



Fox & Tree

A Newsletter for Friends of Wissahickon Charter School

2022-2023 Annual Report

A Note from Dean Kristi

WCS Chief Executive Officer

Saying goodbye to our graduating eighth graders is always bittersweet, but this year's ceremony held extra significance as we said farewell to our very first K-8th class at our Awbury Campus. This was the first cohort of students to attend our second campus, opened in 2014, from "start to finish." Nine years is a long time by most standards, but especially so in the life of a child. Many of our students started as itty-bitty five year olds, just learning the basics of school-- how to raise their hands, use their indoor voices, and walk in a straight line; And they leave as teenagers who have read and performed Raisin in the Sun, petitioned City Council, and traveled the Appalachian Trail (and, admittedly, still need a little practice with those "indoor voices" sometimes).

A very special Graduation tradition here at Wissahickon is to have each student spoken for at the ceremony by a member of our staff. Whether they have been with us all nine years or just for two, each student will have an adult speak uniquely about them, sharing valuable memories, impressions, and advice.

I wanted to share a few of these quotes with you here in my letter, a task that proved extremely hard to execute. Whittling it down to just two or three of the "best" was nearly impossible, so I've included several of my favorites, which you can read on page 4. I hope they will demonstrate the depth, diversity, growth, and charm of our dear students as well as the care and attention shown to them each day by our incredible staff.

Thank you for supporting Wissahickon and making this special community possible.

Dean Kristi

In Remembrance: Eleanor "Lee" Rowan

We are saddened to share the recent passing of our friend Lee Rowan on July 12, 2023. Lee was a fierce advocate for education and a critical supporter of Wissahickon Charter. She was also a real trailblazer, one of the earliest female graduates of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, gaining a degree in architecture. Lee ultimately focused on interior design and contributed to the design of the Children's Museum in Indianapolis, amongst many other special projects. She and her husband Henry Rowan were also generous philanthropists, believing strongly in educational access and equity. Lee's first gift to Wissahickon was in support of the Awbury Library, which, in the nearly 10 years since its founding, has had a tremendous impact on our school and our students.

Despite her achievements and influence, Lee remained incredibly authentic: she loved talking to and getting to know the Wissahickon students when she visited. That is how we will always remember her: genuine, caring, and kind.





Wissahickon CHARTER SCHOOL

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j.walsh@wissahickoncharter.org

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**"We Take Care of the Earth
That Takes Care of Us"**

Fernhill Campus

4700 G Wissahickon Ave

Philadelphia, PA 19144

Awbury Campus

815 E Washington Lane

Philadelphia, PA 19138

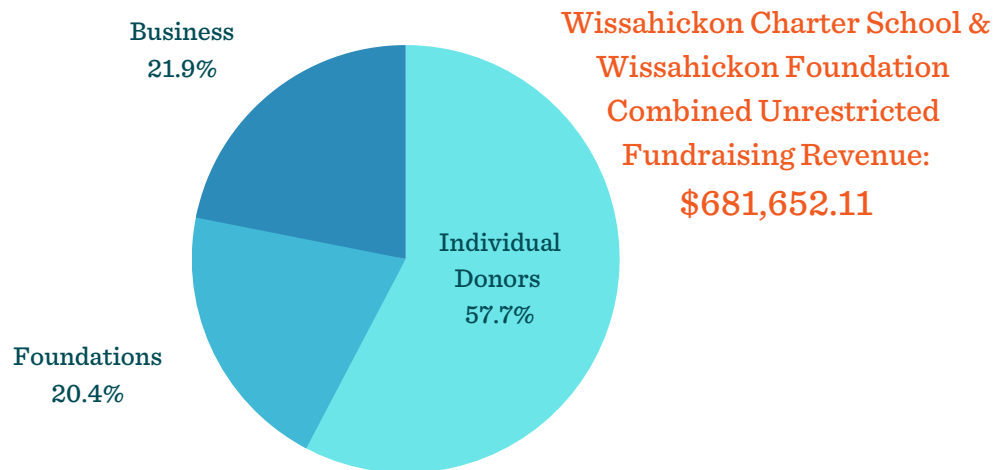
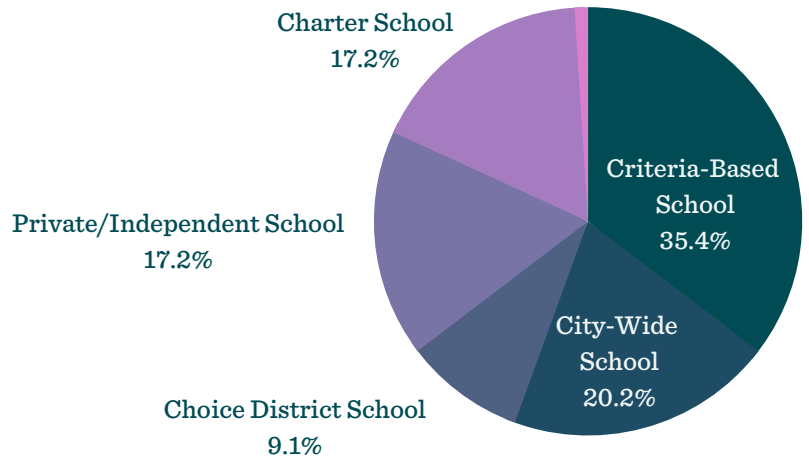


