In 1965, a group of parents founded the Montessori School of Albany which is now known as Woodland Hill Montessori. Our 55th year has been challenging and I have often reflected on our mission:

Woodland Hill Montessori School – a diverse and engaging educational partnership of parents, teachers, children, and community – nurtures a child’s love of learning and sense of social and personal responsibility using the child-centered Montessori philosophy and curriculum to develop the intellectual, spiritual, physical, artistic, and academic excellence inherent in each child.

Our community is drawn together and grounded in the Montessori educational philosophy. But what has stood out this year is the beauty and strength of our diverse partnerships. Our ability to shift to remote learning in the spring, offer a summer program, and reopen on-site learning in the fall has relied on the creativity, knowledge, compassion, and commitment of our head of school, administration, faculty, trustees, parents, children and the larger community of health care workers and municipal officials. Working on these challenges created opportunities to build connections and deepen our sense of community.

I believe these connections will support us as we work on the 2020-23 strategic plan goals. In addition to actions, our strategic plan poses important questions: How might we simultaneously increase our enrollment and our sense of community? How can a stronger culture of giving allow us to reach families, through financial aid, for whom WHMS might not otherwise be an option? How can we grow our understanding and commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in a way that supports action in our school community, our local community, and globally? We look forward to exploring these questions and working, in partnership, on the plan as we move into 2021.

In this 150th birthday year of Dr. Montessori, we are most thankful to the faculty who thoughtfully provide a Montessori education for our children wherever they may be located on a given day! To all our families and community members, may you have a safe and healthy new year.

Warm regards,
Tamara Gatchell
President of the Board of Trustees

Dear Woodland Hill Community,

It is my honor to be reporting to the school community on this remarkable year of 2020. This has been a year of change for the school, for each family, and for the world at large. Through it all, Woodland Hill has remained strong. The exceptional educational and community experience at Woodland Hill has always been of value to each of us, but the pandemic has brought about a renewed appreciation for just how special this school is.

On March 13, the Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, and Middle School students proudly displayed their Science and Maker Fair projects throughout the classrooms and hallways for their peers and teachers to enjoy. We could not have known at the time that this would be the students’ last day on campus for the school year, but it was a magnificent ending. The building was alive with children enthusiastically sharing their learning and admirers asking thoughtful questions.

The months to come required teachers to reinvent instruction, students to adapt to a new model of learning, and parents to take on a new role in their child’s education. As a community, we found the strength, dedication, and resilience to persevere. In June, we said our farewells for the school year with a reverse parade up the hill. Our 2020 graduates had what may be the most memorable graduation in Woodland Hill history: a tailgate-style ceremony on a beautiful June evening.

Over the summer, the teachers, board members, administrators, and parents joined together with a shared goal of safely opening our school building for all who choose to learn in person. We researched and planned, all the while knowing that it was best to write everything in pencil because changes were inevitable. Jesse Roberts and his crew built desks and designed our remote learning technology carts. Alumni returned to help with the heavy work of reconfiguring every space in the school. Teachers were brave and trusting, all the while focused on the goal of being back in the classroom with the children once again. And we did it!

The effort has been great, and the reward is immeasurable. The doors are open, the children are joyful, engaged, and thriving, whether learning in-person or remotely. Holding true to Montessori fundamentals strengthened our shared sense of purpose. It is often said that tough times show what you are really made of. Woodland Hill’s response to the pandemic is not surprising; we know how incredible our school is, but it is a strong reminder of the power of community.

In partnership,
Michelle Edwards
Head of School

OUR MISSION

Woodland Hill Montessori School—a diverse and engaging educational partnership of parents, teachers, children, and community — nurtures a child’s love of learning and sense of personal and social responsibility, using the child–centered Montessori philosophy and curriculum to develop the intellectual, physical, spiritual, artistic and academic excellence inherent in each child.
NEW FACULTY

We welcomed eight new faculty members this year.

**Patricia Agudo** joins us as an Assistant Teacher with Julie Adams. Patricia is an Association Montessori Internationale-certified early childhood teacher and worked as a Montessori teacher in South Carolina for five years. Previously, Patricia was a practicing attorney for 12 years in Spain, where she was born and raised. Patricia is fluent in English and Spanish and is conversant in French, German, and Italian. Patricia is credentialed through the Greenville Montessori Institute.

**Eraena Fraites** is the new Director of Auxiliary Services, leading our aftercare, enrichment, extracurricular, and summer programs. Eraena previously worked in New York City as a school counselor, middle school Language Arts teacher, and substitute teacher for students in preschool through grade 2. She has a bachelor’s degree in journalism from Temple University and a master’s degree in school counseling from Alfred University.

**Patrick Kraft** serves as our Remote Learning Technology Liaison. Patrick has a bachelor’s degree in human development from the University at Albany. He began at WHMS as an intern, and was hired to work in schoolcare shortly afterwards. He has worked for the summer camp program as well.

