

Annual Report

2025/26



WASHINGTON
Waldorf School

2025/26

Faculty Chair/Head of School

Margery Bank

Department Chairs

Paige Black

Early Childhood

Dawn Tanner

Lower School

Taisto Saloma

Upper School

Kate Knuth

College Chair

Janet Dunwoody

Faculty Administrator

Design

Catalone Design Co.

Photography

Alia Goodyear

Charlie Fox

Sophia Harding

Bonnie McClelland

Eli Turner

OUR MISSION

The Washington Waldorf School cultivates each student's capacity to think clearly, feel compassionately, and act purposefully in the world. We are committed to the education movement inspired by the pioneering work of Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner and advanced by Waldorf teachers worldwide.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The Washington Waldorf School is committed to educating children in a welcoming school community that reflects the rich diversity of the greater Washington metropolitan area. WWS is an inclusive community of students, families, faculty, and staff that strives to maintain diversity of race, color, ethnic background, religion, economic status, gender, age, and sexual orientation. We educate our students to respect the dignity of all people.

TRUSTEES COUNCIL

Anne Wotring, Vice Chair

Clay Lowery

Eben Kaplan

Haneef Omar

Jesse Travis, Secretary

Kate Knuth

Kate Mueller, Chair

Margery Bank

Nick Hampton

Taisto Saloma

COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

Barbara Buchman

Bonnie McClelland

Jane Christenson

Janet Dunwoody

Judith Graff

Kate Knuth

Lynn Wenning-Adelmann

Margery Bank

Paige Black

Taisto Saloma

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained on these pages is accurate and complete. If you were a contributor to the Washington Waldorf School in 2024-2025, but find that your name has been omitted, misspelled, or listed under an incorrect category, please contact the Development Office at 301.229.6107 so that we may correct our mistake. All gifts listed in this section are those received between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025.

Washington Waldorf School is a non-profit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions may be deducted as stated in Section 170 of IRS Code. The School's federal tax identification number is 23-7003486.

To maintain our 501(c)(3) status, WWS files an annual report, updating the IRS on its current activities, income and financial status. We take this opportunity to share information with our supporters about the past year's achievements and to recognize our generous donors.

Membership AWSNA, WECAN, AIMS, AISGW, PCW



Dear Community,

What a joyful thing it is to be in a school whose mission is to cultivate each student's capacity to think clearly, feel compassionately, and act purposefully in the world. When I walk into our school building, I see this mission reflected constantly in our students, their work, and the spaces our incredible faculty create to allow the true experience of childhood to flourish.

These reminders are an ever-present part of my day. The morning circle in the Early Childhood classes creates a loving embrace for our youngest students. In the cluster of Lower School students gathered in the lobby with their handwork at the start of the day, I see both the desire to create something tangible and the satisfaction and confidence that come from mastering new skills. And as we've adopted a new format in the Upper School this year, I've frequently been the recipient of insightful student feedback. Their constructive observations reflect not only a desire to improve the environment around them, but also a conviction that they can. This is exactly the kind of engagement that we are striving for.

Our school environment offers a stark contrast to many of the societal challenges beyond our walls—and also offers an antidote to them. At a time when digital interactions increasingly supplant genuine human connection and artificial intelligence seems poised to reshape so much of how we live, I strongly believe that an educational approach grounded in the cultivation of our students' humanity is the best preparation for whatever the future may hold.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margery Bank'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Margery Bank
Faculty Chair/Head of School



Supporting the WWS Mission

For the past several years, the work of the Trustees Council has been guided by Washington Waldorf School's strategic plan and its four pillars: academic development & excellence; diversity, equity, inclusion & belonging; organizational & community engagement; and financial stability. The 2025–2026 school year marked the midpoint of this five-year effort. While much of the work remains ongoing, the school has made meaningful progress toward these goals.

In addition to the strategic plan, the Trustees Council drew guidance this year from two reaccreditation reviews completed last year through AWSNA (the national Waldorf oversight body) and AIMS (the Maryland oversight body). Both reviews affirmed the school's many strengths and also identified opportunities to improve governance and operational processes. Some of these improvements have already been implemented, with others under review.

Supporting the strength and vitality of the academic program remained a central priority for the Trustees Council this year. The school completed its first full year under the new Upper School model, in which seventh- and eighth-grade students are more fully integrated into Upper School classes and activities, and ninth- to twelfth-grade students are offered a broader range of elective opportunities alongside their core academic studies. Our senior class remained the standard-bearers in the new Upper School model, in the classroom, on the stage, and in the community. Yet it was their heartfelt and eloquent commencement remarks—addressed to one another—that perhaps most vividly reflected the outcomes of this human-centered educational approach. The Trustees Council congratulates the senior class and wishes its members success and fulfillment as they embark on their chosen paths.

