B.1 Applicant Organization

HISTORY

As a certified elementary teacher, Jennifer Papp taught elementary and gifted education in district schools. She left her career in education to work in the corporate world for three years. Jennifer missed working with children and so she turned her educational expertise to the business of offering unique birthday parties. She created theme parties with games and activities that hid learning within the fun. Parents loved it as much as the children did.

In 2004 Jennifer purchased a residential property on Gilbert Road, an arterial street, located in a county "island" within the Town of Gilbert. Over the course of 18 months, Jennifer persevered through the process of having the property rezoned commercial. In 2006 she opened Jennifer's Party Pad and Side Door Supplies. Parents as well as children loved her approach to learning and it became evident that a preschool would thrive. Thus, Greenhouse Montessori Preschool and Toddler Center opened in 2007.

Although the preschool was rapidly becoming a financial success, Mrs. Papp, as an experienced educator was still not satisfied. She wanted a developmentally appropriate approach to both academic achievement and to progressively self-directed responsibility. She found what she was looking for in Montessori, a method of teaching that touched her heart as well as appealed to her professional insights. By 2008 she had begun her certification as a 3-6 (year olds) Montessori teacher, redesigned the preschool, and opened Greenhouse Montessori Preschool with one class for children ages 3-6. With enrollment growing, a toddler classroom was added for children 15 months to 2.5 years. Parents soon began to ask about the possibility a Greenhouse Montessori charter school through the 3rd grade. Surprisingly, there is currently no private or charter Montessori elementary school in the Town of Gilbert.

Preparing to offer the extended education that parents have asked for, Jennifer Papp established the non-profit corporation, Greenhouse Montessori School, Inc. She attended seminars, such as Charter 101 put on by the Arizona Charter Schools Association. She began extending her professional network to include experienced experts in the charter school industry. She redesigned and oversaw the construction and refurbishing of the present preschool facility to make room for a multi age Montessori class for ages 6-9 (grades 1-3).

Developing a new corporation and expanding to add a charter school is a heavy responsibility, but Jennifer Papp has the character and experience to accomplish this. She personally accomplished the rezoning of the property so she has knowledge about the local governmental agencies. She was the general contractor for all of the outdoor improvements and planned all of the indoor improvements that brought the property up to code. This gave her experience in contract management. She has teaching experience in the public school system as well as extensive Montessori training. She has experience as a local small business owner and is extremely capable in navigating the challenges of running a growing, successful small business. Lastly, she has a group of devoted parents who volunteer frequently and feel very strongly about both the Montessori Method of education and Jennifer's execution of that philosophy. Jennifer is

aware of the responsibilities she is taking on and has demonstrated the character and tenacity to follow through with meeting every challenge that comes up.

The other two founding Corporate Board Directors, Robin Schroeder and Leslie Coca-Udave both bring further business experience to GMS. Both Leslie and Robin are highly educated, experienced and have children. Each of them recognizes the value of a solid Montessori education and believes that this opportunity should be available to all families in the east valley, not just to those who can afford private schooling. Leslie Coca-Udave's son graduated from Greenhouse Montessori Preschool in 2010 and Robin Schroeder's two children currently attend Greenhouse Montessori Preschool.

PROCESS FOR APPOINTMENTS/ASSIGNMENTS/ELECTIONS OF PRINCIPALS

The non-profit corporation will be operated by a Board of Directors lead by its Board President. It will have a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 9 Directors and will self select its membership by a simple majority vote. The founding Board is created by Jennifer Papp. Board Members will serve two year terms and may serve multiple terms. The Board will seek members based on their dedication to the charter, the school's mission, and on the skills/knowledge they can bring to the Board. This nonprofit Corporate Board of Directors will hire a School Director. At the inception of this charter, this Executive Director / School Director will be Jennifer Papp, but this organizational structure sets the stage for effective sustainability and succession should anything happen to prevent Mrs. Papp from fulfilling her duties. The Corporate Board will appoint a School Board president who will nominate another member, these two members will nominate a third member and so on. The School Board will establish the school's policies and procedures as described later in this section.