**Jeanne Lee** joins us as an Assistant Teacher with Jodi Seltzer. Jeanne has a bachelor’s degree in communication from Cornell University and a master’s degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from the University at Albany. She is also certified by New York State in TESOL Grades K-12. She has worked as an English Language Learner/English as a New Language teacher since 2012 in the Guilderland, Bethlehem, and Peterson (NJ) School Districts.

**Kim Morrison** joins us as the Assistant Teacher with Michele Fraites. She has a bachelor’s degree in English from the University at Albany and is currently enrolled in the Elementary Assistant training through the Center for Guided Montessori Studies.

**Jodi Seltzer** joins us as the Assistant Teacher with Sandy Blakeman. Jodi has a bachelor’s degree in liberal studies from San Diego State University. Previously, Jodi taught physical education for 12 years, and ten years teaching second grade.

**Katherine Singh, B.S.N., R.N.,** serves as our school nurse, after having been an active member of our community for many years, most recently serving as president of the Board of Trustees for six years. Katie is a registered nurse and has a bachelor’s degree in nursing from Utica College of Syracuse University.

**Callie Terpstra** joins us as an Assistant Teacher to Nicole Lenihan. Callie has been working as a lead preschool teacher since graduating with a bachelor’s degree in early childhood and childhood education from SUNY Geneseo.
Campus Enhancements

The area outside each classroom was enhanced over the summer to provide outdoor classroom space.

Iggy Calabria, our UE and MS music teacher, created an outdoor classroom for his ukulele class.

The Toddler and Primary areas were fenced in last year, and shrubs were installed during the summer between the spaces to provide boundaries. In October, awnings were installed above the Primary and Toddler outdoor classrooms to provide protection from the sun and rain.

The inscribed paver bricks from the Capital Campaign and the 2019-2020 WHMS Fund were installed on the patio above the amphitheater classrooms so that each student would have their own workspace.

Professional Development

March 16 was supposed to serve as a Staff Development Day for a training, Anti-Racism and Us. Instead, WHMS teachers gathered in the Great Room and learned about teaching remotely as learning shifted from in-person to at-home effective March 17. The learning from home would continue through June. The anti-racism training will take place this school year instead.

Online educator Stacia Snow led a professional development meeting for WHMS faculty in late March a few weeks into remote learning. Stacia focused on establishing routines, being open to modifications, and offered tips for streamlining communication and organizing a digital classroom.

New Programs

On May 22, the Middle School teachers along with Susan Kambrich and Michelle Edwards visited the homes of our 2020 graduates to place personalized signs of congratulation on their lawns. The parade started in Glenmont, stopping at our 8th grader’s homes in Delmar, Slingerlands, Voorheesville, Albany, East Greenbush, Latham, and Niskayuna. The students enjoyed the visit and the signs. Duplicate signs were placed on the WHMS driveway as well.

Inspired by #518RainbowHunt, WHMS Art Teacher Megan Stasi and Lower EL Assistant Teacher Sandy Schneider wove color through Albany. They wove rainbows at neighborhoods parks and at the Empire State Plaza.

Since families couldn’t travel this spring, WHMS brought the fun to their homes. Susan Kambrich and Meghan Johnson created a Virtual Spring Break Camp. Students (and parents) had the opportunity to participate in demonstrations in magic, cooking, yoga, dog training, Ukrainian egg dying, musical instruments and more! Students also played Dungeons and Dragons, enjoyed a comedic Shakespeare monologue from a WH alum living in London, and made tortillas with a WHMS family living in Mexico.

Artist and alumnas Lexi Hannah visited the Middle School and Upper Elementary students on February 27 to teach them a drip painting technique. Students followed Lexi’s directions, and each made their own design.

The WHMS Coding Committee, chaired by Larry Peters, spearheaded this project.

In March, volunteers from the coding committee visited classrooms in Lower Elementary through Middle School to provide a follow-up lesson to the Kid Bot activity the children completed in the gym in December. The committee worked together to develop a Scratch program identical to the physical program the children ran in the gym to reinforce the concepts the children learned in the physical game.

Accomplishments

WHMS 7th grader Isla Besha was named a winner in an illustration competition sponsored by Scholastic. Isla’s artwork is included in J.K. Rowling’s recently published book, The Ickabog. Over 42,000 entries were submitted from children across the United States and Canada, and 34 winners were chosen. As a winner, Isla will receive a copy of the published book containing her artwork, signed by J.K. Rowling and Woodland Hill Montessori School will receive $650 worth of Scholastic books for our library.

The Upper El students held a Thanksgiving Food Drive for the South End Child’s Café.

WHMS was named a winner in the Times Union’s Albany Top Workplaces 2020. The award is based solely on the feedback that many of our teachers and staff offered through an employee survey Woodland Hill administered in early 2020. More than 62% of our staff and faculty participated. Being named a Top Workplace is a big deal — only 60 companies made this year’s list. This was the first year that WHMS has applied for the award.

Middle School student Romeo Vashishth won Woodland Hill’s National Geography Bee for the third time in a row in January 2020.