Throughout the year, Trustees received ongoing feedback regarding the success of this transition and the continued rigor of the academic program. This included student presentations highlighting the impact of the new Upper School experience, as well as consultation with Dr. Steven Sagarin, Head of School at Berkshire Waldorf High School, who spoke highly of the quality of instruction and student engagement at WWS. In addition, the 2026 NICHE ratings recognized WWS among the leading schools in Maryland.

The Trustees Council remained closely focused on the school's financial health during a year of significant institutional transition. As anticipated,

the school operated at a deficit this year, and we expect to have one again next year as we work on a multi-year approach to minimize deficits and achieve more sustainable operations.

Importantly, the school entered this period from a position of financial stability, with reserves intentionally established to support moments of thoughtful transition and institutional growth. The Trustees Council has approached the use of these resources with care and discipline by: (i) ensuring that reserves are now invested in a more professional yet still conservative manner, (ii) approving deficit spending judiciously and in alignment with the school's broader strategic objectives, and (iii) working to ensure that books are consistent with both audit and taxation guidelines.

Throughout the year, Trustees regularly reviewed financial performance alongside key indicators of institutional health, including enrollment, program development, and community engagement, to ensure that these investments are supporting meaningful progress toward the school's long-term goals.

The Trustees Council also oversees the school's development efforts and works to foster a culture of generosity through contributions of time, talent, and financial support. This year, the school benefited tremendously from a strong spirit of volunteerism and an engaged parent community. Through generous philanthropic support, as well as community-building events such as the Spring Gala, Fall Bazaar, and native plant sales, WWS surpassed its ambitious development goal of \$475,000 and raised roughly half a million dollars for the OneFund. In a year when the regional economy struggled, this level of generosity serves as a remarkable testament to our community's commitment to the school.

Kate Mueller

Trustees Council Chair

On behalf of the Trustees Council

LETTER FROM THE BUSINESS OFFICE

The 2025–2026 school year was one of continued progress as the Business Office focused on strengthening the financial operations that support the School’s mission. Throughout the year, we remained committed to responsible financial stewardship while improving systems, enhancing operational efficiencies, and building a strong financial foundation to support the School’s long-term success.

Key Projects and Initiatives

Financial Assistance

Continuing our commitment to making a Waldorf education accessible to a broad and diverse community, the School maintained a strong financial assistance program during the 2025–2026 school year. Approximately **40% of our students** received financial assistance, reflecting our ongoing commitment to ensuring that financial circumstances do not prevent families from accessing a Waldorf education.

Tuition Management and Operational Improvements

This year, the School successfully initiated a new tuition management system, providing families with improved billing and payment experience while enhancing the efficiency of tuition administration. The Business Office also continued to strengthen financial reporting, refine internal processes, and improve operational efficiencies to better support school leadership and the day-to-day operations of the School.

Payroll and Timekeeping

The School transitioned all employees to an integrated payroll timekeeping system, creating a more streamlined and accurate payroll process while improving payroll reporting and supporting consistent timekeeping practices across the organization.

Transportation Services

Transportation services were expanded to include a second shuttle to Takoma Park, providing an additional commuting option for families. The new route is now regularly utilized and has helped improve accessibility and convenience for our school community.

Faculty Salaries and Benefits

The School provided a modest salary increase for salaried employees as part of its continued commitment to supporting and retaining our dedicated faculty and staff.

Business Office Transitions

The 2025–2026 school year also brought several meaningful transitions within the Business Office. We extend our sincere appreciation to **Chiedza Mazonde** and **Amanda MacKaye** for their dedication and contributions during their time with the Business Office. Their service helped support the School through an important period of growth and change.

We are equally pleased to welcome **Chanda Miles** to the Business Office team and look forward to the experience, collaboration, and support she brings as we continue strengthening the School’s financial operations in service of our community.

Cash Position

Although the School’s overall cash position decreased from the prior year, the decrease was anticipated as part of the approved operating budget and long-term financial plan. Throughout the year, the Business Office closely monitored cash flow to ensure the School continued to meet its operational needs while supporting its strategic priorities. We remain focused on prudent financial management and identifying opportunities to strengthen the School’s financial position and support its long-term financial stability.

Challenges and Operational Results

Like many independent schools, the School continues to navigate an evolving economic environment while balancing investments in its people, programs, and operations. The Business Office remains committed to thoughtful financial planning, responsible stewardship of resources, and continuous evaluation of opportunities to strengthen the School’s long-term financial sustainability while supporting its educational mission.

Conclusion

The 2025–2026 school year reflected continued progress in strengthening the School’s financial operations while supporting its mission

and strategic priorities. We remain committed to transparency, responsible financial stewardship, and continuous improvement.

