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WEST SIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
2016-2017

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By the time you read this, we will have completed our decennial NYSAIS/AMS re-accreditation. This undertaking lasted over a year, involved participants from every constituency of the school, and provided an in-depth look at every aspect of our operations: from the obvious ones—like the educational program and the school’s faculty, administration, and facilities—to less obvious ones, like our place in the local community. Included in this issue is an overview of the academic review by co-chair and 4Eam head teacher Robyn Mernick.

As part of this process we took a serious look at our Mission Statement, and revised it to better reflect what we consider our goals and place in the early childhood academic world. And, having successfully addressed and achieved our 2011-2016 Strategic Plan objectives, we produced a new plan for the next five years. You will find the updated Mission Statement and a recap of the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan in this issue.

One goal of the new Strategic Plan is to celebrate and explore our community’s diversity. In The Importance of Family in Our Classrooms, by Giuliana de Grazia, 3Wam head teacher, describes how teachers reach out in sensitive and thoughtful ways to make all families part of the WSMS community.

I hope you will join me in extending a warm welcome to Beverly Smith, our new Assistant Head of School. As you will see in her interview, Bev brings to WSMS an impressive background in administration and teaching, and a strong commitment to Montessori education.

Key to our success in providing the best possible educational beginning for our children is our estimable Board. I’d like to thank outgoing trustees Kristen Chae Arabadjiev, Maggan Daileader, Suzanne Day, Kathleen Friery, Amy Groom, Alexandra Jarislovery, Jae Lee, Aima Raza, Michael Seckler, and Cordell Spencer, and welcome new Board members—whose bios appear in this issue—Mark Cicirelli, Tim Daileader, Victoria Feltman, Murtaza (Mort) Haque, Elise J., Natasha Kazmi, Kyra Nelson, and Jing Wang. Lindsay Forbes and Iva Mills are wearing new hats: last year they represented the PA on the Board; they are now trustees. Replacing them as co-chairs of the Parents Association and ex officio Board members are Jeff Leaf and Bonnie Whitcher.

Our fall issue is traditionally focused on what has been achieved in the last academic year and gives me the opportunity to publicly thank the many individuals who contribute in so many ways.

I am deeply grateful to our parents, who provide energy and creativity in the many events that bring our community together; to our teachers and administrators, who focus always on making this school the best possible place for our students; to the Board for their oversight of all our activities and their strong support of our goals; and, of course, to the many generous donors whose contributions to our Annual Fund enable us to provide the exceptional educational beginning to so many children every year.

Mimi Basso
Head of School
A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear members of the WSMS Community,

As a Board member since 2011, I have watched West Side Montessori School flourish under the leadership of Head of School Mimi Basso, and former Board chairs Valda Witt and Alex Southwell. I am honored to succeed Alex as chair this year.

My daughter, Ashley, began her academic career at WSMS in 2009, and we knew right away that we had found the right place for her to start—a warm and stimulating environment for her, a welcoming community for Marc and me. As someone who has spent his career in administrative roles in schools and other not-for-profit institutions, I was delighted to help when Mimi and others asked … and it didn’t take long for that to turn into a Board position!

We have had another stellar year at WSMS. The renovation of the fifth floor provided our children with enhanced gym and rooftop facilities and our TEP Program with adult classroom amenities. The PA offered multiple opportunities for every parent to be involved. Our fund-raising efforts, coordinated by Board and PA volunteers, secured the generous support of our families and friends, ensuring that we can continue to provide an extraordinary first education for many years to come.

I can’t begin to name everyone who should be thanked, though Alex Southwell and Mimi Basso are on the top of the list. Our teachers have once again been inspiring. And I want to send a special thanks to the members of the administration, who work out of sight, often without recognition, for all that they do.

You will see the names of so many active parents in the PA Section, but I want to make sure, again, that the heavy lifters behind the scenes know they are appreciated.

And, finally, our deep thanks to all who supported the 2015-2016 Annual Fund. Every gift—no matter what size—makes a difference.

Gratefully,

Myles B. Amend
President, Board of Trustees
(Ashley Amend-Thomas ’11)
The primary responsibility of the Board of Trustees is to see that the School operates in the best interests of its students, teachers, and parents. The Board sets the purpose and policies of the School, ensures its financial stability, plans for its future, and hires the Head of School, who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the School.

Myles B. Amend, President
Myles B. Amend is Associate Head of School for Advancement at Trinity School, where he has worked since 2000. Prior to that he served as Director of Development and Finance at Rice High School in Harlem; as Principal of Tampa Catholic High School in Tampa, Florida; and as Associate Director for Institutional Advancement and Governance at the Museum of the City of New York. He is a graduate of Iona College and holds master's degrees in History from New York University and in Independent School Leadership from Columbia University Teachers College. He is also a trustee of De La Salle Academy and a past president of the New York City Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Myles and his husband, Marc Thomas, are parents of a WSMS alumnus who completed her two-year career at WSMS in 2011.

Joanna Rego, Vice President
Joanna Rego is the mother of two WSMS graduates. She is an active WSMS volunteer, having served as co-president of the Parents Association and co-president of the 50th Anniversary Celebration & Auction. Joanna received her BA in English Literature from Brown University. Before having children she worked for 15 years as a theater producer, overseeing such productions as Martin Short’s “Fame Becomes Me” on Broadway, Nickelodeon’s “Blue’s Clues Live!” tour, and Wayne Brady in Las Vegas. She is married to Matthew Rego.

Lindsay Forbes, Vice President
Lindsay Forbes was born and raised in Vancouver, Canada. She has a BSc in Forestry from the University of British Columbia and a JD from the University of Toronto. Prior to starting her family, Lindsay practiced commercial real estate law in Vancouver and New York. She is now developing the U.S. East Coast market for EAB Tool Co., a power tool accessory company founded by her father and marketed in over 2,700 retail outlets in North America. Lindsay and her husband, Ali Dibadj, are the proud parents of a WSMS alum and a current WSMS student.

