



WINTER 2022 | VOL. 1

Fox & Tree

A Newsletter for Friends of Wissahickon Charter School

A Note from Dean Kristi WCS Chief Executive Officer

Happy New Year! As we enter a new calendar year, Wissahickon continues to successfully navigate an unusual and unpredictable time. Like many schools, soaring Covid cases in January made it necessary for us to begin 2022 with two weeks of virtual learning to keep our community safe. Today, we are **THRILLED** to be back in our school buildings with happy and healthy staff and students!

We're still overcoming challenges each day, but recent feedback from families shows how grateful they are for our safety procedures, resources, and clear and regular communication during this moment. I'm honored to be able to share some of those messages in this season's Fox & Tree: I hope you will enjoy reading them as much as I did.

Thank you, as always, for your incredible support!

Dean Kristi



Exchanging hellos with some students at recess

Meet Our New Covid Coordinator!

WCS is happy to announce the arrival of Bethann DiGiovanni, our Covid Coordinator. In this newly created position, Bethann is managing the many essential tasks that keep our community safe, from daily health screenings to contact tracing/testing to communication with staff and families. By keeping our daily safety measures running smoothly, Bethann helps ensure that our students' academic and social needs remain top priority!



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She got in the car at pick up and said: 'Mommy, I didn't have a great day. It was better than great. It was super great. It was awesome.'

Moments like that make it all worth it. Keep up the amazing job. We are beyond grateful.

- WCS Fernhill Parent



Wissahickon
CHARTER SCHOOL

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



Fierce Foxes

In response to older students' expressed desire to feel more confident and safe while riding SEPTA and being out in the city, we've held self-defense workshops with 7th & 8th graders. Organized by Director of Culture Niema Golphin and led by Urban Defense, these hands-on, practical workshops took place in P.E. class and offered students a chance to build knowledge of their bodies and surroundings and practice basic self-defense.



Up and at 'Em!

Check out this fun and informative Morning Announcement video from Fernhill's Dean of Culture Thomas Randall! In addition to providing a soft-landing to the day and giving some birthday shout-outs, Mr Randall reminds us about the correct way to wear a mask in a funny and engaging way.

Sharing morning announcements via video was a necessity during remote learning, but it led to the serendipitous discovery that some of our students who are visual learners actually PREFER video announcements to loudspeakers; it's also a great way to keep students connected with our amazing administrative and support staff. Even in person, we're continuing to share video announcements every day.

Fernhill's Big Little Friendships

Peer Mentoring has been a Fernhill Campus tradition for years: Select Middle school students are recommended by their teachers and paired with lower schoolers in need of tutoring, a buddy, or a role model. One of our mentors this year was even a mentee herself a few years ago! This is a great opportunity for both big and little kids to practice important CARES values.



What are CARES?

CARES are WCS's shared community values!
"CARES" stands for:

- C** Collaboration
- A** Academic Excellence
- R** Responsibility
- E** Empathy
- S** Self-Reflection



Thank you,
Arden
Friends!

Donors Bring Theatre to Classrooms

This year has brought the in-person return of a beloved WCS tradition: Arden for All (AFA), Arden Theatre's in-school arts education program. This partnership exposes students to arts education as well as (pre-pandemic) live theater, some for the first time ever. On a recent classroom visit, AFA teacher Ms. Sam had WCS students hanging on her every word during an interactive reading of Milo Imagines the World, a beautiful story that helps students dive into issues of identity and bias.

Bringing AFA to WCS was made possible by a group of amazing friends: Lois Brodsky, Anne Cook, Nancy Elfant, and Lee van de Velde. Our students can't wait for their next activity with AFA - writing a play about a day in the life of their teacher!

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I am SO GRATEFUL
that my littles are at WCS!
Thank you for all you do
to protect our treasures.
I cannot imagine being in your position.
Please know our family appreciates you!

- Judi W., WCS Awbury Parent

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Thank you so much.
I appreciate the WCS staff
for taking every precaution
to keep our children safe.
I'm sure [my daughter] will be happy
to be back at the building tomorrow.

- WCS Awbury Parent