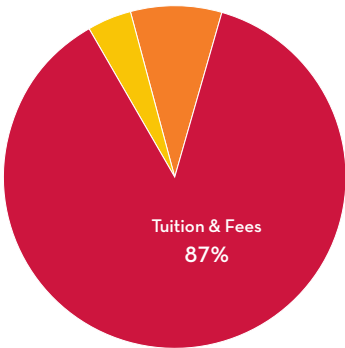
We extend our sincere appreciation to our faculty, staff, Trustees Council, families, donors, and the entire school community for their continued partnership and support. We look forward to continuing to serve the School with integrity, transparency, and a shared commitment to its mission.

Jenny Swift
Business Manager

OPERATING REVENUE AND EXPENSES

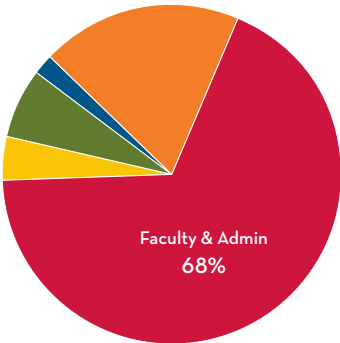
REVENUE

Tuition	\$ 9,261,706	87%
Fundraising	\$ 467,845	4%
Other Income	\$ 888,515	8%
Total Revenue	\$10,618,066	



EXPENSES

Faculty & Admin	\$ 7,527,798	68%
Financial Aid	\$ 2,107,338	19%
Fundraising	\$ 202,938	
Facilities	\$ 736,657	11%
Programs	\$ 455,416	4%
Total Expenses	\$11,030,148	
Deficit	(\$ 412,081)	



Please note that the financial information presented reflects unaudited results. The School’s audited financial statements will be completed following the annual audit and will be made available upon request. This data reflects a cash budget.

MESSAGE FROM THE PARENT FAMILY ORGANIZATION

It was an exciting year for the Parent Family Organization (PFO), as we built on new ideas, strengthened our growing community, and expanded what is possible when parents and caregivers come together in partnership. An active and engaged parent community is a strong indicator of a healthy, thriving school.

Community Highlights



During the 2025–2026 school year, the PFO gained new leadership under co-chairs Jennifer Borders and Erica Mutschler. We launched several new initiatives, including an expanded focus on community service with Nourishing Bethesda; a CSA program for WWS families with Moon Valley Farm, our Good Food Lunch Program partner; and an end-of-year book fair with People’s Book. These collaborations strengthened connections between our school and the broader community while reflecting the values and priorities that guide Waldorf education.

We were inspired by the community’s continued commitment to volunteering, which made beloved traditions such as the Fall Bazaar, Gala, and community picnics possible throughout the year.

Below is a snapshot of the events and programs hosted or supported by the PFO this year.

- Back-to-School & End-of-Year Picnic
- Family Game Nights (with 100+ attendees!)
- Parents Night Out
- Nourishing Bethesda Volunteer Nights and 3 food drives!
- MLK Day of Service
- CSA with Moon Valley Farm
- Expanded Faculty Appreciation Week
- Book Fair
- 4 New Affinity Groups
- Fall Bazaar
- Spring Gala
- Grandparents & Special Friends Day

Looking ahead, the PFO is excited to build on this year’s momentum with returning favorites and new opportunities for connection and engagement, including a school-wide camping trip, curriculum nights for parents, expanded community service opportunities, community-wide Black History Month celebrations, and more. These programs are made possible by families who share their time, talents, and ideas.



PFO EXECUTIVE TEAM

Co-Chair	Jennifer Borders
Co-Chair	Erica Mutschler
Craft & Conversation Chair	Sarah Deckard
Faculty Appreciation Chair	Jenia Beer
Fall Bazaar Chair	Jesse Travis
Gala Chair	Jennifer Borders
Grandparents & Special Friends Day Chairs	Diana Hicappie & Tracy Del Bianco
New Families Chair	Jeren Mametklycheva
Waldorf Store Chair	Jesse Travis



PFO CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

Seedlings	Mary Vitale
Apple Blossoms	Jennifer Borders
Cherry Blossoms	Erica Mutschler
Songbirds	Sindhuja Surapaneni
Sunflowers	Patricia Casbas
Waldorf in the Woods	Jenia Beer
Grade 1	Jennifer Borders
Grade 2	Jenia Beer
Grade 3	Jesse Travis
Grade 4	Jenia Beer
Grade 5	Kate Sandstrom
	Miki Yoshimura
Grade 6	Aimee Duncan
Grade 7	Charlie Fox
Grade 8	Chris Carlton
Grade 9	Laurelle Lo
Grade 10	Redeit Alemu
Grade 11	Melissa Wilets
Grade 12	Sarah Langham

PFO CLASS CAPTAINS

Seedlings	Mary Vitale
Apple Blossoms	Jennifer Borders
Cherry Blossoms	Erica Mutschler
	Staren Pierce
Songbirds	Esther Probst
Sunflowers	Caitlyn Shelley
	Simone Anderson
Waldorf in the Woods	Sarah Deckard
Grade 1	Jennifer Borders
Grade 2	Patricia Casbas & Sarah Deckard
Grade 3	Dulce Maria de Guadalupe Govea Aguilar
	Mei-Lin Khor
Grade 4	Jenia Beer
Grade 5	Kate Sandstrom
	Miki Yoshimura
Grade 6	Jesse Travis
Grade 7	Charlie Fox
Grade 8	Chris Carlton

Help Shape the
WWS Community

We invite you to help shape the year ahead at WWS! Whether you have a little time or a lot, there are many ways to get involved and make a difference. Email Jennifer and Erica at pfoexec@washingtonwaldorf.org to find an opportunity that's right for you.

