

Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018

Hello my name is Julia Pan and I am from Ward 20.

I am a single parent of 2 of children who are 5 and 12 years old.

I am a parent leader with Middle Childhood Matters Coalition Toronto.

We are an active group of 13 parent leaders working together with more than 25 service providers to improve access to programs for children 6-12 in Toronto.

We work together to make Toronto a city where all children 6-12 years old and their families have equitable opportunities and resources to thrive.

Today I am writing to you to ask you – members of City Council - to make budget decisions that support children 6-12 and their families in Toronto.

It is no secret that ages 6-12 is a foundational period for child development and wellbeing. Only if all low income, newcomer and racialized children 6-12 years in Toronto have equitable, affordable and high quality Out of School Time Programs, then Toronto children will achieve better developmental milestone, thrive and maintain their wellbeing while their parents go to work and have peace of mind that their children are taken care of from 7:00 to 9:00 am and from 3:00– 6:00 pm.

My children attend art, swimming, golf and cooking programs and I am certain without which I couldn't be as active as I am now.

I couldn't attend meetings with MCMCT and other parent active groups. I couldn't gain and transfer new skills and knowledge to other parents on many matters that are of importance including importance of middle childhood ages and stages and out of school time programs. I couldn't work two shifts and be self-reliant.

Out of school programs give my children the chance to make friends, to learn new skills, and to have new experiences. Without out of school programs, my kids would have been physically inactive, with less social and emotional skills, might develop risky behavior and poor school performance!

Without Out of school programs, as a parent, I would have been without any source of income and probably on social welfare – not being able to work and take care of my children at the same time.

For us low income and single parents, it is crucial to feel that our City Council members support us through the decisions/votes they make on our behalf.

- We want to see additional affordable, accessible and appropriate recreational programs for our children 6-12 years old in Toronto in 2018.
- We want more spaces, subsidies and money attached to those programs.
- We want to continue seeing low income and new comer families benefit from programs covered by Welcome Policy.
- We want to see no child in poverty in Toronto.
- No child should be going to school hungry in Toronto because when children are hungry they struggle to concentrate, and that can affect their school performance and experiences.
- Student Nutrition Program should be permanently funded at schools.

The 2018 budget is an opportunity for you, members of City Council, to deliver on your promises to support children and their families and allow Toronto to be a fair and prosperous city for all.

*Sincerely,*



*Julia Pan*

*Parent Leader "Parents Matter Project"*

*Middle Childhood Matters Coalition Toronto.*