

SVCMS 2021-2022 Annual Campaign FAQs

What does the Annual Campaign fund?

Traditionally, donations to the Annual Fund are earmarked towards covering the cost of employing high-quality, credentialed Guides, or second adults, in our classrooms. This year, however, the pressures of operating a thriving Montessori charter school under pandemic conditions have presented a unique slate of challenges. Tuition revenue from enrollment in our Children's House program is down by 60%. Despite this, we are committed to keeping our Children's House teams fully employed to both serve the children enrolled in our school now and to maintain the continuity of staff once the pandemic has passed. Likewise, SVCMS has encountered increased operating costs from adapting our normally free-flowing, boisterous classrooms into facilities that both students and Guides can safely occupy during in-person learning, and for learning devices, such as iPads and Chromebooks, when remote learning is necessary.

What are the goals this year and how is the financial goal determined?

The annual financial goal is set based on a variety of factors including student headcount and school budget projections. Our goals for 2021-2022 are:

1. To raise \$95,000
2. To have 100% family participation in the Annual Fund campaign.
3. To reach these goals by **May 15, 2022**

How can we get this year's campaign over with quickly?

The best way is for families to make their donations and pledges *early*. In past years, commitments for contributions have started strong but then slowed to a trickle over the remainder of the school year, and that's not much fun for anyone involved. If you can donate now or set up an automatic monthly donation through your bank's online bill pay, [Colorado Gives](#), or even pledge an amount that you'll promise to pay before the end of the school year, that will go a long way toward reducing the shared discomfort of perpetual fundraising.

Why does SVCMS still need to raise so much money after 10 years in operation?

All Colorado public schools are drastically underfunded. Colorado ranks 41st in the nation in per-pupil spending adjusted for regional cost differences, annually spending \$2,703 less per student than the national average (click [here to see more stats](#)). Most public schools do some level of fundraising to make up for this gap in funding.

As a charter school, SVCMS is at a further disadvantage compared to traditional district schools because ***we must fund our facilities and capital improvements from our regular operating budget*** and have not historically been included in bond measures for capital improvement and construction costs.

The bottom line: funding the high-quality staff and instruction, beautifully prepared environments, and extraordinary programs we have all come to expect from SVCMS

requires financial resources over and above what we currently receive through public funding. That's why, every year, the Board of Directors needs all families to make a charitable financial contribution to the school we are all building together.

Why do you ask for 100% participation from SVCMS families?

Participation from SVCMS families shows community support and dedication to our collective efforts to build a high-quality, authentic Montessori School. It can also be critical when we approach certain foundations and corporations with requests for grant funding. Even a small donation from every family allows us to show broad community support. Every gift, in any amount, is vitally important to our school.

Is this tax deductible?

Yes! SVCMS is a 501(c) 3 organization. All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Consult your tax advisor for more details.

How much should our family give? What if I can't afford \$1,000 per child?

We ask families to give \$1,000 for each child they have enrolled at SVCMS, and we rely heavily on the many donations that approach this level. However, we recognize that SVCMS is a socio-economically diverse community and we welcome gifts of all sizes. We hope that you will give as much as is appropriate for your family.

I am currently paying preschool tuition. Should I still donate to the Annual Fund?

Yes! The financial goals for the school's campaign are set based on total student headcount, including preschool students. Further, money raised by the Annual Fund is specifically allocated to funding a portion of the total required in salaries and benefits to employ all SVCMS Guides. Children's House families that give to the Annual Fund are ensuring that SVCMS can continue to hire high-quality, credentialed Guides for their children's classrooms.

I participated in other SVCMS fund raisers and spent a lot of money at the Silent Auction, don't those donations count as my family's contribution to the Annual Fund?

First, thank you for participating in these other fundraisers! The money raised by those efforts goes directly into the SVCMS general fund. The Annual Fund is a separate and specific campaign that provides money to hire high-quality Guides for each classroom. If this line item falls short, it may affect the ability of the school to hire such wonderful Guides.

Families pay activity fees to the school every year. Don't those fees cover any shortfalls?

All public schools charge activity fees, which can only be allocated to school-related programs and services, and not teacher salaries. The activity fees charged by SVCMS help to cover the many consumable products in the classroom, which are of higher quality than what is found in typical schools and reflect the beauty and order of the Montessori classroom. The fees provide a small fund for teachers to select the types of

supplies they need for their classrooms and allow SVCMS to pay for transportation on school related field trips.

Cash is a little tight for my family right now. Can I pledge to give a donation later instead of giving right now?

Yes! (...and...) We welcome donation pledges, which are commitments to give a specific amount by a specific time later in the school year. However, please understand that SVCMS is counting on you to fulfill any pledge you make and that unpaid pledges cause painful budget shortfalls.

Can other people give to the campaign?

Yes! We welcome donations from grandparents, family friends, neighbors, and other community members as well. A thriving public Montessori school is an asset to the SVVSD and public support is always welcome. If you know someone you think would be willing to give, please ask or let us know so we can ask!

How do I give?

You can choose to give your entire tax-deductible contribution in a single lump sum (by personal check, RevTrak, or Colorado Gives—see below) or set up a monthly payment plan (manual or using your bank's online bill pay function). Please see the attached donation form for more information.

Can I pay by Credit card?

Yes, both RevTrak and Colorado Gives allow credit cards.

What is RevTrak and how do I use it?

For families wishing to pay by credit or debit card, RevTrak is a secure, third-party online payment system that SVCMS families can use to pay a variety of school fees and make Annual Fund donations. Please note that RevTrak adds a 3.61% service fee to all transactions, which SVCMS is unable to absorb. Click here to [donate via RevTrak](#).

What is Colorado Gives and how do I participate?

ColoradoGives.org is a secure website run by the Community First Foundation to encourage charitable giving in Colorado by providing comprehensive, objective, and up-to-date information about Colorado nonprofits. ColoradoGives.org and its signature giving day—Colorado Gives Day—are intended to make giving simple through a convenient electronic platform. On the [Colorado Gives page for SVCMS](#), donors are able to make one-time or recurring donations with a credit card to SVCMS. A 2% transaction fee is deducted from all donations made through Colorado Gives. Click here to [donate via Colorado Gives](#).

How can I set up automatic online monthly bill pay?

This easy and convenient option is something you set up through your bank's online banking system. It's usually pretty simple to do; to learn how, visit your bank's online

banking page and look for “online bill pay,” or contact your bank directly to set up a monthly payment system.

Recurring payments can also be setup from a credit card on the Colorado Gives platform. To make a recurring donation through Colorado Gives, [click here](#). After entering a donation amount, select the recurring button under Donation Frequency.