Why get involved?

- Stay connected and in the know about what's happening at WWS
- Show your children that their school community matters
- Build meaningful relationships with other WWS families
- Share your talents—organizing, crafting, communicating, or simply spreading joy!



Festivals & Events





Academic Highlights

The 2025–2026 school year was a year of purposeful evolution at Washington Waldorf School. Across the campus, students learned by doing, questioning, creating, performing, observing, and engaging deeply with the world around them. From the Early Childhood garden and woodland trails to the Upper School stage, science lab, and graduation ceremony, the year reflected a central question: **How can we preserve what is essential to Waldorf education while thoughtfully adapting our practice to meet the needs of today's students?**

That question was at the heart of the introduction of our new **Upper School model**, one of the most significant academic developments in WWS history in recent years. Drawing on conversations with leading Waldorf educators and schools, including Betty Staley, David Barham, Jason Child, and Steve Sagarin, WWS took the courageous step of reimagining how our adolescent students learn, connect, and lead.

The new model brings Grades 7 and 8 into closer relationship with Grades 9–12, creating a more cohesive Upper School community and allowing students in the younger grades greater access to the expertise and rigor of high school faculty. At the same time, our older students have greater opportunities to step into leadership through a daily Gathering, where they share monthly themes, announcements, celebrations, and their own work with the broader Upper School. The new structure has also created more opportunities for social and athletic connection across grades and introduced a fuller range of electives for students in Grades 9–12, allowing them to pursue particular interests with greater depth.

The change was not simply structural. It was designed to strengthen the experience of adolescence at WWS by bringing **greater academic expertise, greater choice, greater connection, and greater student agency** into the Upper School while remaining grounded in Waldorf's developmental approach.

The year began with the Upper School coming together for a lively production of *The Music*



Man, Jr., an early expression of the collaboration and community the new model was designed to foster. Seniors closed the year with a powerful performance of *The Humans*, an enriching trip to Taos, New Mexico, and **acceptances to 35 colleges and universities across the United States and United Kingdom**. Throughout the year, feedback from students, parents, and faculty, along with teacher observations, helped us assess the new model and identify thoughtful adaptations for 2026–2027. This process of reflection and refinement will remain an essential part of the work as the Upper School continues to develop.

That same commitment to thoughtful evolution extended throughout the curriculum.

The **Mathematics Department** spent the year working with Reut Rozenberg of the Orim Educational Foundation, a lifelong Waldorf expert and advocate, to examine and strengthen the mathematics program from the Lower Grades through high school. The goal is a more coherent progression of skills and concepts, with greater opportunities for rigor and differentiation as students advance through the grades.





Our college counseling program also took an important step forward with the arrival of **Robert Kostrzeski** as College Counselor. With 26 years of experience in education and college counseling across independent, Waldorf, and international schools, Robert Kostrzeski brings deep expertise and a genuinely student-centered approach to WWS. His commitment to adolescent well-being, self-discovery, and helping each student recognize their strengths makes him a valuable addition to our Upper School and college counseling program. Robert has brought a vibrant, thoughtful approach to engaging students in the college process, helping them see it not simply as an application exercise, but as an opportunity to understand their own interests, strengths, and aspirations.

The **Anti-racist, & Belonging, Curriculum Committee (ABCC)** continued its annual review of curriculum scope and sequences, with particular attention to expanding the breadth of resources available to teachers. The accreditation process provided an opportunity to update and strengthen these materials, while a shared digital Drive has made curricular resources easier for faculty to access and use collaboratively.

In the Lower School, our **Gardening program expanded from two grades to four**, deepening our commitment to hands-on learning, stewardship, and care for the place we call home. The year began with a small herd of goats clearing the garden beds in preparation for planting. By January, Grade 3 students were harvesting broccoli only 45 minutes before lunch and conducting a taste test against the store-bought variety. The verdict was clear: fresh from the garden won by a mile. When Grade 4 began its Animal block, Furcules, a guest rabbit, arrived on campus. He has since become a permanent resident, helping to fertilize the garden and becoming a beloved part of the school's daily life.

In **Early Childhood**, purposeful work and imaginative play continued to shape the rhythm

of each day. Students cut vegetables and shaped rolls for snack, set tables, tended gardens, hiked through the changing seasons, and celebrated festivals alongside their classmates' families.