Upper El student Keya Mehta won the 14th annual WHMS Spelling Bee in December 2019. Keya progressed to the Capital District Spelling Bee in February, where she made it all the way to the semi-final round. Students gave their “kid robot” instructions to follow. During the four rounds, the bots tried to pick up as many disks in a grid as possible. The disks were made in the WHMS Makerspace.

The WHMS Coding Committee, chaired by Larry Peters, spearheaded this project.

In March, volunteers from the coding committee visited classrooms in Lower Elementary through Middle School to provide a follow-up lesson to the Kid Bot activity the children completed in the gym in December. The committee worked together to develop a Scratch program identical to the physical program the children ran in the gym to reinforce the concepts the children learned in the physical game.
A sampling of campus events

As part of a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) assignment, Upper El students built haunted houses. The houses were placed in their hallway and students from the school were invited to visit the “haunted hall” the day before Halloween.

Patrick and Vinita’s Upper El class created an altar to Maria Montessori to commemorate the Day of the Dead. Students made all the scull and flower decorations for the display.

The WHMS community gathered outside on September 25 to commemorate the United Nation’s International Day of Peace. Our students sang “Light a Candle for Peace” and “Building Bridges.” In addition, Michele and Kim’s Upper El class researched different ways to say or express “Peace.” The students then decorated rocks with the words or symbols.

Teachers returned to school on Monday, August 31, the 150th anniversary of Maria Montessori’s birth. To mark the occasion, the teachers gathered together, shared her words, and ate birthday cake. Our annual Meet & Greet, where students and parents come to meet the teachers and drop off school supplies was held outside this year. Because inside events were not allowed this June, twelve 8th graders graduated on June 10 outside of the school, with their families watching from our parking lot.

During the last week of classes, WHMS held two car parades. WHMS families decorated their cars and parked alongside our driveway, while families with students Moving Up (kindergartners, 3rd graders, 6th graders, and 8th graders) paraded up the driveway in their cars.

The day was very festive!

A virtual alumni panel was held on April 29.
Five current high school students spoke to WHMS Middle School students about their experience with the transition to high school.

The WHMS Talent Show went virtual this year. Students sang, danced, and played instruments during the Spring Break Camp week.

Students throughout the school enjoyed read-aloud with special guests this past spring including visits from Jim Kambrich, Tabetha Wilson, Judge Helena Heath, and classroom parents.

The WHMS Science and Maker Fair was held on Friday, March 12, and was just for students this year due to the pandemic. Lower Elementary through Middle School students set up their projects throughout the school. Each student had time to tour the collection as well as stay by their work and present to others. Teachers and staff toured the projects as well. The students were enthusiastic as they explained their processes and end products.

The Middle School presented Our Town by playwright Thornton Wilder on February 7 and 8.

WHMS African Drumming instructor John Dickson performed for WHMS students in February, along with an ensemble of percussionists. John is very passionate about African drumming and has been teaching an afterschool class at WHMS for more than 15 years.

The Upper Elementary pajama and book drive in December 2019 was very successful. Donations were delivered to four locations, including the Capital City Rescue Mission, Joseph’s House, The Anchor, and the YWCA in Troy.

In January, Middle School and sixth-grade students enjoyed a special yoga demonstration from three-time national champion and 2011 Male International Asana Champion Joseph Encina.

For Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Upper El students discussed some of his famous quotes and reflected on what they mean and their continued relevance today. They also talked about putting their hands together for equality and friendship.

WHMS participated in the Read for Ronald McDonald House Program once again. The program supports the Ronald McDonald House of Albany, which provides housing and supportive services to families of children who are sick and receiving treatment from our local area hospitals.

The annual Primary Pinning Ceremony took place in mid-January. During this event, the oldest children in the classroom are recognized for their role as leaders. Each child receives a special pin to signify this role. The children sing songs, tell the audience their favorite work, and shake hands with Susan before receiving their pin. This WHMS tradition has been a part of the school for over 20 years and continues to be a cherished moment for the families and staff.

WHMS violin students performed during Troy’s Victorian Stroll in December 2019.

Parent Education

In November renowned adolescent expert, Jocelyn Bell Swanson, M.Ed., virtually spoke to WHMS parents. Her presentation was titled Being and Becoming – The Road from Childhood to Adolescence.

WHMS Primary teacher Jennifer Graham gave a presentation about bringing the Montessori method into your home.

In October, WHMS and the Suzuki Association of the Capital District co-sponsored a virtual event for families from both organizations. Winifred Crock, a world-renowned Suzuki clinician and parent of Montessori children, talked about the remarkable parallel lives and methods of the two revolutionary educators - Dr. Maria Montessori and Dr. Shinichi Suzuki - and offered powerful insights for our challenging times.

Mary Bilik, a mental health counselor and art therapist, spoke to WHMS parents right before school started about supporting children as they return to school. Mary served as the WHMS school counselor from 2010-2015 and as our Art Teacher in 2002.