Alexander H. Southwell, Vice President
Alexander H. Southwell is a partner at the law firm Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, where he is a member of the White Collar Defense and Investigations and Chair of the Privacy, Cybersecurity, and Consumer Protection practice groups. Alex previously served as an Assistant United States Attorney in the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York and is also an adjunct professor of law at Fordham University School of Law, where he teaches a seminar on cyber crimes. Alex graduated from Princeton University and New York University School of Law. He is also a proud alum of WSMS, having been born and raised on the Upper West Side, where he still lives with his wife, Sandy, and their three children who all graduated from WSMS. Alex has been a Trustee since 2009 and previously served as President of the Board of Trustees from 2013-2016.

Jason E. Santiago, Treasurer
Jason E. Santiago is currently an investor at Stripes Group, a $1.5B private equity fund that invests in Internet and consumer products companies. Prior to joining Stripes Group, Jason was an Investment Banker at Cowen and Company in both New York and San Francisco, responsible for the execution of growth equity financings. He was formerly a Director at PRIME-DIA, responsible for enterprise-wide Internet product development. Jason started his career as an entrepreneur, co-founding two Internet technology companies, and then leading them through acquisition and IPO. Jason was born in Puerto Rico and has an MBA from Columbia Business School, where he was an Alberto Verme Scholar, and a BA in Architecture and Planning from Columbia College. Jason and his wife, Casey, have two children. Their daughter is a current WSMS student and their son, who graduated WSMS in 2015, now attends The Dalton School.
Jennifer S. Conway, Secretary

Jennifer S. Conway is a partner at the law firm Cravath, Swaine & Moore, where she is a member of the Executive Compensation and Benefits Department. She regularly advises public and private companies on executive compensation and employee benefits matters, principally in connection with mergers and acquisitions, initial public offerings and other business transactions. Jennifer is a graduate of Georgetown University and Columbia Law School, and she serves as a trustee for the Lawyers Alliance for New York. She is also a member of the Steering Committee of the Kate Stoneman Project, an organization devoted to the advancement of women in the legal profession. Jennifer and her husband, Victor Manuel, have two daughters, current student at WSMS and one from 2016. Jennifer and Victor also served as co-chairs of the first annual Fall Festival.

Nissa Booker

Nissa Booker is a graduate of Spelman College where she majored in English. After realizing journalism was her calling, she interned and eventually took a job with ABC News in Washington, DC, where she worked her way through the newsroom to the office of talent development. There Nissa discovered her calling in training and development. After several years of recruiting and hiring entry-level talent and spearheading development programs, she left ABC News and joined a start-up owned by AOL where she is responsible for managing the editorial recruitment and employee benefits matters, principally in connection with mergers and acquisitions, initial public offerings and other business transactions. Jennifer is a graduate of Georgetown University and Columbia Law School, and she serves as a trustee for the Lawyers Alliance for New York. She is also a member of the Steering Committee of the Kate Stoneman Project, an organization devoted to the advancement of women in the legal profession. Jennifer and her husband, Victor Manuel, have two daughters, a current student at WSMS and a baby born May 2015. Jennifer and Victor also served as co-chairs of the first annual Fall Festival.

Mark Cicirelli

Mark Cicirelli is married to Lisa and is father to Emma and Alexandra. He works as a Portfolio Manager at Elliott Management, a NY-based investment firm. He joined Elliott in 2005, after working at TH Lee Putnam Ventures, a private equity fund, and at JPMorgan Chase & Co. Mark graduated from Dartmouth with an AB in Government and Economics, and from Harvard with an MBA. He serves on the New York board of All Stars Project, a non-profit that supports the development of inner-city youth. He also serves on the boards of Opus Bank, Paraline Holdings, an insurance company, and Bernoulli Health, a medical technology company.

Tim Daileader

Tim Daileader, the father of Declan and Madeleine Daileader (WSMS ’14) and husband of Maggan Daileader, has pursued a twenty-three year career in investment management and banking. Over the course of his career, Tim has been a senior analyst at Litespeed Management and Strategic Value Partners, a portfolio manager at Stanfield Capital Partners, and the Director of Research at Knight Capital. Tim is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) and is a member of the New York Society of Securities Analysts. Tim also volunteers on the Board of Directors of 257 Central Park West, Inc., and has served on both the College Board of Advisors and the Admission Ambassador program for Georgetown University. Tim graduated from Georgetown University, where he was a Baker Scholar, with a bachelor’s degree in Economics in 1992.

Victoria Feltman

Victoria Feltman is a nutritionist who specializes in family and childhood nutrition. Before going into private practice, Vicky worked at the New York Children’s Health Project in the South Bronx, where she counseled kids and adults and taught nutrition education classes. Prior to becoming a registered dietitian, Vicky spent four years as an editor at O, the Oprah magazine, and later worked as a restaurant publicist in New York and Los Angeles. Vicky has a BA from Cornell University and a Masters of Science in Nutrition from NYU. Vicky and her husband, Josh, have three sons, one at WSMS, one in kindergarten, and a baby born in 2016. She is a member of the WSMS Admissions Committee and is actively involved as a parent volunteer.

Mort Haque

Mort Haque is a Portfolio Manager at Sound Point Capital, an investment management firm specializing in below-investment grade corporate and structured credit markets. Prior to Sound Point, Mort worked at Apollo Management in their capital markets group and spent a number of years as an investment banker at Bank of America and JPMorgan Chase in their leveraged finance and M&A departments. He is a graduate of Georgetown University (School of Foreign Service) and Columbia Business School. Mort is married to Henna Khan, who has been actively involved with WSMS as a member of various committees for the Spring Fair and Annual Auction, and in interviewing prospective families for the Admissions Committee. They have two daughters who graduated from WSMS.

Elise J.

Elise J. is a dentist and mother of two. She holds a doctorate in dental surgery from the University of Strasbourg, France, as well as a master’s degree in cellular and molecular physiopathology. She relocated from France several years ago and lives on the Upper West Side with her husband and their two children. She has previously worked with several non-profit organizations, and is actively involved in the community. She has been class representative for the past year.