These ordinary-seeming moments are foundational to Waldorf education: through meaningful work and participation in community, young children develop independence, confidence, coordination, and a sense of belonging. After a year of transition and adjustment within the Early Childhood team, we enter 2026–2027 with a strong and stable foundation for continued growth.

Perhaps the clearest evidence of the breadth of learning at WWS can be found in the accomplishments of our students beyond the school community. **Erika and Linden, both in Grade 9, received the Yale Helicon Undergraduate Journal of Classics Award. Bea, a Grade 11 student, received the Congressional Art Competition Award for the 8th Congressional District as well as the Spotlight Prize.** These recognitions offer an important glimpse of what happens when students are given the time, encouragement, and depth of study to pursue their interests seriously.

The 2025–2026 academic year was about more than adding programs or changing structures. It was about asking what our students need now and having the courage to respond. We strengthened academic progression, expanded opportunities for specialization and leadership, deepened hands-on learning, and created new connections across the grades.

The result is a Washington Waldorf School that is building on its strong foundation while looking deliberately toward the future: a school committed to educating the whole child, and equally committed to ensuring that the education we provide prepares our students to meet the world with curiosity, capability, compassion, and purpose.

FALL BAZAAR

Contributions to the One Fund

BAZAAR COORDINATORS

Abby Saloma
Bronwen Brown
Cara Llewellyn
CJ Leonard
David Talbot
Dawn Beckman
Early Childhood Faculty
Elissa Castaldo
Erica Mutschler
Eron Picus
Esther Probst
Hannah Cook
Isabel Pimenta
Jana Vandergoot
Jenia Beer
Jennifer Borders
Jennifer Robinson
Jesse Travis
Kazuo Tase
Laurelle Lo
Maria Monteverde-Jackson
Marlene Sandhu
Martin Cordiner
Mei-Lin Khor
Melissa Wilets
Michael Lieberman
Nancy Doyle
Russell Kramer
Samantha Cohen
Sarah Deckard
Sarah Heirman
Sheila Herrling
Shelly Hackman
Shubha Dhage
Susan Peckham
Torie Gorges
Wendy Jackson
Zsófia Zsiros

The Washington Waldorf School’s 2025 Fall Bazaar continued the event’s long tradition of uniting the community, and harnessing its formidable volunteer power, to produce one of the premiere fall events in the area. A new entrance flow this year provided easier access to all the Bazaar has to offer—crafts and activities, delicious food, music, and shopping.

The Fall Bazaar offered children some time-honored traditional crafts, including decorating candles with beeswax shapes and tiny treasures collected from nature, and having their young faces and hands decorated with artistic designs by our talented upper school students. Some newer or renewed activities added to the mix—a chance to crack a geode to reveal its glittering inside, and to decorate leather pieces with hand-hammered stamps and paint markers to create bookmarks, coasters and bracelets.

The youngest children were enchanted by the complete transformation of the Songbirds classroom into a winter wonderland in the Crystal Cave, and delighted by the chance to retrieve a small prize with a fishing pole from the “ocean” and to launch a felt ball over the castle wall in return for a marble from the dragon! And as always, our talented Early Childhood faculty entertained with marionette and story time shows.

Children had the chance to do their very own shopping for treasures in the beautifully decorated Enchantment Shop, and adults did their seasonal shopping in the school’s own Waldorf Store and from a varied selection of artisan vendors in the John and Mary Brauer Gym. Musical performances accompanied a delicious lunch from Chef Eron’s Bistro, along with a wondrous selection of treats in the Patisserie. The day was truly a feast for all the senses!

The Fall Bazaar raised over \$50,000 for the school’s One Fund.



FALL BAZAAR

SATURDAY, NOV 21, 2026
10AM - 4PM

TICKETED PREVIEW
FRIDAY, NOV 20, 6PM

Artisan Vendors
Activities & Crafts for Children
Live Music and Puppet Shows
Books, Toys & Hand-Crafted Gifts
Delicious Lunch and Desserts



Dear Friends,



As I reflect on this past year, I am reminded that growth rarely follows a straight path. Any meaningful endeavor comes with moments of uncertainty, unexpected turns, and the occasional bump in the road. What stays with me most vividly are the people who appear along the way: our community who offered guidance, rolled up their sleeves, shared their expertise, extended grace, and helped keep us moving steadily toward our shared goals.

Our One Fund theme this year was One Community, Building Together. It was a fitting reminder that the strength of Washington Waldorf School has never rested in any one person or department, but in the collective care and commitment of those who believe in this extraordinary place.

I chose a word this year to guide the work of the Development Office; a touchstone reflected in our outreach, our events, and our approach to philanthropy. For the 2025–2026 school year, that word was exploration: the endeavor of questioning and the act of traveling through or carefully investigating an unfamiliar area or subject in order to discover, map, or learn from it.