The Diversity Committee met to talk about two books this past year: So You Want to Talk about Race by Ijeoma Oluo and Robin DiAngelo’s White Fragility.

Art Teacher Megan Stasi hosted a “Tree of Life”-themed paint and sip in May 14 for parents and staff. She developed several examples using paint, watercolors, and collage techniques to accommodate the variety of supplies that attendees may or may not have had access to at home.

WHMS Literacy Specialist Jennifer Burns, M.Ed. presented How to Help your Emergent Reader at Home via Zoom while school was remote in April.

Bethany Burroughs, WHMS’ School Counselor gave a virtual presentation entitled, Helping your child emotionally and socially during a crisis. Bethany also created a Google site for parents to reference during the pandemic.

The Toddler teachers gave a workshop on Toilet Learning in May.

How to Make Online Learning More Productive for your Child was presented by online educator and WHMS parent Stacia Snow during the remote learning period this spring. She offered tips and ideas for improving the learning from home experience for families.

Dawn Abbuhl, Psy.D., presented Increasing Resiliency in Your Children During These Challenging Times during the spring remote learning period. Dr. Abbuhl is a New York State licensed psychologist specializing in pediatrics.

WHMS parent and child psychologist Jenny Malataas, Ph.D., held a Zoom presentation, Parenting in a Pandemic in April.

In late February, WHMS parents attended a workshop on Parent Effectiveness with Jim Davis, the executive director at Samaritan Counseling Center in Utica, NY. Jim talked about how to talk to your children so they will listen, how to listen to your children so that they feel understood, and how to resolve conflicts in your family.

Educator and consultant Lyndon Cudlitz came to WHMS for two days in February to talk about gender identity and expression, sexual orientation and the challenges and anxiety that students may face. Lyndon spoke to parents at one workshop and Upper El and Middle School students in two other workshops.
Woodland Hill Montessori School Statement of Activity
for the year ended June 30, 2020

INCOME

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tuition-Net of multi-child discounts &amp; financial aid</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
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<td>Lunch &amp; Extra-Curricular</td>
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<td>Summer Program</td>
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<td>Aftercare</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>Investment Income-Net of expenses</td>
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<td>Enrichment Program</td>
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<td>Gala-net of expenses</td>
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EXPENSES

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CHANGE IN ASSETS

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<td><strong>$130,096</strong></td>
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Financial Aid

Woodland Hill is committed to serving families of diverse socio-economic backgrounds through a growing financial aid program and affordable tuition.

Statement of Financial Position

As of June 30, 2020

ASSETS
Cash and cash equivalents $1,454,335
Investments 3,314,910
Receivables (net) 500,724
Prepaid expenses 2,844
Land, building, and equipment (net) 6,109,476

Total assets $11,382,289

LIABILITIES
Accounts payable and other current liabilities 851,731
Accrued expenses 117,900
Deferred revenues 989,915
Long-term debt 3,023,843

Total liabilities $4,983,389

NET ASSETS
Unrestricted $4,189,422
Board designated 2,009,947
Temporarily restricted 199,531

TOTAL NET ASSETS $6,398,900

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS $11,382,289
Woodland Hill Montessori School gratefully acknowledges gifts received between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020. Thanks to our generous supporters, WHMS raised over $75,000 for the WHMS Fund.

**SCHOLARS’ CLUB** $5,000+

- John J. Nigro, Nigro Companies
- In memory of Carole Wolfe Korngold

**HEAD OF SCHOOL CIRCLE** $2,500-$4,999

- James Besha and Susan Thomas
- Bob Green and Nina Loewenstein
- Rex and Lee Tien, Tien Family Foundation
- Whole Kids Foundation

**LEADERSHIP CIRCLE** $1,000 - $2,499

- Guha and Deepa Bala
- Gloria Brillig
- Marisa and Allan Eisenmann
- Susan and David Evans
- Thomas Federici and Julie Tsai
- Lore and Charles Ferguson
- Tara Fracalossi and Thomas Lail
- Fred and Laura Galt
- Robert and Tamara Gatchell
- Bernie and Nancy Hillengas
- IBM
- Julie and James Knox
- Derek and Kimberly Lane
- Kevin and Monica Brady
- Gemma and Jason Allen
- Anthony and Jaclyn Santilli
- Tobi and Gary Saulnier
- Dr. CD and Kate Singh
- Nathan and David O’Leary
- Andrew McClain and Sandy Blakeman
- Dan Massey and Liliana Garcia
- Matthew and Erin Lavigne
- Wendy and Charles Gilman
- Peter and Kristine Gernert-Dott
- Nora Flores
- Michael Endler and Lise Hafner
- Danielle and Jason Dow
- Timmy Dillon
- Danielle and Jason Dow
- Michael Endler and Lise Hafner
- Nora Flores
- GE Foundation
- Peter and Kristine Gernert-Dott
- Wendyl and Charles Gilman
- Matthew and Erin Lavigne
- Steven and Tara Maniere
- Dan Massey and Liliana Garcia
- Andrew McClain and Sandy Blakeman
- Neelam Mehta
- Dr. Patrick Mottolese & Dr. Phyllis Norton
- Nanda and David O’Leary
- Maria Papa
- Thomas and Stephanie Puchner
- Jenny Romero and Nathallie Kiser
- Peter Sinclair and Allegre Edelman
- Stewart’s Holiday Match
- Wendy Turner and Yathin Krishnappa