Natasha Kazmi

Prior to taking time off to raise her family, Natasha Kazmi spent 15 years in a number of roles in the financial services industry, ranging from corporate banking to restructurings and asset management, across diverse geographies like Pakistan, Indonesia and the US. Natasha was a member of the 2014 WSMS Online Auction Committee, and currently serves as a member of the Admissions Committee and Chair of the Annual Fund. She is also involved in projects related to furthering girls’ education in Pakistan’s remote areas and the improvement of interfaith relations. Natasha and her husband, Qaisar Hasan, are proud parents of one current WSMS student and one WSMS graduate. She earned a BBA and MBA from the University of Karachi.
Iva Mills is the mother of twins—Dashiel and Morgan—who both began excitedly attending WSMS in the Fall 2013 Twos Program. During her children’s first year at WSMS, Iva assisted the WSMS Development office with the Annual Fund and volunteered with the Auction and Spring Fair committees. Currently, Dashiel and Morgan are in their third year at WSMS and thriving. After two years as co-president of the Parents Association, Iva continues to be an active parent at WSMS and is on the Admissions Committee. Iva also contributes to the Admissions Committee and Board as a parent representative. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of California, Los Angeles and Juris Doctorate from the American University, Washington College of Law. Iva practiced law for ten years at a law firm primarily in the area of advertising and marketing litigation and, later, in-house litigating intellectual property disputes. Iva also serves on the Acquisition Committee of the Studio Museum in Harlem and volunteers for the Harlem Children’s Zone. She is married to Scott Mills.

Kelly West is currently the Director of Lower School Admission at The Browning School. Kelly first joined the Browning faculty in 2003, where she served as an Assistant Teacher, Head Teacher and then Acting Head of Lower School before moving to admissions. Kelly received her MA from the Steinhardt School of Education at N.Y.U and a BA in Psychology from The George Washington University.

Jing Wang grew up in China. He came to the United States for graduate study after earning his BS in Physics from Peking University. After receiving a PhD from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2004, he joined Tricadia Capital LLC, a $4.2B multi-strategy credit hedge fund. Mr. Wang is now a partner and portfolio manager at the fund, trading US and European fixed income and equity derivatives, and focusing on generating stable and superior returns for investors. Besides work, Mr. Wang would like to dedicate more time to philanthropic efforts and nonprofit organizations. Mr. Wang is married to Yi Zhang. They have one son at WSMS and one who graduated in 2016.

Jing Wang

Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, Kyra Nelson spent the first 7 years of her career as an investment banker, primarily with the Credit Suisse First Boston Technology Group. She then worked in real estate in the Bay Area until she moved to Manhattan in 2013. Kyra holds a BA in History from Georgetown University, where she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and an MBA from the Stanford Graduate School of Business. Kyra and her husband, Travis, are proud parents of a daughter and son who attend WSMS, a son who attends the Manhattan Childrens Center, and a fourth child born in 2016. Kyra has been actively involved as a parent volunteer at WSMS and serves on the WSMS Admissions Committee as a parent interviewer.

Kelly West

Allen Lamb has been a Wall Street professional focused on the intersection of media and technology since the mid-2000s, and has also been a multiple time digital media entrepreneur. In his capacity as a finance executive, Allen was most recently with The Raine Group, a boutique merchant bank focused exclusively on entertainment, digital media and sports, while his latest concept as an entrepreneur was Cheddah, a mobile app that awards millennials instant cash credits to use at eateries in exchange for answering five quick questions about their day-to-day thoughts and insights. Allen holds a bachelor’s degree in Engineering, a master’s degree in Computer Science from Cornell University, and an MBA from the MIT Sloan School of Management. He resides on the Upper West Side with his wife, Angela (a dermatologist with Mt. Sinai), and two children, Mitchell, who completed three years at WSMS, and Darby, who is a current student.

Allen Lamb

Mr. Wang is married to Yi Zhang. They have two children, who both began excitedly attending WSMS in the Fall 2013 Twos Program. During their first year at WSMS, Mr. Wang worked for the past 11 years. His work can be seen in advertising campaigns for a variety of clients including Nestlé, BlackRock, Tiffany & Co., NASDAQ, Siemens and DuPont. Jeff has a bachelor’s degree in Communications from Boston University, and a BFA from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, CA. He and his wife, Lindsay, are proud parents of a current WSMS student as well as a recent WSMS graduate. Jeff is currently serving as co-president of the WSMS Parents Association.

Jeff Leaf

Bonny Whitcher (Parent Representative) is currently serving her first year as co-president of the Parents Association. Bonny is a CPA and received her BS in Business and Economics from Lehigh University. Prior to starting a family, she worked at Ernst & Young for 9 years in their Financial Services Office and then spent several years as the corporate controller of a boutique investment bank headquartered in New York City. She also provides volunteer financial advisory services to the Harlem Educational Activities Fund. Bonny and her husband, Jonathan, reside on the Upper West Side and are the proud parents of two current WSMS students.

Bonny Whitcher, Parent Representative

Jeff Leaf, Parent Representative

Kyra Nelson

After graduating from Penn State University and earning her Montessori training at The Children’s House in State College, PA, Joan Shisler (Faculty Representative) moved to New York to continue her teaching career at West Side Montessori School. She gained her Masters of Education Degree from Hunter College and has permanent New York State Teaching Certification for grades Pre-K through Elementary. Since 1979, she has taught in many of the different programs that WSMS has offered over the years. Currently Joan is a Head Teacher in the Late Afternoon Program and is the Nature/Science consultant and mentor for teachers. Joan has always been an avid gardener and has traveled extensively.

Kelly West

Joan Shisler, Faculty Representative

Jeff Leaf (Parent Representative) is Partner, Group Creative Director at Ogilvy & Mather, where he has worked for the past 11 years. His work can be seen in advertising campaigns for a variety of clients including Nestlé, BlackRock, Tiffany & Co., NASDAQ, Siemens and DuPont. Jeff has a bachelor’s degree in Communications from Boston University, and a BFA from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, CA. He and his wife, Lindsay, are proud parents of a current WSMS student as well as a recent WSMS graduate. Jeff is currently serving as co-president of the WSMS Parents Association.
MISSION STATEMENT

As we always do, we began by examining our mission, and ultimately reworded it to better express our focus and goals:

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.

BOARDS OF TRUSTEES APPROVES REVISED MISSION STATEMENT AND 2016-2021 STRATEGIC PLAN

At WSMS we are proud to be accredited by NYSAIS (the New York State Association of Independent Schools) and AMS (the American Montessori Society). Every ten years these organizations require us to look deeply into every aspect of our school—who we are, what we do, how we do it, what can/should we do differently—all with the goal of ensuring that we continue to provide the highest quality start to the education of our young students, and support their families to ensure that this process continues after they leave us.