This year marked my first as Director of Development, and it has indeed been a year of exploration. There were many questions: Why do we do it this way? Is it the best approach? What can we do better? What do our families truly want and need from us? Beginning this work with a team of just two people in the office made answering those questions—and maintaining forward momentum—a formidable task. By the heartiness of this community, we continued onward.

In countless ways, both large and small, you demonstrated the generosity of spirit that lies at the heart of Washington Waldorf School. It is this response, the instinct to care for one another and contribute to something greater

than ourselves, that makes WWS not only successful, but truly special.

As we look ahead to the 2026–2027 school year, the word guiding our work will be discovery. It may seem synonymous with exploration, but I have come to understand it differently. Exploration is the planting; discovery is the fruit. It is the moment when curiosity becomes understanding, when effort gives way to insight, and when investigation reveals something meaningful and true. Discovery carries with it a sense of wonder; joy that accompanies learning and the exhilaration of uncovering what was there all along, waiting to be recognized.

In the year ahead, I hope we will take time to celebrate what we have discovered together. I hope we will continue to ask why this community feels so extraordinary, why our children flourish here, why generosity abounds, and why so many people choose to invest themselves so deeply in this school's mission.

Friends, I believe I already know the answer.

It is you.

With Gratitude,

Erika Bryant-Northcutt
Director of Development

YOUR IMPACT

2025/26
ONE FUND BY THE NUMBERS

FINANCIAL AID

\$1.79M

Total financial
aid awarded

COMMUNITY



118

Students
receiving aid

FUNDRAISING

\$538K

Gross total
raised



253

Total
students

47%

Of student body
receiving aid



3%

Of overall
budget

\$15,046

Average
aid award



564

Gifts

\$1,503

Average
donor gift

2025/26 Annual Giving Report

This year has been one of growth, exploration, and generosity at Washington Waldorf School. While change often brings challenges, it also reveals the extraordinary strength of a community willing to come together in support of our shared mission. Throughout the year, our families, alumni, grandparents, faculty, staff, and friends demonstrated their commitment to Waldorf education through their philanthropic support.

The Washington Waldorf One Fund remains essential to sustaining the exceptional educational experience our students receive each day. Tuition alone does not cover the full cost of a Waldorf education, and philanthropic giving helps to bridge the gap by supporting financial aid, faculty excellence, classroom resources, and the many programs that make our school so special.

As of June 2026, our annual giving results include:

- \$538,000 gross income**
- \$498,583 raised in gross support**
- \$372,032 in charitable gifts**
- 247 unique donors**
- \$1,506 average gift size**

In support of these increasing results, we have transitioned our reporting metrics to utilize gross revenue figures in accordance with nonprofit accounting best practices (GAAP). This approach provides greater transparency by recognizing the full philanthropic impact of our community's generosity

Our annual fundraising efforts were strengthened by several successful initiatives and events, including the Annual Gala, Giving Tuesday, the Plant Sale, Grandparents Day, alumni engagement efforts, and the ongoing support of our monthly and leadership donors. Together, these efforts have allowed us to build a stronger and more sustainable culture of philanthropy across our community.

Community Giving

This year, our community mirrored the shifting trends seen across broader philanthropic giving: an increase in gift size from established donors and a decrease in the number of gifts from participation-level donors. We are deeply grateful for the generosity of our leadership donors, whose increased investments continue to strengthen Washington Waldorf School's future.

Though participation-level giving decreased this year, participation remains central to our philosophy of philanthropy.

Washington Waldorf School believes that everyone has a place at the table as a donor. A gift of \$10 carries the same spirit of generosity and commitment to our mission as a larger contribution. Community-wide participation strengthens our culture of philanthropy and demonstrates to institutional funders that our community believes in the work we do every day.

When we seek grant funding, we are looking for partners, not pocketbooks. Foundations want to know that we have meaningful community support and that their investment will join an already engaged and committed constituency. Participation matters because it shows that our community invests in our mission.

While we encourage everyone to contribute, it is important to remember that this is an invitation, not an expectation. Philanthropy at Washington Waldorf School is rooted in gratitude and shared

purpose. Every family and community member contributes to our mission in different ways, and we value each contribution, whether it is made through time, talent, or treasure.

Strengths and Challenges

The Development Office experienced significant growth in FY26, driven by the extraordinary generosity of our community. Parent volunteers demonstrated a robust appetite for lending both their time and expertise, strengthening our events, outreach, and fundraising efforts. Nearly 20 new attendees joined us at the Gala, expanding our circle of supporters, while our leadership donors maintained or increased their commitments to Washington Waldorf School. Grandparents and Special Friends Day welcomed more than 200 visitors and fully utilized both the John and Mary Brauer Gymnasium and the Goodman Stage, showcasing the vibrancy of our campus community. We introduced the inaugural Plant Sale as a new fundraising initiative and continued to cultivate a culture of philanthropy by removing barriers to giving and increasing transparency around philanthropic expectations. Together, these efforts have helped foster a more inclusive understanding that every gift strengthens our school and advances our mission.