**INVESTOR** $500 - $999

- Kevin and Julie Adams
- Air & Waste Management Association Eastern New York Chapter
- Gemma and Jason Allen
- Kevin and Monica Brady
- Dave and Sheri Canfield
- Ellen and Harry J. DePan, M.D.
- Timothy Dillon
- Danielle and Jason Dow
- Michael Endler and Lise Hafner
- Nora Flores
- GE Foundation
- Peter and Kristine Gernert-Dott
- Wendyl and Charles Gilman
- Matthew and Erin Lavigne
- Steven and Tara Maniere
- Dan Massey and Liliana Garcia
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- Dr. Patrick Mottolese & Dr. Phyllis Norton
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- Maria Papa
- Thomas and Stephanie Puchner
- Jenny Romero and Nathallie Kiser
- Peter Sinclair and Allegre Edelman
- Stewart’s Holiday Match
- Wendy Turner and Yathin Krishnappa

**BENEFACCTOR** $250 - $499

- Mostafa Abousayed & Shaymaa Moussa
- Albany Art Room
- Bilal Alp and Meylude Akay Alp
- American Clothing Recycling Co. Inc.
- Elizabeth Angell
- Laura and Nathaniel Angell
- Anonymous
- Elizabeth and John Armstrong
- Ann and Adam Ayers
- Niranjain Baji and Vinita Shekhar
- Dr. Michael and Madeline Baltrush
- Willard and Ruth Bridgham
- Joan Burns
- The Calhoun Family
- Ignatius and Claudia Calabria
- Chuck and Kathleen Chandler
- Kathe and Ryan Coakley
- Brian Delaney and Allison White
- David Devaprasad and Tracy Berger
- Mustafa Dokucu and Isil Severcan-Dokucu
- Michelle and Ashley Edwards
- Mary-Jo Ehrlich
- Edward and Rachel Eveloth
- Charles and Nadine Fuda
- Jamie and Michael Furgang
- Geoff Gloak and Kristi Berner
- Jennifer and Nile’s Gold
- Susan Gordon
- Christopher Griffith and Rebecca O’Donnell
- Lisa and Griffith Holland
- Jaqaulyn and Sauro Iardella
- James and Erin Jenkins
- Patrick and Laura Jordan
- Scott Kellog and Stacy Pettigrew
- Jeffrey Lang and Andrea Tinio
- Sue LaVigne
- Deborah J. Lee
- Nicole and Brian Lenihan
- Michele and Eddie Lenzo
- Conor and Doni Lillis
- Nicole and Brendan Longcore
- Rachelle and Fred Luciani
- Steven and Corrine Maniere
- Rene McGovern
- Kim and Ian Morrison
- Heidi and David Nathanielsz
- Erika and James Nickens
- Ray and Marion Niedowski
- Gary and Jane Noakes
- Daru and Susan Pantano
- The Raimo Family
- William Reynolds & Ann McGinnness
- Michelle L. Richens
- Grant Rickles and Colleen Mills
- Moira K. Rienzo
- Wendy and Jesse Roberts
- Cyril and Lydia Rodriguez
- Sandra Rouse
- Sandy Schneider
- Eric Schroeck and Shayan Vechonie
- Edward Schwarzschild and Elisa Albert
- Kim and Steve Seabury
- Sachin and Abhijna Shah
- Sara and Jess Stevens
- Jeff Stewart and Heather Kusendorf
- Deepak Vachshith and Valerie Vassell-Vashshith
- William Wan and Clara Chew
- Adam and Kelly Wu

**FRIEND** $1 - $249

- 16 Handles
- Amazon Smile
- Kristi and Rich Barlette
- Best Buy Employee Giving Program
- Cindy Bishop
- Box Tops for Education
- John Buddenhagen and Christina Spaulding
- CapCom FCU
- Bernhard and Tina Claus
- Karen Clayton
- Coca-Cola GIVE
- Kathey Corvino
- Tom and Sarah Crowell
- Bill and Laura Dehmer
- Peter and Carol Dunning
- Esperance Elks
- Field Goods
- Kori Graves and Ted Riese
- Danielle P. Flavin
- Mary Gleason
- Danielle and Jake Hall
- Michael Harris and Sima Patel-Harris
- Faculty Student Association of Hudson Valley Community College
- Susan and Jim Kambrich
- Rebecca Koch and Justin Pfeiffer
- The Logan Family
- Molly McDonald and Bill Krattinger
- Tami Meek
- Panera Bread
- Pay Pal Giving Fund
- Melinda Putney
- Tom and Carol Sallie
- The Frederick V. Singerland Family Foundation
- Stacia and Shawn Snow
- Erika and Chris Solomon
- Wilfrido Tinio, M.D.
- Linda Truett
- Perry Woodlin and Laura Welles

**IN-KIND DONATIONS**

The following donated gifts or services to WHMS, freeing up resources for other needs.