This year the self-study that generated our 2016 decennial assessment also provided the context for reviewing our mission statement and assessing and developing a 2016-2021 Strategic Plan.

The data collection processes that undergird our planning decisions have been extensive, and involved a combination of focus group meetings and online surveys. In addition, our mission statement, educational program, internal and external communications, policy documents, administrative and governance structures, and physical plant have been examined.

On June 6, 2016, the West Side Montessori School Board of Trustees approved a revised Mission Statement and a new Strategic Plan to guide us for the next five years. The plan focuses on children, faculty, TEP and financial security. We are grateful to the many members of the faculty and administration, Board members, and parents and friends of WSMS who contributed their insights and enthusiasm to putting this plan in place.

Mimi Basso
Head of School
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2016–2021 STRATEGIC PLAN
The overriding goal of the new plan is continuous improvement: to ensure our ability to provide an unparalleled early childhood education with the highest caliber faculty in the most appropriate and best-maintained facility in New York City.

STRATEGIC GOAL #1: Enhance the experience of children.

We believe that learning is not neat and linear: it is a messy process. We expose children to a range of intellectual, physical and social activities, and we give them long blocks of uninterrupted time to work in these activities. In this way children take responsibility for their own learning. They ask questions and seek explanations and then ask more questions. They learn to make decisions, to challenge themselves, and to strategize. Our objectives for this goal address expanding these opportunities for our students.

Objectives:
• Enhance the cultural arts curriculum at WSMS
• Naturalize the rooftop environment
• Explore the possibility of providing uninterrupted work periods (2-3 hour blocks) for WSMS students
• Strengthen the bonds of WSMS alumni to their school

STRATEGIC GOAL #2: Uphold a faculty culture of excellence and growth.

We are very proud of our faculty. Our teachers are highly skilled, multi-talented, and well credentialed. Equally significant, they form a cohesive team of independent thinkers who are dedicated to and expert at helping their students experience the sense of joy and competence in their classroom work that will lead to a lifelong love of learning. We recognize the importance of attracting and maintaining strong faculty and are committed to ensuring competitive salaries as well as meaningful benefits, professional development opportunities, a stimulating work environment, and high morale.

Objectives:
• Strengthen the enduring commitment to knowledge, reflection and mutual support that is already a vital characteristic of our faculty culture
• Commit to anti-bias professional development for teachers so that they can create an environment which supports anti-bias work with children
• Develop and support a wellness initiative for teachers
• Develop and support a financial preparedness initiative for teachers

STRATEGIC GOAL #3: Explore, nurture and celebrate diversity at WSMS.

We are, by design, a culturally, racially, and economically diverse school. Our families—parents and children—and our faculty/administration reflect the ethnic, cultural, racial, and economic mix of our community. Over the years approximately one-fourth of our families have received financial assistance through the School's Financial Aid Fund. More than 40% of our families self-identify as non-Caucasian for the NYS Basic Educational Data (BEDS) form. Our faculty is also ethnically and racially diverse, including 3 African-American/multi-racial, 5 Hispanic, 6 Asian, 3 Middle-Eastern and 22 Caucasian teachers in 2016-17.

There are a number of children with identified disabilities receiving special services: occupational and/or physical therapy, speech/language therapy, vision therapy, and counseling.

We strive to build a warm, welcoming community in which children and adults find friendships and support, a place where adults and children are encouraged to ask questions and broaden their understandings of themselves, others and the world.

Objectives:
• Explore who we are as a community
• Share our diversity

STRATEGIC GOAL #4: Promote, enhance and communicate the value of TEP.

Over the past five years, WSMS has strengthened our Teacher Education Program by adding the option for an Infant-Toddler credential, partnering with Concordia College to offer a master's degree to students, and upgrading the fifth floor gym space to provide adult classroom space. TEP offers expanded career opportunities to our classroom teachers, as well as a first look at potential entry level teachers as they intern in our classrooms.

Objectives:
• Promote, enhance, communicate Teacher Education Program opportunities
• Promote, enhance, and communicate ongoing professional development opportunities
• Promote, enhance, and communicate the knowledge and expertise of TEP faculty

STRATEGIC GOAL #5: Assess and protect WSMS’s long-term financial sustainability.

WSMS has been conservatively managed, has no outstanding debt, and enjoys a comfortable level of cash reserves. The Finance and Investment Committee of the Board has oversight responsibility for investments consistent with the Financial Policy and Procedures Manual adopted by the Board.

Annual income is composed of tuition, ACS funding, funds raised through the annual Auction and through Annual Giving, interest on invested funds, and the WSMS-TEP program. In the past, capital campaigns have been used to fund major projects, but there are no campaigns planned at the current time.

In these uncertain economic times we must ensure our financial ability to support our mission of economic as well as social and cultural diversity. We must actively manage our building to maintain its functional and financial viability. And we must improve our ability to deal with unanticipated cash needs and major capital commitments.

Objectives:
• Adopt an investment/risk policy
• Determine whether investment management should be outsourced or internal
• Establish baseline financial health for WSMS
• Ensure consistent financial performance
• Support financial literacy as a core competency of the WSMS Board
• Identify new sources of revenue
• Identify future capital expenditures
As you know, every ten years WSMS undergoes a major self-study to be re-accredited by NYSAIS (New York State Association of Independent Schools) and AMS (American Montessori Society). Over the last year, we used this as an opportunity to take a deep look into how WSMS operates, and the faculty, administration, Board and families in the community, both current and former, had a role in that effort. The purpose of this process, above all, is school improvement, and we all (students and their families, faculty and administration) benefit.

It was an honor and privilege to serve as co-chair of the steering committee for West Side Montessori School’s re-accreditation. I have been a member of the faculty of WSMS, as a teacher of both children and adults, since 2009. But the process of self-study reminded me of what makes this school such a unique and generous place, not only for children and their families, but also for faculty and administration. I’m very grateful to work in a community of people so deeply dedicated to their work.

Throughout the process of our self-study, WSMS faculty and administration took thoughtful account of what we do everyday: what works, and what we can do better. It was quite a coordinated team effort! Everyone’s input and efforts throughout this process were invaluable, and it is my hope that within the AMS report they will hear their voices, and the voices of the children and families with whom we partner.