FY26 was a transition for the Development Office. My move from Assistant Director of Development to Director of Development required us to balance strategic priorities with the day-to-day demands of fundraising, events, donor stewardship, and communications. As the scope of the office’s work continues to expand, maintaining ambitious timelines and institutional deadlines with a lean team was a challenge. To address this challenge, we were incredibly fortunate to add Lily Feist to our team in April.

She is a graduate student at American University studying Arts Management. She joins the team with institutional giving experience from her role as the Annual Giving Coordinator at the University of Wyoming Foundation, where she oversaw digital fundraising, annual campaign efforts, and young alumni giving.

This year highlighted both the opportunities and limitations of a growing development program and underscored the importance of building sustainable systems and capacity to support that growth. Even amid these challenges, FY26 strengthened our fundraising practices, clarified philanthropic expectations, and positioned the Development Office to continue building a culture of giving in the years ahead.

The Year Ahead

FY2026 demonstrated both the generosity of our community and the continued growth of our fundraising program. As we look toward FY2027, our focus shifts towards building a sustainable culture of philanthropy that reflects the values of Waldorf education.

Our priorities include:

- Increasing overall donor participation across all constituencies.
- Growing institutional giving through expanded grant opportunities.
- Growing leadership-level and recurring giving.
- Increasing alumni engagement and philanthropic participation.

Every gift, regardless of size, represents an investment in our students, our faculty, and our mission. Together, we are ensuring that Washington Waldorf School remains a place where children are empowered to think clearly, feel compassionately, and act purposefully.

DEVELOPMENT STAFF

Erika Bryant Northcutt, Director of Development
Dykeem Cervantes, Database Manager
Lily Feist, Assistant to the Director of Development

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Paul Ninomura
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Joy Belluzzi

To celebrate Charles Court (Class of 2026) and
Lucy Court (Class of 2022)

Ayesha and Randolph Court

In Memory of Terry Dammann

Jeff Dammann

In honor of the Children’s Garden Faculty, who create
magic and wonder in the classroom each day

Stephanie and Dave Hanson

In honor of Gogi Kalka, a dedicated advisor to our
two older children, and an inspiring science teacher
to all students

Thomas Holmberg and Alison Southall

In honor of Rudolf Heirman

Janet Johnson

In honor of the great teachers of WWS

Kate Losman

Kate and Alex Wotring, former students, and
Anne Miller Wotring, board member

Allen Miller

The Anne & Tom Wotring Family

Noel Miller

In memory of my mother, Sabina Reisfeld Paiewonsky

Adrienne Paiewonsky and Paul Girdzis

In honor of Coco Pimenta Clark

Isabel Pimenta

Helene and Oscar Hunter, great-grandparents of
Eleanor and Charlotte Hanna

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In honor of Nathaniel, Audrey, and Julian

Wester J. Frank & Susan S. Brown Family Fund

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In honor of the 11th grade teachers and staff.

With gratitude from Nathan, Melissa, & Scott Wilets
Melissa and Scott Wilets



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Wally and Mechelle Kulesza
Marta Schley and Paul Squire
Max Silver
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A WALDORF WORLD'S FAIR

On Saturday,
February 28, 2026, our community
gathered to explore the world—all without leaving
the Wharf. As the sun set over the Potomac and
golden light poured into the room, we found ourselves
surrounded by laughter, joy, and generosity—a reminder that
our Gala is both a celebration of our accomplishments and a
renewed commitment to our shared mission.

And commit you did! Because of you, our Gala raised over \$178,000 in support of our school community. That number represents opportunity, access, creativity, and care for our students—and we are deeply grateful.

Each year, our Raise the Paddle portion of the event makes an incredible impact on our Financial Aid program. The live auction was lively and generous, filled with laughter, friendly competition, and a shared commitment to our mission. To those who “Raised a Paddle,” joined a buy-in party, pulled wine, or otherwise contributed to our goal, we extend a heartfelt thank you.

Thank you to our speakers, Joey Johnson and Jeff Johns, whose stories reminded us that what happens inside our classrooms ripples outward for years to come. Their reflections gave us a beautiful glimpse into the classroom experience and the enduring impact of a Waldorf education, reminding us of the importance of ensuring its accessibility for our children.

Thank you to our Gala Committee—Jesse, Larissa, Tamara, Zsofia, Simone, Aimee, and Sindhu—who imagined an experience so thoughtful and considerate that its spirit will last long beyond the end of the night. To Jennifer Borders, our Gala Chair, for her ability to make each guest feel treasured and appreciated, and for her leadership in creating a thoughtfully whimsical evening—we are deeply grateful to you.

And finally, to every parent, grandparent, alum, staff member, and friend who gave so generously to the Waldorf World's Fair—thank you. Thank you for sharing your time, your talents, your treasure, and most importantly, your JOY. We are so grateful to build this community together.