- Dr. Michael and Madeline Baltrush
- Jenny Malatras, Ph.D.
- Erin and Fernando Mergil
- Montessori Services/For Small Hands
- rO Office Interiors
- Greg Watson

**MEMORIAL AND HONORARY GIFTS**

In honor of Bethany and Elana Burroughs
Bill and Laura Dehmer

In memory of Carole Wolfe Korngold
Cindy Bishop, Sandy Blakeman, Julie Adams, Nicole Lenihan, Jackie Santilli, Stephanie Puchner

In memory of Ernst O. Lai, grandparent of Coltrane Fracalossi-Lai
Karen Clayton, Peter and Carol Dunning
Esperance Elks, Tara Fracalossi and Thomas Lai, Mary Gleason, Faculty Student

**ASSOCIATION OF HUDSON VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE, TOM AND CAROL SALLI, LINDA TRUETT**

**HEAD OF SCHOOL CIRCLE**

- WHMS appreciates the donations from grandparents of current and former students!
- Elizabeth Angell
- Anonymous
- Dr. Michael and Madeline Baltrush
- Willard and Ruth Bridgham
- Gloria Brillig
- Joan Burns
- Chuck and Kathleen Chandler
- Kathey Corvino
- Bill and Laura Dehmer
- Lore and Charles Ferguson
- Charles and Nadine Fuda
- Sue LaVigne
- Steven and Corrine Maniere
- Norman and Micki Massry
- Rene McGovern
- Ray and Marion Niedowski
- Gary and Jane Noakes
- Cyril and Lydia Rodriguez
- Sandra Rouse
- Wilfrido Tinio, M.D.

**FACULTY AND STAFF**

We thank the current and past WHMS faculty and staff members for supporting WHMS through the WHMS Fund.

- Julie Adams
- Cindy Bishop
- Sandy Blakeman
- Liz Calhoun
- Iggy Calabria
- Tina Claus
- Michelle Edwards
- Sue Evans
- Kris Gernert-Dott
- Susie Gordon
- Danielle Hall
- Nancy Hillengas
- Susan Kambrich
- Sue LaVigne
- Deborah J. Lee
- Nicole Lenihan
- Andrew McClain
- Tami Meek
- Erin Mergil
- Kim Morrison
- Heidi Nathanielsz
- Stephanie Puchner
- Melinda Putney
- Moira Rienzo
- Ted Riese
- Jesse Roberts
- Jackie Santilli
- Sandy Schneider
- Vinita Shekhar

**MEMORIAL AND HONORARY GIFTS**

In honor of Bethany and Elana Burroughs
Bill and Laura Dehmer

In memory of Carole Wolfe Korngold
Cindy Bishop, Sandy Blakeman, Julie Adams, Nicole Lenihan, Jackie Santilli, Stephanie Puchner

In memory of Ernest O. Lai, grandparent of Coltrane Fracalossi-Lai
Karen Clayton, Peter and Carol Dunning
Esperance Elks, Tara Fracalossi and Thomas Lai, Mary Gleason, Faculty Student
Congratulations to the Class of 2020!

Twelve 8th graders graduated on Wednesday, June 10 outside of the school, with their families watching from our parking lot.

Sophia Morse was nominated by her classmates and teachers to serve as the senior speaker.

Jim Malatras, Ph.D., was the keynote speaker. At the time, Jim Malatras was the president of SUNY Empire State College. He has since been named Chancellor of the State University of New York.

Andrew McClain also spoke. Andrew is retiring from teaching Upper El at WHMS after 28 years.

Our graduates will be attending the following high schools: The Albany Academies (3), Albany High School (2), Bethlehem High School (2), Emma Willard School (2), Niskayuna High School, Shaker High School, and Tech Valley High School.

We also celebrate the WHMS Class of 2016 as they move onto college!

WHMS Class of 2016 College Choices
Clarkson University
Providence College
SUNY Cortland
The University at Albany
The University of Arizona
The University of Pittsburgh
Virginia Tech
Williams College
and The National Guard
The 2020 Gala was scheduled to take place on the evening of May 30 at the Albany Country Club. Unfortunately, we could not hold our event in person. We did, however, hold an online auction in early June.

Thanks to our generous corporate sponsors, honorary committee members, donors, and auction supporters, we raised over $23,000 for Woodland Hill Montessori School!