Because we are a Montessori school, NYSAIS permits the educational program piece of the self-study to be prepared according to AMS guidelines. What follows is an excerpt from the report submitted to the American Montessori Society in July of 2016, detailing the work faculty and administration undertook, with the participation of both current and former families.

DEFINING WHO WE ARE: THE EDUCATIONAL NATURE OF THE SCHOOL

Many aspects of the self-study required the participation of the full faculty. Some of this work was conducted during evening faculty meetings, held monthly, where the teachers participated in deeply meaningful reflections on our program offerings.

At our first meeting, teachers examined the learner outcomes identified by the American Montessori Society, and brainstormed indicators that matched each of these outcomes. They recorded their ideas on Post-its, which were then placed on posters and later used for the development of our observation forms and surveys. At another meeting, teachers gathered at tables covered with paper tablecloths, each labeled with one of the essential qualities of a Montessori school. Over the course of a few hours, small groups considered: what are our strengths, and what could we do better? Teachers were offered the opportunity to share their thoughts as they related to the essential qualities of Montessori education: the Montessori Learning Environment, Students’ Learning Activity, Learning Relationships, Spirituality, What the Montessori Teacher Does, and What the Montessori Teacher Is.

Teachers’ responses served as the frame-
work for our Educational Nature of the School section. The faculty reflected appreciation of this element of the process in surveys completed at the conclusion of the self-study: “I think meeting in small groups to talk about strengths and weaknesses of our program is certainly a step towards becoming better at what we do.” Echoed another faculty member, “All good programs must have opportunities for constructive criticism to be offered.”

Faculty committees gathered on Friday afternoons in the library. With heads bowed over laptops or raised to participate in a brainstorming session, teachers created guidelines for our parent observation groups, located particular articles in Great Beginnings, formulated drafts of surveys, and, later, tallied results and identified meaningful anecdotal information to be included in the report.

Our Head Teacher Professional Development Seminars, held monthly, provided a space to refine the work of the self-study. This subset of experienced faculty examined the compiled lists from the faculty’s discussions of our strengths, areas for growth and plans for improvement. They addressed and reflected upon the standards set forth by the American Montessori Society.

**DOING WHAT MONTESSORIANS DO BEST: OBSERVE!**

The faculty then deeply immersed ourselves in study of the eight learner outcomes identified by AMS as integral to the best Montessori programs: independence, confidence and competence, autonomy, intrinsic motivation, social responsibility, academic preparation, spiritual awareness, and global citizenship. Are we successful in providing our students with opportunities to develop in these areas? How could this be ascertained? Through thoughtful observation and analysis conducted over the course of the year, teachers gathered photographic and anecdotal evidence for their classrooms, creating illustrative newsletters to be shared with the parent body. Additionally, end-of-year conferences and reports were structured according to the eight learner outcomes, providing us with useful data for every one of our 245 students.

Cross-classroom and cross-level observations by teachers further supported the collaborative approach to which we aspired at the outset of the self-study. Though we always intend to visit the classrooms of our colleagues within the school, too often this opportunity slips away as our school year becomes busy with other tasks and responsibilities. The self-study necessitated that we undertake this important work, and a collegial atmosphere was renewed among faculty. During the period allotted to the teacher observations, it was common to hear peers offering support and praise of one another, or seeking more information about one another’s strategies, approaches, presentations, and even songs. One teacher commented: “It was nice to see that there was evidence for all of the wonderful things that we feel about our school—that you can go into any classroom, and see evidence of it.” Another added: “I enjoy these moments and opportunities [to be observed] because parents get to really see what makes WSMS such a special place and why the children cherish it so much.”

The steering committee also organized a month-long observation period to be conducted in every classroom, at every level, by current and former parents as well as members of the Administration. Thirty-seven parents, including many sitting or former Board members, were invited to spend one hour in a classroom other than their child’s to seek evidence of a particular learner outcome; twenty-six agreed, and several parents volunteered to participate in more than one observation.

Feedback shared on the observation forms and verbally was enthusiastic; parents and administrators delighted in the opportunity to see classrooms at work in a unique way that had not previously been afforded. To quote Iva Mills, parent to two children at WSMS and 2015-16 PA co-president: “Participating in the classroom observations allowed me to observe authentic and spontaneous interactions between children working together with their peers and teachers. I also appreciated seeing how individual children autonomously engaged the works over long periods of time with nominal teacher guidance. I was quite struck by the care children consistently took to maintain the work(s) and the classroom environment.” This sentiment was echoed by Nigel-Ann La Qua Williamson, parent to two children at WSMS: “Besides the fact that it was exciting to observe the children in the classroom for a long period of time, observing a specific learner outcome was very interesting. It really helped how to gauge an observation well by looking for something specific. It was interesting to see what is being learned in the classroom, and also to be aware of the milestones teachers/WSMS is striving to attain. Although the children are all learning at a different pace, the learner outcome that I observed both times were very evident in the classrooms.”

Administrators expressed appreciation for the opportunity to view the work underway in our classrooms. One staff member commented, “I was delighted to spend some time observing. Despite the fact that I have been working in a Montessori school for almost two years, I’ve had little opportunity to see how the philosophy is implemented in the classroom. I was most impressed by the children’s self-sufficiency; whether it be getting their own snack or resolving an issue with a peer, they seemed confident and capable.” Another member of the administrative staff added, “What struck me most was the teachers’ patience with the children and their encouragement toward independent activities.”
CLASSEEM YEAR-END RESPONSES

Below are word clouds generated by parents’ responses to our year-end survey: the first by parents of children in our multi-age classrooms, and the second by parents of children in the Twos classrooms. They reflect the words used most frequently in response to the prompt: Please choose five adjectives to describe your child’s classroom experience.

SURVEYING OUR CONSTITUENTS

As the end of the school year approached, the committee created a survey for teachers to assess the development of learner outcomes throughout the year, in both multi-age and Twos classrooms. This survey was completed for each child, and used as a framework to plan teacher-led conferences. We attained 100% participation by teachers on this survey.

At the start of each end-of-year conference, parents were reminded that the school was engaged in a process of self-study, and that conferences were organized with attention to the AMS eight learner outcomes. Many parents confirmed that they found it useful to hear their child’s experiences highlighted in this manner. In contrast to past formats for this important summation of the child’s year, this approach provided a more holistic picture of each child’s development, rather than simply sharing a list of mastered lessons.