CURRENT STATUS OF LICENSES OR PERMITS

Mrs. Papp has established a non-profit corporation, Greenhouse Montessori School, which will hold the charter contract. Its EIN is 90-0607023. An application for the charter school's 501-c-3 is pending.

In 2004, Mrs. Papp incorporated an LLC called Jennifer's Party Pad and Side Door Supplies in order to open the party business and later to operate the private preschool. She purchased a facility that houses these two businesses. (The preschool will continue to operate in one of the two buildings on the property and the other building will become the home of the charter school.) The property has already passed the Fire Marshal's inspection and has a Certificate of Occupancy.

Currently, Mrs. Papp is certified by the state of Arizona as an elementary teacher. She is certified for 3-6 year olds and trained for 6-9 year olds as a Montessori teacher. She is "highly qualified" by NCLB standards.

All licenses and certificates remain in good standing.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXISTING AND PROPOSED SCHOOL

The existing school, Greenhouse Montessori Preschool and Toddler Center, was recognized as one of the top five Gilbert private schools by Go Gilbert Magazine in March 2010. The preschool classroom has an extensive and diverse array of Montessori materials that are meticulously prepared to create the standard Montessori 'prepared environment' so crucial to the Montessori method as a whole. The new classroom will be supplied with similar traditional Montessori materials and some materials will be used by both the primary and elementary charter classrooms.

An adjacent covered patio houses a traditional Montessori outdoor environment classroom for children in both the preschool and toddler classrooms. Outside, there are numerous flower beds and five raised vegetable garden beds, a seasonal sunflower house, a fountain and three sitting areas for children to work and play. The property also has a large traditional playground and fenced grass area. The proposed school will be housed in an existing, adjacent building to the preschool and toddler center building and all of the outdoor facilities described above will be available to all children on campus.

The charter elementary can almost be viewed as a natural extension of the existing private preschool and toddler room. A crucial part of the Montessori philosophy is the grouping of mixed-age children in one classroom. In essence, the older children act as the leaders. As children advance, they are able to internalize concepts by both being taught and teaching which aides development of self-esteem. The toddler room feeds the primary room (ages 3-6), which feeds the charter elementary school (ages 6-9) classroom with experienced children that are familiar and comfortable with the Montessori environment.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The applying organization has a responsibility, first and foremost, to provide our students the best possible educational experience. Secondly, we have a responsibility to the parents of our students to create an environment that is safe, well-rounded and academically challenging for their children. We also have a responsibility to our local community to provide choice in education. Finally, we have a responsibility to both the national and international Montessori community to uphold the values and teachings of Maria Montessori.

Responsibilities of the Corporate Board of Directors:

- Reviews School Board minutes at least annually
- Reviews school financial documents at least annually
- Reviews performance of all staff at least annually
- Set staff salaries
- Recommend staff professional development
- Appoints School Board president
- Appoints School Board Members
- Oversees accounting and legal contracted services
- Recruit fellow Corporate Board directors
- **Delegate authority on daily operations to the School Board**

Responsibilities of the School Board:

- Upholds Arizona Open Meeting Law
- Evaluates School Director, faculty and staff for Corporate Board review
- School Board president leads members in a brief discussion of 1-2 education related articles per month, developing a well-educated Board

Duties Delegated to the School Board:

- Form advisory committees
  - Financial Committee – Develops sources for school funding (state ADM, federal grants and title programs, capital and any other charter support) and develops school budget
  - Volunteer committee – Manages volunteer activities
  - Nomination committee – Nominates future school board members & makes nominations for school board offices
  - Fundraising Committee –Develops fundraising activities
- Reviews the school budget
- Sets all school policies, including, but not limited to policies related to discipline, dress code, donations, hiring, registration fees, attendance, parent participation, etc.
- Authors the School Handbook
- Set school calendar
- Nominates future School Board Members (Corporate Board Appoints new Members)

Responsibilities of the School Director:

- Establishes school culture
- Ensures curriculum meets standards
- Approves assessment plan
- Gives final approval on implementation of Montessori curriculum
- Works with faculty to ensure PMP is followed
- Oversees Special Education contracted services
- Leads faculty and staff meetings