities Guide Kate Bennett.

The Outdoor Learning Environment (OLE) provides Ruffing students a beautiful space to work, play, and explore nature. It offers outdoor classroom space and includes a school playground with natural wooden play equipment and open, grassy areas. The OLE has designated spaces for Gaga Ball, Four Square, Tetherball, and basketball that create a variety of opportunities for physical activity. Trees, bushes, rain barrels, buckets, and metal bowls invite imaginative play. Garden beds teach awareness of our natural world and invite insects and animals to be part of the environment.

The highlight of the OLE in 2022-2023 was taking steps to further develop the space which had been established at the school in 2020. The Gaga Ball pit was constructed, new raised beds were installed, native plants were planted to attract pollinators, and new paths were created. Each of these projects brought new life to the space and allow for exploration and learning moments among the children.

Ruffing students of all ages find joy in the OLE. Whether they play in the Gaga Ball pit, run around the sidewalk loop, or explore gardening, everyone is able to engage and learn at their own pace in Ruffing's Outdoor Learning Environment.

Contributions to this piece were made by Ruffing Lower Elementary Assistant and Green Committee Chair Betsy Moss.



GREEN INITIATIVES & SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS



GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN) is a program that gives students the opportunities to make global connections and consider the vast array of issues that our world faces each day. As a simulation of the processes of the United Nations, the program is designed to immerse students in fact-based negotiations in order to come to a consensus around solutions to global issues. The program supports and builds upon the Upper Elementary and Middle School Peace curriculum. The core mission of the UN is securing a peaceful future for

all citizens of the world, including student participants, which lies at the heart of all that is accomplished with the MMUN program. Students immerse themselves in their represented nation to research and tackle global issues that directly undermine peace and human rights or jeopardize those concepts in the future.

The program fosters independence and organization skills in the students who are required to complete work outside of school with a partner. They research real-world topics on a global scale and collaborate with peers to work toward consensus, thinking critically, and creating thoughtful solutions. The notable difference between MMUN and MUN is that there are no prizes or awards given to the students of MMUN.

Last year, four students were elected by their peers to speak on behalf of the committee on the final morning of the conference. They spoke inside the General Assembly of the United Nations at the same podium that heads of state from all over the world have been speaking from since the UN's existence.

Contributions to this piece were made by Ruffing Upper Elementary Lead Guide Lynn Baird and Ruffing Upper Elementary Assistant Max Pinson.

Of all the core values which guide Ruffing Montessori School, few were as personally impactful as community and independence. While there are more examples of these values than are numerable in such a short piece, one of the most poignant and memorable initiatives that cultivated within me a great deal of independence and sense of community was the student-initiated "Goings Out."

For context, a Going Out is a student-planned and direct spin on the conventional "field trip." Students are solely responsible for generating ideas, communicating with community partners, and arranging transportation to local sites related to a project, passion, or interest that will be greatly served by an experience outside the bounds of Ruffing's campus. While I both arranged and participated in many Goings Out during my time at Ruffing, I distinctly remember one such Going Out to EDWINS Restaurant in Shaker Square. EDWINS, founded by Brandon Chrostowski, provides culinary training opportunities and employment for formerly incarcerated individuals.

Along with several of my colleagues during our 6th Year, we planned a Going Out to visit EDWINS and learn more about their mission, work, and community impact. While successful as a stand alone event, the trip parlayed into much more than just a single visit. Based on our positive experience with Brandon Chrostowski and his Director of Culinary Education Gerry Grim, we organized a school supply drive for the organization. After collecting a great deal of academic materials, we again visited EDWINS to deliver the supplies.



INDEPENDENCE

The genuine delight on the faces of the formerly incarcerated individuals studying at EDWINS during the time of our dropoff is something that I know those of us who delivered the school supplies will never forget.

Reflecting on the experience, and my time at Ruffing more generally, it is easy to pinpoint the most meaningful and transformative moments. Of course, our partnership with EDWINS is among those important moments, but the entire process of developing a Going Out built a level of confidence and independence that stays with me to this day. The self-guided approach to learning and perpetual support of Ruffing's educators built incredible independence and cultivated within each of us the courage to act within our community and the greater community. I attribute most, if not all, of my personal passion for learning, desire to positively impact the community, and independence to the experiences that I had during my time at Ruffing Montessori School.

Contributions to this piece were made by Ruffing Alumnus Matthew Stefan. Class of 2016.

Ruffing's Class of 2023 Matriculated

to the Following Schools:

Beaumont School
Gilmour Academy
Hawken School
Laurel School
St. Ignatius High School
Shaker Heights High School
University School



"The children of today will make all the discoveries of tomorrow. All the discoveries of humankind will be known to them and they will improve what has been done and make fresh discoveries. They must make all the improvements in houses, cities, communication, methods of production, etc. that are to be made. The future generation must not only know how to do what we can teach them, they must be able to go a step further."

- Maria Montessori







3380 Fairmount Boulevard Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118







ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

Above and Beyond