At the conclusion of each end-of-year conference, teachers advised parents that they would be asked to submit a survey comparable to the one completed by the teachers. This allowed us to see whether teachers’ perceptions of learner outcomes matched the perception of parents. We attained 70% participation from parents of children in multi-age classrooms, and 80% participation from parents in the Twos program.

The committee also created a version of the learner outcome survey to be completed by representatives from ongoing schools who have welcomed West Side Montessori School alumni. Ten schools were polled; 5 responded. Heads of School and/or Admissions Directors were asked to comment on 16 indicators (two for each learner outcome), and to provide additional information as needed. They were also asked to describe a “typical” West Side Montessori School graduate with five adjectives. Below is a selection of their affirming replies:

- curious, cooperative, mature, kind, social
- collaborative, respectful, engaged, self-assured, community-minded
- curious, capable, independent, kind, generous

This self-study, which involved our faculty and administration, current and former parents, Board members, and even the children themselves, has clarified our understanding of our goals for children as a leading Montessori school and unified our approach to meeting these goals. The outcomes of the study informed our latest strategic plan, detailed further in this magazine, and provided a plan for school-wide goal setting. Every member of our faculty will have a hand in meeting these new goals. The hard work completed thus far has been in service of the children in our care, and, as we make meaningful changes in response to the self-study, of the children who will join us in the coming years.
MEET BEVERLY SMITH, ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

Beverly Smith was primed for change. After a lifetime of increasingly responsible positions in suburban schools—most recently as head of Acorn Montessori School in Lebanon, NJ—she was ready to explore life in a more urban, culturally available location. She had started putting out feelers for new positions.

Bev knew about WSMS because of its reputation in the greater Montessori community, and she had also been hearing about the school from Marie Dugan, former president of the American Montessori Society and a close personal friend to her and also to Mimi Basso. And, as Vice President (now President) of the New Jersey Montessori Association Corporation, Bev knew Lisanne Pinciotti, Director of WSMS-TEP (Lisanne is also a member of NJMAC).

When Lisanne called Bev, out of the blue, and said she and Mimi had an idea they wanted to discuss, Bev was happy to meet with them.

Mimi had two objectives: she needed some expertise is incredible. And having three or four teachers in every classroom means the children get unparalleled support.”).

Bev actually did not start out as a Montessori teacher. At Rumsey Hall in Washington, CT, the sixth grade students who had transferred in from a local Montessori impressed her. “The Montessori kids were amazing. They always found something positive about the other children. They asked critical questions and even asked for extra homework to explore different ways of looking at a topic.” She moved to Washington Montessori School and began work toward a Montessori credential.

At Washington Montessori, Bev was always looking for another challenge. At West Side Montessori, she is delighted with the challenges facing her. Her ongoing work with American Montessori Society (AMS) on the Emerging Leaders Fellowship Program (ELF) feeds directly into the development of the TEP administrative curriculum.

And she relishes the chance to become involved in the community. At Acorn she was hired to turn around a school that had faced a few difficult years. She describes one of her strengths as the ability to “see how the community will interpret what’s happening, and focus on the positive.” Her success at Acorn in building community translates into the desire at WSMS to reinforce the strong core she recognizes here.

When asked if anything surprised her, Bev said she is “blown away” by our historical diversity and financial support, and by the professional development opportunities available to our faculty and administration. She admits with a smile that finding a quiet space is a challenge, but is impressed by the ingenious multi-use green facilities.

Transition to urban life can be a bit intimidating, and Bev did it with care. At first she commuted from her home in central New Jersey. Then she found a great apartment in West New York—an easy commute by bus across the Hudson, with glorious city views when she walks her dog in the park across the street from her building. At the moment she is housing her 27-year-old son (soon to move to London) and her daughter, who graduated last May from Haverford College. She loves access to the cultural life of the city…and the opportunity to “order in” her lunch!
Almost every day from October through June, at least one child will point to his or her family photo on the wall. “See? That’s my family!” or “Look! I see my dad. His name is Angelo,” or “Giuls, did you know me and my mom have a special feeling called rainbow love? She gets it when she hugs her mom, my grandma, or when I give her a kiss!” Children look to these pictures when they long for their families during separation. They can see their families when they wander the classroom awaiting the urge to work or play. The pictures are present during drop-off and dismissal, for hellos and goodbyes. And, most importantly, children see their families during classroom circles, when we build community by talking about kindness, friendship, ourselves, and those we love. Our families, though they say goodbye when the door closes, are actually ever-present in our classrooms.

In The Power of Guidance: Teaching Social Emotional Skills in Early Childhood Classrooms, Dan Gartrell writes, “Over the years a mistaken practice in education has been to consider the child in the classroom as separate from the child in the family” (2004, p. 38). Today, research related to anti-bias early childhood education is digging deeper to demonstrate why families are so important to children and what challenges may arise as children begin to make meaning of their families and the families of others. As adults, and as teachers, we have the responsibility to support and guide children in our community as they try to understand other families, their own families, and themselves.

Young children’s personal and social identities are directly connected to their families. They understand themselves based on the people they love most, know best, and have learned everything from. In Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves, Louise Derman-Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards (2010) write, “Family is central to the life of every child. It is through this earliest relationship that children come to view themselves and others and find their place in the world” (p.112). Not only is it through their families that children make meaning of their world, but each child also begins with the understanding that his or her family represents what all families are. As adults, we know that family structures vary, and we also know that a family structure does not reveal what a family needs or “how well it functions” (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010, p. 113). Our children, however, are just beginning to learn about how families are full of differences.

One of the beautiful and interesting aspects of family is that it is a concrete and meaningful subject through which children can explore and respect the diversity in our community. Children are curious about how families are composed of different numbers of people, different roles, and different appearances. Children can see that some families live together and some live apart; some families live with grandparents; some families have step-parents and step-siblings; some families are spread around the globe, while others all live within the five boroughs. Children can also see the love, care, and sense of belonging that exists in all families.