www.wissahickoncharter.org

2022-2023 Report Card

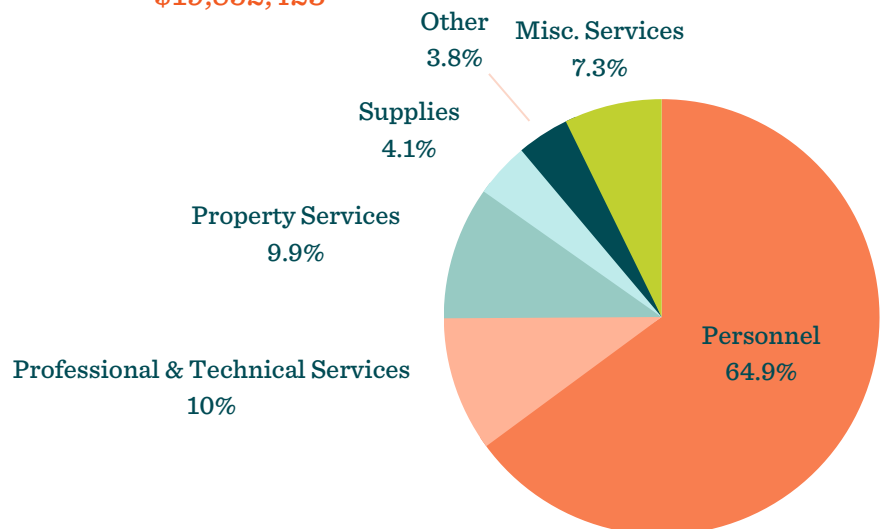
Eighth Grade Outcomes

One of our biggest metrics of success is our ability to provide our graduating eighth graders with high quality options for high school and the ability to choose a "best fit" school. We are proud to report that 99% of 8th graders were accepted to a high-school of choice!



Wissahickon Charter School Expenses:

\$19,852,423

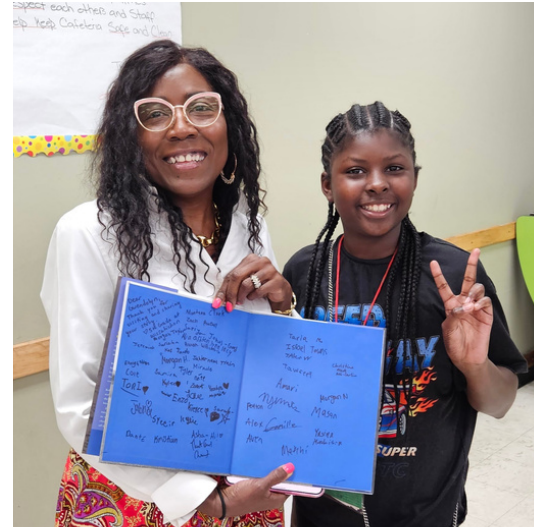


Readers and Leaders of Social Change

This year the big buzz at Wissahickon was all around our new literacy curriculum, EL Language Arts. EL not only adheres to the principles of Science of Reading -- the current leading approach to literacy instruction -- but it is also highly aligned with Wissahickon's inquiry-based environmental curriculum and emphasis on social emotional learning. Teaching in EL is designed to foster curiosity about the world. The curriculum comes with many hands-on lessons and a wealth of high-interest topics. The program is centered on learning "modules," which vary by grade and change throughout the year. Modules include topics such as "What's Up in the Sky: A Study of the Sun, Moon, and Stars (1st)," "Providing for Pollinators (2nd)," and "Athlete Leaders of Social Change (5th)."