We hope to continue to explore the future of Washington Waldorf with this wonderful community, and we look forward to what we may discover together.

GALA BY THE NUMBERS

Guests
165

Sponsors
23

Underwriters
25

*Thank you for being part of this generous and spirited community.
You make it possible.*

Through multiple income streams, this year's Gala raised vital funds that help us meet the needs of our diverse community. We're thrilled to share these results:

Ticket Sales, Underwriting,
Sponsorships
\$34,280+

Live Auction
\$60,000
Raise the Paddle
\$54,169+

Silent Auction and
Buy-In Parties
\$13,393+

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Naveed Khan and
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Steve Adelman
Shubha Dhage and
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\$100+

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Elsa Gomez and
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Jay Louvis and
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Russell and Annie Kramer
Taisto and Abby Saloma
Tamara Minor
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\$250+

Hannah Losman and
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Tania Delgado and
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Laurelle Lo and David Talbot
Lelia True
Samantha Cohen and
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\$2,000+

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Sylvia Schneider and
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Yvonne and David Malino
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GALA SPEAKER

JOEY JOHNSON

AN EXCERPT FROM HIS GALA SPEECH

“To me, the ingredients are **curiosity, empathy, and honesty.**

These are the qualities that drive our students to want to learn, to want to understand, to discover what they are good at, to support their friends, and to engage with the world around them.

These qualities are painstakingly fostered from early childhood through the very last week of senior year by teachers who work tirelessly to create not just lessons, but experiences—tangible, magical, and moving experiences that help students discover what makes them curious and passionate. To find what drives them.

For me, I can look at many of my greatest passions—languages, operatic singing, and writing—and see the connection to what I experienced here at the Washington Waldorf School.

Now, more than ever, it is crystal clear to me that I owe much of who I am to this place: a school that promotes genuine curiosity, heartfelt empathy, and real honesty.”





Class of 2026 Self Portraits

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2026

BENJAMIN

Loyola University Maryland - Undeclared

CHARLES

University of York, UK - Chemistry

KATE

Fairfield University Egan School of Nursing and
Health Studies - Nursing (Spanish Minor)

MAYA

Northeastern University - Molecular Biology (Pre-Med)

OMARI

Job Corps - Culinary Arts

PHOEBE

Haverford College - Undeclared

Alum News

NEW ALUM WINTER PACKAGES

In December, we distributed our New Alums Winter Packages to the Class of 2025. Filled with WWS magic, these packages are a source of warmth and encouragement for our young alums.

ALUM BASKETBALL GAME

Over 100 alums, families, and friends joined us in December for this treasured annual tradition. We shared stories and celebrations during the lively game, finding connection and community at this truly unique event. We hope you will join us in December 2026 for our next Alum Basketball Game!

NEW ALUM BREAKFAST

In January, we had Alums join the Class of 2026 to discuss graduation, college, and life after WWS. This opportunity to connect is an important step for both graduates and returning alums to reflect on their time at WWS.

Connections Coming Soon

ALUM AMBASSADORS

Interested in serving your graduate class? Become a Alum Ambassador to help your class stay in the know about all things WWS. Contact us here:

ALMABASE

Want to connect with WWS and other Waldorf alums? Join us on Almbase to connect with alums around the world. Sign up here:

ALUM PLAYDATE

Alum with children of their own are invited to join us for a playdate on October 24 at WWS. Reconnect with classmates and find new friends for your kids! RSVP here:

Already volunteered to be a Alum Ambassador? We will be in touch soon. Thank you for your patience!

ALUM NEWSLETTER

This year, we will be revitalizing our Alum Newsletter, including adding spotlights on Alums like you! To be featured, or to make sure you get access to our newsletter, contact us here:

HAWKS NEST GIFT

Are you an alum who's expecting? Let us know so we can bring you a special gift for your baby hawk from the WWS family. Contact us here:



Have an update to share or new contact information? We'd love to hear from you. Please email alumni@washingtonwaldorf.org and send us your news of awards or honors, new family members, scholarships, travels and adventures, jobs or milestones.



A L U M
BASKETBALL GAME

Lace up your sneakers and hit the court for the WWS Alum Basketball Game. Reconnect with old teammates and friends, relive the glory days, and enjoy some friendly competition. Whether you're ready to play or cheer from the sidelines, we'd love to see you there!

**FAMILY FRIENDLY
DINNER PROVIDED**

**SAVE THE DATE
DECEMBER 18TH**

The background of the entire image is a vibrant, ethereal nebula. It features a mix of deep purples, magentas, and blues, with bright, glowing orange and yellow streaks that resemble star trails or the core of a galaxy. Numerous small, white, four-pointed star-like sparkles are scattered throughout the scene, adding a magical and celestial feel.

Annual Gala

March 13th, 2027

Save the date for a night of
philanthropy and
community!



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Waldorf School

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