It has been interesting to consider what family means, to children and to adults. According to Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010), “Most children most commonly un-
We can always be proud in my family and side down. They say we can break our necks, don’t like when me and my sister hang up

miss them,” to “They can get mad. They ily and you never leave your family or you’ll

families. In one such conversation this year, information about what children know about

Families by Robert Skutch or example, we might read

and have conversations about family. For

whole class, we read books, do activities,

Before sharing the family photos with the

whole class, we read books, do activities,

smile!” We also have specific conversations

about who is in a family. Again, children

share different ideas:

“I have one cousin named Baby Elle.”

“I only have a mom and three cousins.”

“I have a grandma and mom and dad! Oh, and a baby sister. When my grandma was little she had a pet parakeet...?”

(By the way, for those children with strong

interest in animals, we offer information or

the opportunity to research how female el-

phants care for all of the young elephants

or how male seahorses carry their fertilized

eggs. It is amazing how the mention of ani-

mals will draw some children’s attention!)

And, for our artists (everyone!), we offer the

project of drawing their own family portraits. Children choose the individuals they consid-

er part of their families. This year I’ve seen
groups that range from immediate family

caretakers, to a large company that also

included the most precious stuffed animals

of a child and her brother. Studying family

offers children the opportunity to identify

and include those they love most.

We teachers also model how we will share

the photos by bringing in our own family

pictures. That allows us to work in ideas that

some children won’t mention without an in-
vitation, such as divorce, relatives living in

other parts of the world, step-siblings, or
grandparents who have died.

In these ways, and others, we make sure that

the classroom community is full of kindness

and respect for every family.

How do you think family should be defined

for children? What aspects of family do you

feel are important to talk about with chil-
dren? As teachers, we ask ourselves these

very questions, and many more. [See Side-

bar: Stop and Think: Our Own and Others’

Family Structures] Through conversations

and activities about family, we can help

children learn to respect differences among

families, and to cherish the love within fami-
lies.

In the new WSMS strategic plan, the school

set a goal to celebrate and explore our com-

munity’s diversity. The family unit is a perfect

place to begin; however, like other sensitive

topics, teachers are careful to set a strong

foundation of understanding and respect

first. We recognize that adults and children

are sensitive when talking about the differ-

ces and uncertainties they may experience

within their own families. We also agree that,

“Children are hurt if their early childhood

community does not validate their family.

Because family is such a personal construct,
it is critical that teachers allow each child to
define his or her family and then support

that definition” (Derman-Sparks & Edwards,

2010, p.113). For these reasons, we build

curriculum around the idea of family and we

include everyone.

Before sharing the family photos with the

whole class, we read books, do activities,

and have conversations about family. For

example, we might read Who’s in a Family?

by Robert Skutch or The Great Big Book of

Families by Mary Hoffman. We then collect

information about what children know about

families. In one such conversation this year,

comments ranged from “You love your fam-

ily and you never leave your family or you’ll

miss them,” to “They can get mad. They
don’t like when me and my sister hang up-

down. They say we can break our necks, but

that’s not really true,” and “Sometimes

we can always be proud in my family and

STOP AND THINK:
Our Own and Others’
Family Structures

As teachers committed to anti-bias early

childhood education, we realize that

some of the most important work we do

is the work of reflection. Here are some

questions to ask yourself as you consider

how you talk about family with your chil-
deren and help them develop respect and

understanding:

• What was the configuration of your

family of origin? Your current family?

How was it similar or different from

other families in your community?

• What did others (in school, in your

community) communicate to you

about your family? Was your family

accepted or admired? Did you experi-

ence teasing, invisibility, or rejection?

• What messages did you receive from

your family about families with struc-
tures different from yours?

• With what types of family configura-
tions are you most comfortable? Least

comfortable? Why?

(From: Derman-Sparks, L. and Julie Olsen Edwards. 2010. Anti-Bias Education for Our Children and Ourselves. NAEYC: Washington DC)
One challenge for teachers is getting to know about families through the parents. Some classrooms have tried to collect information about each family’s culture and traditions through surveys. The teacher can then better prepare herself to have meaningful conversations with children if they are absent for a holiday or when a relative is visiting from far away. However, surveys can only scratch the surface in getting to know a family.

At WSMS, we are lucky to have home visits and beginning-of-year conferences, during which we can learn about what families do together, which people are important in their lives, what languages they speak, what they celebrate, and much more. We can check in with parents at the beginning or end of day through casual conversations, or schedule meetings and phone calls for other times. We can make time to talk with parents, but we also know that it may require a longer relationship before people are willing to disclose personal information. When parents do share challenges, idiosyncrasies, worries, or values with teachers, we feel honored to have their trust, and we also feel more capable to support their family.

Parent-teacher conferences are excellent opportunities for teachers and parents to have honest and supportive conversations. These conversations, however, can be full of emotion and even anxiety with the pressure of omissions, challenging behaviors, or assumptions. Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot wrote an excellent book about the parent-teacher conference dynamic. In *The Essential Conversation*, she considers the parent’s experience of speaking with teachers, as well the teacher’s perspective. Her work explores how past experience and identity influence how parents and teachers interact. Though the parent-teacher relationship can bring up challenges, it is essential to fully supporting the child.

At WSMS, we make it a priority to offer families a comfortable and welcoming community. We follow NAEYC’s guidelines: “Practitioners work in collaborative partnerships with families, establishing and maintaining regular, frequent two-way communication with them... [They] involve families as a source of information about the child...and engage them in the planning for their child... Mutual respect, cooperation, [and] shared responsibility” (Derman-Sparks and Edwards, 2010, p. 36). This partnership is dependent on families learning about our school, our classrooms, and Montessori education. To truly partner with families, particularly as a Montessori school, we are obligated to provide parent education too. Paula Polk Lillard, in *Montessori Today* (1996), writes, “If education is to begin at birth, parents must be considered the child’s first teachers. Montessori believed that parents needed and wanted help in this regard” (p. 28). We hope our parents come with questions, interest, and open minds to learn about West Side Montessori School and the practices in their child’s classroom. A strong and trusting connection between home and school, family and classroom, serves every child in understanding himself or herself and his or her community.

Finally, though the classroom door closes at 9:10 a.m., we hope that our families will schedule times to come visit, to share their traditions, to read a book, or to have a meal. We also hope you will tell us during conferences, conversations, and even through surveys(!) more about who you are and what is important to you. In our classrooms, we truly want to embrace every family with all of their special and unique differences, just as we know and love every child for exactly who he or she is.

