

## STILL MOVING



WSMS-TEP was honored last February at the Bergen-Lafayette Montessori School Gala in Jersey City for providing service and support to the school, and scholarships for their teachers in Montessori training. One of the other awards was given to Nimbus Dance Company, which partners and provides dance classes after school for the children at BLMS. Samuel Pott, the Founder and Artistic Director of Nimbus, accepted the award, and in his acceptance speech, which was after Lisanne Pinciotti's, he mentioned what a small world it is ... he went to WSMS!

Sam remembers Elspeth MacDonald, a former WSMS teacher, as a very special teacher. In fact, his family and hers are still in contact after more than 40 years. And he shared a vivid memory of his father scaling the street lights at the corner of 92nd Street to hang the banner for the Spring Fair!

Sam trained in modern dance and ballet in college. His exposure to creative movement required him to "unlearn" the more disciplined approach to dance of traditional ballet, and opened his eyes. His career has included both classic and contemporary roles. Prior to founding Nimbus, a professional dance company located in Jersey City, in 2005, he was soloist with the Martha Graham Dance Company. As their website says, Nimbus reflects his expanding "vision for dance and the arts as a catalyst for equity, community development and transformative cultural exchange." His focus is creating and exploring movement, while making dance relevant, available and acceptable to engage the community.

Sam's time at WSMS probably laid the groundwork for his career. He loved movement activities, especially sashaying across the "gigantic space" on the top floor. He sees exploring movement and dance as not so different from other Montessori activities ... testing options, trying different ways to do things, pushing boundaries, using your body in creative ways ... And he loved the sense of community in the school, reflected in the Spring Fair and so many other activities.

In addition to Bergen Lafayette, Nimbus now provides classes to some 7,000 children/year in their communities and schools, and also offers classes on-site at Nimbus. And Sam is closely tied to Montessori in another way: his daughter is a 6th grader at Waterfront Montessori.



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2021–2023 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1963, West Side Montessori School (WSMS) was established with the vision of providing Upper West Side families with an option for innovative and dynamic early childhood education programming, combining key aspects of the Montessori curriculum with the best practices of current child development, and reflecting the economically, racially, culturally, and intellectually diverse community. To help navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, the school's families and leaders undertook a strategic planning process to guide their efforts from the school year 2020–2021 to the end of the 2022–2023 school year.

The strategic planning effort was rooted in WSMS's Vision and Mission:

***We prepare children to be resilient, creative and independent problem solvers. We are leaders in teaching Montessori principles and incorporate the best practices of***



*modern early childhood education in our classrooms. West Side Montessori School is a vibrant collaborative community of passionate teachers, joyful children and engaged parents. Our diverse community is a reflection of the city in which we live.*

Through the strategic planning process, WSMS's strategic planning team identified **four high-impact goals** to pursue in 2020–2023:

- **Goal 1: Ensure that WSMS continues to be at the forefront of national and international early education.** WSMS is a national and international leader in early learning. We will continue to provide outstanding opportunities for children to learn the academic and personal skills reflective of the best equity-informed research on child development and social-emotional intelligence.
- **Goal 2: Strengthen partnerships with families to better support their children's education.** WSMS is a key partner and supporter of parents as they nurture their children's development. We will continue to provide resources and programs to better support the next generation of WSMS parents, building on family strengths, cultural backgrounds, languages, and experience.



- **Goal 3: Enhance the ability of teachers and staff to meet the needs of WSMS students.**

Key to providing our children with the best possible early childhood education is a dedicated community of teachers, administrators and parents for whom this is their highest priority.

- **Goal 4: Strengthen WSMS operations to ensure sustained contribution to the highest quality education.** WSMS must maintain our financial strength and flexibility while continuing to achieve our goals of building an inclusive community.

WSMS's leadership team and Board are excited to begin implementation of the plan and advance the organization's impact on its young learners and their families for years to come.

## ARTHUR SACHS

The WSMS community is saddened by the death last April of long-time Board member Arthur Sachs. Art and Mary were active parents from 1977 to 1986. Art served on the Board for 10 years, playing an important role as treasurer.

The Sachs family was profiled in the Fall 2011 issue of *Great Beginnings*. Art's sons, Tim '86, Chris '83, and Andrew '80, have fond memories of WSMS, and especially of their time walking to school with their dad. Chris and Andrew gave moving tributes to Art at his memorial service, and Chris even included a story of Art cooking hot dogs at the WSMS Spring Fair!

We send our deep sympathy to Mary and her sons.



Left to Right: Art, Mary, Andrew, Tim, and Chris  
Photo by: Tatiana Urquiza