In this final module, students learned about and discussed the factors that contribute to the success of professional athletes as leaders of social change, starting with historical figures like Jackie Robinson and eventually moving on to more contemporary leaders like Jim Abbott and - of course - our very own Philadelphia Eagles.

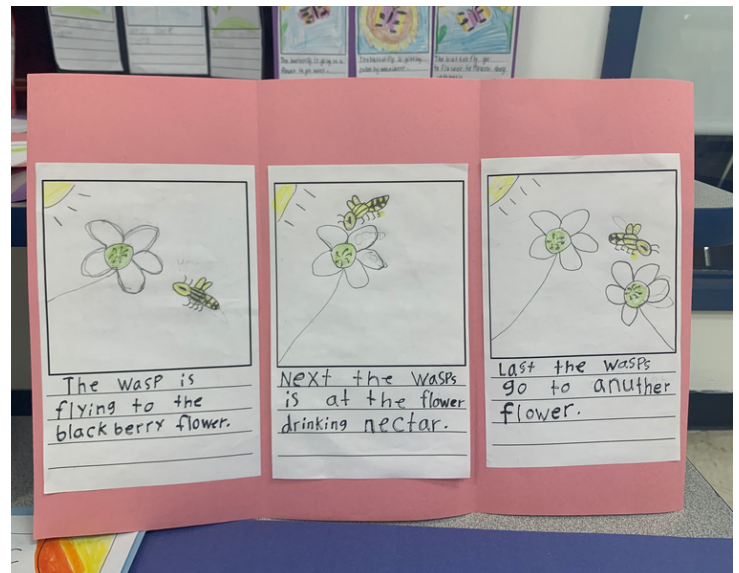
In their final project, the 5th Graders presented on the "Habits of Character" (such as compassion, integrity, and collaboration) that help leaders to effect social change, and we were fortunate to have a very special visitor to speak on this topic. Mrs. Gwendolyn V. Jenkins is the President and CEO of The Malcolm Jenkins Foundation, a charity founded in 2010 by her son, former Philadelphia Eagle Malcolm Jenkins! Mrs. Jenkins spoke about the habits of character that made Malcolm a successful leader of social change, the values that she has tried to instill in her family, and the ways in which she and Malcolm have effected positive social change. Students also presented Mrs. Jenkins with a copy of the book "Promises to Keep," written by the daughter of Jackie Robinson, and signed by our 5th Graders. Thank you, Mrs. Jenkins, for your dedicated service and for inspiring our students to become leaders of change!



Mrs. Gwendolyn V. Jenkins, President and CEO of The Malcolm Jenkins Foundation, spoke to our WCS 5th Graders.



Left: Mrs. Jenkins holds a copy of "Promises to Keep," a gift from our 5th Graders, who are reading the book as part of their module on "Athlete Leaders of Social Change." Right: Our 2nd Graders built their research skills and science knowledge through a study of the secret world of plants and pollinators.



Eagle Trivia (No, not THAT kind of Eagle!)

Eagles have a hooked beak that is used to tear scales off of fish!

Fact brought to you by our First Graders, who became "bird experts" as part of their EL Module on Birds!



Quotes from Graduation Speeches

“When I met Amiyah, I knew she was the kind of person who looks out for other people. She cares about her family and makes sure people have what they need. My favorite memories of Amiyah are the times when she went out of her way to help someone, make someone smile, or just check in on someone who was having a hard time. She knew how to make the silliest jokes to bring a smile to the faces of the people around her.”

“Jade...For the nine years I have known you, there has been one thing that has stayed true: you have always had that tough exoskeleton, with a BIG heart protected inside. I feel privileged to see that heart of yours... I see it when you mentor younger students and support friends when they are in need. I see it in your smile and laugh in moments of genuine happiness. It is absolutely captivating.”