**GALA COMMITTEE**
Jenny Malatras, Chair
Coral Anglada
Michelle Edwards
Danielle Hemmied
Mohamed Hemmied
Kanika Johar
Susan Kambrich
Tara Manierre
Neelam Mehta
Lauren Orciuoli
Kimberley Osburn
Susan Thomas
Deepak Vashishth
Shayna Vecchione

**Auction Donors**
9 Maple Avenue Jazz Club
AAA Hudson Valley
Albany Symphony Orchestra
Dr. Michael and Madeline Baltrush
The Bread Butler
Children’s Museum of Science & Technology (CMOST)
Cookie Therapy ALB
Dave and Buster’s
The Egg
Footbeats Stride Rite
Four Fat Fowl
The Glimmerglass Festival
High Adventure Ski & Bike
The Hyde Collection
Stewart’s Shops

**Honorary Committee**
Dawn and John Abbuhl
Michael and Marcy Bellows
David and Sheri Canfield
Mustafa Dokucu and Isil Severcan-Dokucu
Frederick and Laura Galt
Christopher Griffith and Rebecca O’Donnell
Jim and Julie Knox
Murray and Mallory Massry
Norman and Micki Massry
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Don Robbins
Josh and Jenny Wainman
Jeff Stewart and Heather Klusendorf
Gerald and Judith Wainman

**DONORS**
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**THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!**

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Michael Hilton Bellows, Architect, PLLC
CDPHP
Repeat Business Systems, Inc.
Solutions by Design, Inc.

*In-Kind donations

**NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

WHMS welcomed four new trustees to the board this year. Erika Solomon and Sara Stevens were elected to the board in June and Shayla Sawyer Armand and Andrew McClain joined in September.

Erika Solomon is a global business advisor at IBM. She specializes in internal operations and financial management and was chosen as a “Best of IBM” award winner in 2019. Erika earned an M.B.A. from the Graduate College of Union University and a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from The University at Albany.

Sara Stevens currently serves as Vice President of Analytics Operations at Capital District Physicians’ Health Plan (CDPHP), a non-profit, physician-governed health insurer in upstate New York. Sara’s professional background in healthcare finance, along with her formal education in math and business, give her a unique and valuable perspective on the complex issues facing healthcare in the United States today. Sara earned an M.B.A. from The University of Albany and received her bachelor’s degree in math and English from Marist College.

Shayla Sawyer Armand, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the Electrical, Computer, and Systems Engineering Department at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. She has a doctorate degree in electrical engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from Hampton University. Her Nano-Bio Optoelectronics research program expands the fundamental understanding, engineering processes, and potential applications of hybrid inorganic/organic materials for optoelectronic devices and sensors.

Andrew McClain joins the board as a faculty trustee. Andrew recently retired from Woodland Hill Montessori School following a 46-year teaching career. For the past 28 years, Andrew taught Upper Elementary students (4th – 6th grade) at WHMS. Andrew began his teaching career in Africa in 1972, while studying for his bachelor’s degree in sociology and English at the University of Zambia. He received his teaching license from Indiana University and his 6-12 Montessori certification from the Center for Montessori Education in New Rochelle.
This year we welcomed a new Head of School, Assistant Head of School, and Board of Trustees President.

Michelle Edwards
Head of School
On May 8, 2020, Woodland Hill Montessori School’s Board of Trustees announced that it named Michelle Edwards as the new Head of School, effective July 1, 2020.

Michelle joined the Woodland Hill community in 2012 as the Head Toddler teacher, helping to develop the new Toddler program. Under Michelle’s leadership, the program grew to a robust size serving over 30 families. In 2016, Michelle joined the administration team as Assistant Head of School.

Prior to her time at Woodland Hill, Michelle worked as a teacher at Our World Montessori School and Birchwood Elementary School in Niskayuna, and Hawthorne Elementary School and J.T Brackenridge School, in Texas. Michelle holds a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Grove City College and a master’s degree in educational administration from Lamar University and holds an AMS Infant and Toddler certificate. Michelle resides in Niskayuna with her husband, Ashley, daughter Emma (WHMS class of ’17), and son Will (WHMS class of ’20).

A search committee for a new Head of School was formed in early January, chaired by board member Jason Allen. In February, the search committee engaged Metro Consulting, a firm specializing in Montessori leadership development. They were asked to develop a report outlining the type of leader needed to carry Woodland Hill Montessori School into the future and to recommend how best to approach the HOS search. Though Metro Consulting was unable to physically visit Woodland Hill Montessori School because of the Covid-19 crisis, they conducted multiple remote focus groups and in-depth interviews with just under 100 members of the community. Stakeholders included faculty, parents, administration, and board members. During HOS need assessment focus groups and one-on-one interviews, it became clear to Metro Consulting that WHMS had, within the school, a beloved and respected leader who had the profound support of the community.

Metro Consulting concluded that Michelle was “the strongest internal candidate they had ever interviewed” and they conveyed how fortunate WHMS was to have Michelle as a member of our community.