**Works Cited:**
FUNDRAISING RESULTS 2015-2016  
(unaudited)

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2015-2016 REVENUE (unaudited)

- Annual Fund 5%
- Auction 4%
- Tuition, Fees, Gov’t Programs 91%

2015-2016 OPERATING EXPENSES (unaudited)

- Instructional Expense 55%
- Building Maintenance 11%
- Financial Aid 13%
- Administrative 21%
THE ANNUAL FUND 2015-2016

WE ARE SO FORTUNATE TO BE ABLE TO COUNT ON YOU ...

The Annual Fund is the foundation of the school’s fundraising efforts. All contributions are utilized immediately to ensure significant improvements to the school’s programming and facilities, as well as to achieve a balanced budget for the year.

Like all non-profit independent schools, we depend on a combination of tuition revenue, interest income on reserve funds, and charitable gifts from parents, alumni, and friends to support our ongoing operations and our priorities. None of these sources alone would be sufficient to deliver the quality of early childhood education that WSMS is known for while also ensuring the longer-term stability of the school as an institution.

A WSMS parent put it well by saying, “The tuition makes the school as good as it has been, while the fund helps the school to achieve something even greater; tuition is what we ‘have to pay,’ but the Fund represents what we love to contribute.”

Thanks to the generosity and support of our community, WSMS has enjoyed these significant improvements, among others, in curriculum and facilities in recent years:

- the comprehensive renovation of the gym in 2015
- hiring an expert on Dual Language Learners in 2015 who is working with teachers to enhance their support of children whose family language is other than English*
- the Kindness Curriculum that was designed and launched by former WSMS teacher Cara Zelas in 2015*
- a series of workshops in partnership with the Network for Schools that Heal that teachers attended in 2014*
- hiring a nutritionist who created healthy snack and meal options with Chef Jonathan for WSMS children in 2013*
- the creation of our new Parents Room/Library in 2011
- the installation of new Snug Play equipment in our rooftop play space in 2011
- the creation of a faculty incentive program for excellence in teaching in 2011
- hiring a music specialist working with teachers to expand their repertoires in 2010*
- the “green” renovation of our eight classrooms and our kitchen in 2009

*As a result of the Annual Fund-supported Visiting Scholar Program that was launched in 2009
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Anonymous (3)

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Bonny and Jonathan Whitcher
Nigel-Ann La Qua Williamson and Marco Williamson
Anonymous

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At WSMS, ALL parents are part of the Parents Association. This means that we value every contribution to our school community in whatever ways work for each family. From hosting a Class Dinner, to spending a Saturday morning at Hippo Playground at our Bulb Planting event, to scheduling time to visit the classroom to share something important to your family, or anything and everything in between, we are so happy to have had you on board. In addition to our children’s unparalleled learning environment, the wonderfully diverse and active parent body is a great source of pride at WSMS. As a school that was founded in 1963 by a caring group of parents, each and every family is a special part of WSMS’ history. The breadth of time, talent and good will generated freely by so many in the community is inspirational.

Last year, Co-Presidents Lindsay Forbes and Iva Mills returned for a second year and once again assembled an energetic, creative and hard working group of committee chairs and class representatives, whose names are listed here. This list of volunteers is but a small percentage of the countless parents who lent a hand. To all of you, our deepest thanks.
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2015-2016

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Iva Mills

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4Epm
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THE ANNUAL WEST SIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL AUCTION
Bringing the entire community of families, faculty and staff together to celebrate & to support a critically important part of our mission.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 2017
7:00 – 11:00PM | THE LOEB BOATHOUSE | CENTRAL PARK

For over 50 years, we’ve provided 20% of WSMS families (40 or more students) annual tuition support from our financial aid program.
The gracious volunteer leadership of Auction Co-Chairs Cecily Denny, Malda Hibri, and Thao Nguyen led to a spectacular night. Their leadership, combined with the hard work and expertise of a legion of parent volunteers, provided an exceptional night of fun and community spirit. From the record-breaking turn-out of best dressed Guys and Dolls, to the musical genius of the McClenty Hunter Quartet, to the spirited Live Auction and dance party, there was every reason to celebrate.

Thanks to the enthusiasm and generosity of this extraordinary community, we collectively raised over $275,000 for the West Side Montessori School Financial Aid Program. This is an increase of more than 7% of the previous year’s proceeds. We are truly grateful to every parent, alumni family, board member, teacher, faculty member and friend of WSMS for contributing to such a wonderful fundraising event. We tip our Jazz Hats to you!

Our sincere thanks to Cecily, Malda, and Thao, to our committee chairs and members, and to Nikki Chase-Levin for an amazing evening. A special thank you to our WSMS faculty and to our children, who worked so hard to create those impressive classroom projects. Heartfelt thanks also to the teachers who donated their time and creativity to this year’s Teacher Time projects, and to the administrative staff for all their help and support.
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THE 2015 FALL FESTIVAL

OCTOBER 17, 2015

Although we are still filled with excitement from the recent 3rd Annual Fall Festival, we would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the wonderful volunteers and donors who graciously put together last year’s Festival. The 2nd Annual Fall Festival took place on a crisp, beautiful day, and was a resounding success. The hard work and commitment of our volunteers – all 185 of you! – resulted in a memorable day for all who attended. We are deeply grateful to all those who helped – whether it was posting festival flyers in our neighborhood, bringing tables and chairs out to the street, hanging signs from the tents, working the grill, making delicious goodies for the food tables, helping kids string beads, working with little ones to paint with vegetables, or helping clean everything up and haul supplies to the gym, we couldn’t have done it without our devoted and generous community.

In particular, thank you to our Festival co-chairs Katie Barra, Jocelyn Charles, Radhika Dewan, Laura Gould, Misha Nonen, and Allison Ross. Many thanks to Nikki Chase-Levin, Lindsay Forbes and Iva Mills for the support they provided the team. The smiling faces of the face-painted children who bounced and sang the day away said it all!
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Great Beginnings
FALL 2016

Very special thanks to the WSMS faculty and the WSMS parent photographers, who provided many of the articles and photos used in this magazine, and to the WSMS administrative team, who helped in ways too numerous to count.

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