“Haniyah... I remember back in Kindergarten when you were this tiny little person with a big old raspy voice and now I look at you, an almost fully grown person with an even bigger raspy voice..You truly stand up for what you believe in and advocate for yourself as well as the people you care about. The last few years have presented many challenges but you made it through. I encourage you to stay focused and on top of your work because you have all the intelligence and support to be a great success!”

“You are a dedicated and talented student, who is not afraid to ask for what you want. Repeatedly. But I admire your persistence, even when it is directed at me, because I know your enthusiasm to learn new things, along with your high standards for yourself will take you far. Making your own clothes and forging your own path, you stand out from the crowd and bring creativity to all you do. Remember to embrace the mistakes along the way, hold onto that empathy and always let your creative spirit shine. ”

“Ryan, you are a firefly. Your kindness, your intelligence, your witty humor are a gift to those around you. You are truly a gift in any setting. Ryan, I have so very much enjoyed watching you since kindergarten, give the same steadiness while finding new and brilliant ways to grow. I cannot wait for the world to see that too.”

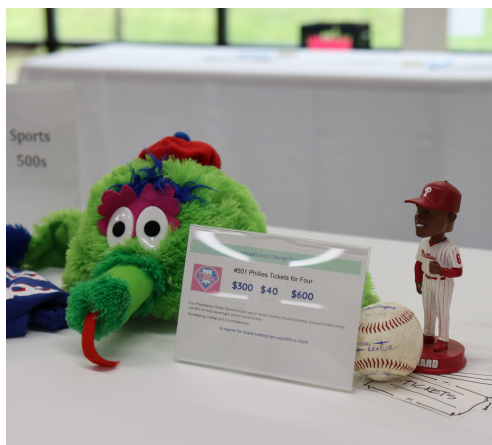


The Spring Event Returns

THANK YOU to everyone who attended the 2023 Spring Benefit & Silent Auction! It was our first since the pandemic, and we were so happy to catch up with old friends and meet new ones. We also felt very fortunate to celebrate our honoree, Ellen Lutz, for her dedication to our school and to present former WCS teacher and parent Carol Pringle with the Jeremy Nowak Legacy Award.

We are proud to report that the event raised \$147,514, all of which will go towards Wissahickon's unique and valuable LEAP Programs. These programs - our Libraries, Environmental Education, Arts & Extracurriculars, and Peace (Social Justice and Social Emotional Learning) - are the programs that truly make Wissahickon a special place to go to school.

We are truly grateful for your support and for your belief in our mission and model!



Annual Contributions

Wissahickon Charter School and Wissahickon Foundation gratefully acknowledge the generous financial contributions made by our community of friends during the 2022-2023 school year. Your support makes our work possible, providing nearly 1000 Philadelphia school students in grades K-8 with a quality holistic education centered in environmental education. Your gift is felt by each and every one of us here at Wissahickon. We thank you!

\$100,000 or above

Hallee and David Adelman ★
Educational Opportunities, LLC.

\$30,000 - \$99,999

Jim and Mary Brown
Hamilton Family Charitable Trust
Michele Kreisler Rubenstein and David Rubenstein

\$10,000 - \$29,999

Anonymous
Corinne R. & Henry Bower Memorial Trust through
the PNC Charitable Trusts Grant Review Committee
Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation
McLean Contributionship
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Peggy Chung Thrash Memorial Program
Robert H. Reakirt Foundation Equities through
the PNC Charitable Trusts Grant Review Committee
Truist Bank

\$5,000 - \$9,999

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Jane and Dr. Abass Alavi
Bob and Peggy Anderson ∞
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Judy Giuliano
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Office Basics
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WSFS Community Foundation

\$1,000 - \$2,499

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Who Gives?

- ★ WCS or Foundation Board Member
- ♥ WCS Staff Member
- 🍃 WCS Parent or Grandparent
- ∞ Former Staff, Board Member, or Family



\$1,000 - \$2,499 (cont.)

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\$500 - \$999

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Dean Holland
Elizabeth Isles



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\$50 to \$149

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The Spring Event Returns (cont.)