Erin Mergil
Assistant Head of School
Erin Mergil was selected as Woodland Hill’s new Assistant Head of School on July 28, 2020. Her deep commitment to the Montessori philosophy, tireless implementation of best practice, and devotion to the children and families made her the right choice for this position. She enjoys partnering with the faculty and staff to meet the unique challenges of this school year and to ensure that Woodland Hill thrives in the years to come. Erin has been a lead Primary teacher at Woodland Hill for the past three years after serving in the role of assistant teacher for one year. Before joining Woodland Hill, Erin taught at Castle Island Bilingual Montessori School in Albany and Escuela Montessori Del Valle in El Paso, Texas. Erin has a bachelor’s degree from the University at Albany in Spanish and linguistics and holds a master’s degree in Early Childhood Education with a concentration in Montessori Studies from The College of New Rochelle. She received her American Montessori Society teaching credential through the Center for Montessori Education.

Susan Kambrich
At the beginning of January 2020, Susan Kambrich announced that she was leaving WHMS on June 30, 2020 after serving as Head of School at WHMS for 20 years. Susan accepted a position at Twin Parks Montessori school in New York City and started as the Head of School there.

Susan joined the WHMS faculty in 1995 as a Lower El teacher. In 2000, she became Head of School. Susan doubled the enrollment during her tenure and led the construction of our current school and three much-needed additions since then. Susan was responsible for the addition of a middle school and a toddler program. Under her leadership, WHMS has become well-known and respected as a leader in the Montessori community locally and nationally.

Andrew McClain
In early March, Andrew McClain announced his intention to retire from WHMS at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Andrew had been a teacher at Woodland Hill/ Montessori School of Albany since 1992, primarily in our Upper Elementary program.

One of Andrew’s most outstanding accomplishments was starting our Shakespeare program. Its inauspicious beginning was in 1994 in the basement at the old St. John’s Academy building in Rensselaer, where the school was located until our move here in November of 2002. The Shakespeare program has grown every year, both in breadth and depth and is now an important part of the Upper Elementary curriculum and a WHMS tradition we look forward to each year.

Andrew could often be seen with students, teaching them about fossils and the timeline of humans, or giving a geometry lesson. Whether introducing the genius of Charlie Chaplin through film, sharing philosophy, or teaching the arithmetic of the trinomial cube, Andrew demonstrated his love of learning in thought and deed. WHMS is grateful for the dedication, expertise, and thoughtful work that Andrew has given to our students and to our school of best practice and devotion to the children and families made her the right choice for this position. She enjoys partnering with the faculty and staff to meet the unique challenges of this school year and to ensure that Woodland Hill thrives in the years to come. Erin has been a lead Primary teacher at Woodland Hill for the past three years after serving in the role of assistant teacher for one year. Before joining Woodland Hill, Erin taught at Castle Island Bilingual Montessori School in Albany and Escuela Montessori Del Valle in El Paso, Texas. Erin has a bachelor’s degree from the University at Albany in Spanish and linguistics and holds a master’s degree in Early Childhood Education with a concentration in Montessori Studies from The College of New Rochelle. She received her American Montessori Society teaching credential through the Center for Montessori Education.

Tamara Gatchell
President of the Board of Trustees
In June, the Board of Trustees announced that Tamara Gatchell would serve as the president of the board, effective July 1, 2020. Tamara has served on the WHMS board since 2015 and has been a parent at WHMS since 2005.

Tamara has displayed great leadership as chair of the building committee and the strategic plan committee. Tamara has a bachelor’s degree in management from Clarkson University and an MBA from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

In 2009, Tamara founded Cadence Analytics, a firm focused on healthcare and strategic advisory. Last year, Tamara changed her company name to Cadence Creative to more fully represent the work in which she is now engaged, including strategy, collaborative design and creative community building.

Tamara’s son Andrew graduated from WHMS in 2016 and her sons Matthew and Aidan are 7th graders.

We also said goodbye to three longtime WHMS faculty members.

Liz Cahrenger
Over the summer, Liz Cahrenger made the decision not to return to Woodland Hill Montessori School. Liz had been a beloved teacher for over 30 years, starting in 1988 when we were still known as the Montessori School of Albany. During her tenure, she has been a Primary Head Teacher, Primary Coordinator, and teacher trustee on the WHMS board. She has seen our school through the growth that brought us to our current campus on the hill, always providing leadership and inspiration. Liz’s mentorship of young educators has launched many successful teaching careers. In December 2002, Liz was chosen as “Educator of the Week” on WNYT, NewsChannel 13. She is cherished and revered by the hundreds of families she has served over the years. Her warm presence at Woodland Hill has left an indelible mark on our community.
The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind. “

Make your gift online now at www.woodlandhill.org

Yes, we would like to contribute to the 2020-2021 WHMS Fund in honor of Maria Montessori!

Name(s) ____________________________________________________________________________

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The WHMS Fund provides essential unrestricted funds in support of the school’s annual operations and, this year, will assist with the unique ongoing expenditures that have arisen from the pandemic, such as PPE, new Chromebooks for our students, enhanced internet speeds to ensure live streaming of daily activities, and distance and virtual learning tools; reimagined learning spaces to accommodate social distancing; and supplemental financial aid for those enduring hardship due to COVID-19.

This year, we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Dr. Maria Montessori’s birth. Her revolutionary work in education has transformed the lives of children and teachers around the world.