### ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

### WOODLAND SCHOOL PORTOLA VALLEY

## WE ARE WOODLAND

**MISSION** | Woodland School develops collaborative, creative, and confident learners with the strength of voice to follow their hearts and make a difference.

**OUR HOUSES** | A long-time school tradition, Woodland's House System fosters camaraderie and teaches students throughout all grade levels to work together toward a common goal.

PINE

MAPLE

OAK

### **CYPRESS**

SAPLING

## Rising to the Challenge

The 2020 Annual Fund carried the theme, "Celebrating Our History, Planning Our Future" and those principles guided my inaugural year at Woodland. Joining the school at the height of a global pandemic meant more pivots, uncertainties and innovation than any of us expected, but Woodland's rich traditions and 40-year history provided vital guideposts throughout the process.



Throughout a remarkable year... Woodland students were simply incredible. Long known as tight-knit and collaborative, the Woodland community truly came together to welcome students back for in-person learning. Everyone parents, teachers, staff and students themselves—made countless sacrifices and individual commitments to create a safe and engaging environment for teaching and learning.

I cannot underscore enough the dedication of our teachers and the commitment of our staff. Everyone wore more hats than ever before, covering no fewer than 42 lunch, recess, arrival and dismissal duties every day to ensure the health and safety of each stable cohort. Early Childhood Education led the way with in-person instruction resuming in August, while K-8 faculty mastered new teaching techniques to deliver virtual learning when the year began then pivoted to in-person teaching and Flexible Learning Plans.

Through it all, we had joyful experiences with students. Together, WSPA, faculty and staff reimagined beloved school traditions. Cars were decorated for a drive-through Halloween parade, families logged in for a virtual Santa Lucia, 13 countries and 24 states were represented at our virtual Grandparent and Special Friend Day, and, by year's end, we celebrated capstone and graduation on campus.

Foundational to all of this was a knowledgeable Board of Trustees who aligned around doing whatever it took to support the Woodland team and bring students back to campus. What they provided as volunteer trustees, while managing their own households and careers in a pandemic, demonstrates a commitment to our school and community that is truly remarkable.

With their leadership, Woodland made significant investments to keep our community safe and plan for our future. Those investments are documented in the following pages and I thank both the trustees for their vision and our donor community for the financial support that drove record Annual Fund and auction results in support of our growth as a school.

That growth has been guided by input from parent surveys that affirm what we already know: Families miss the opportunities for community connection that are core to Woodland. As the new school year begins, we are working intentionally to involve every volunteer who wants to give back to the community, to create connection points for all families but particularly those new to Woodland, and to enjoy safe gatherings that resemble pre-pandemic life including a celebration of Woodland's 40th year.

Finally, I cannot close without one last observation. Throughout a remarkable year, Woodland students were simply incredible. Despite many disappointments and changes to the typical school experience, they rose to the challenge, demonstrated core virtues daily, and, in the end, were what kept all of the adults going day to day. The work we do each day, and the plans we lay for the future, are for them.

Jennifer Warren, Ed.D., Head of School

#### MICHELLE GABRIEL, BOARD CHAIR

### A Message from the Board Chair

A key role of the Woodland Board of Trustees is to hire and work collaboratively with the Head of School. Enabling that partnership to be successful in service of the school is a top priority, and this is especially true in a pandemic.

The beginning of the 2020-2021 school year was dynamic as we worked together to identify where to pivot and how to adapt in order to reopen the school and keep the community safe. Equally important, the board worked to impart the school's history so that the entire community, particularly faculty and students, could remain grounded in Woodland's rich traditions and core virtues in the midst of so much change.

As board chair, I am both proud and grateful that, with intention and good protocols in place, we were able to bring kids back to campus in stepwise fashion. I appreciate not only what it took to make that a reality, but also the ongoing commitment and dedication to uphold protocols so that everyone could remain safe throughout the year.

As the parent of a Class of 2021 graduate who attended Woodland since kindergarten, I can attest that capstone presentations and graduation speeches are monumental traditions at the school. It was truly meaningful to see both take place safely on campus as the year drew to a close.

Throughout the year, the board also worked to lay the foundation for a comprehensive financial review in preparation for a strategic planning process going forward. We also worked on succession planning for the board itself, putting out a call to the community and intentionally looking at skill sets needed for a balanced trustee corps.





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As a result, the board welcomed three new members whose tenure began with the 2021-2022 year. I look forward to working with them and with returning board members as we continue to navigate priorities including diversity, equity and inclusion. Looking ahead, there is work for us as a board to stay true to who we are and find new ways to grow as we pursue this journey together.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our retiring trustee, Michelle Morcos Smith, and our WPSA representative, Luciana de Almeida Aguiar, for their service and dedication to Woodland in the 2020-2021 school year.

Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude and that of the entire board to the Woodland community for showing grace throughout a pandemic and partnering to create meaningful experiences for our kids. As board chair, I have heard from both longtime families and from prospective parents evaluating the school that the Woodland community is a source of strength and of pride. I look forward to the opportunities that the year ahead will offer for us to come together once again.

## A Letter from the Treasurer



Although we were unable to gather in person, the Woodland community came together to support the Annual Fund and auction at record levels, leading to a strong year for donated revenue.

As outgoing treasurer, I am pleased to prepare this fiscal summary for the 2020-2021 year. It was a year in which Woodland faced many financial demands but strong management and sound decision making placed the school in a solid financial position.

In her inaugural year, Head of School Jennifer Warren met head on the challenges of operating the school within COVID-19 constraints, taking care to do so in a fiscally conservative way that balanced the priorities of families, the needs of students and staff, and the protocols to maintain community safety. Ensuring the school was prepared for three distinct instructional models (distance learning, in-person instruction, and Flexible Learning Plans) took extensive planning and preparation involving facilities, scheduling, communications, process management as well as significant financial investment.

These investments included rigorous COVID-19 testing and health screenings, equipping classrooms to meet cohort and distancing guidelines, expanding instructional space by adapting the lodge and the gym as well as adding tented outdoor classrooms, installing the technical infrastructure to support distance learning, and providing campus-wide air filtration, sinks and signage. This effective leadership and management, together with Woodland's small class size and large campus that naturally allows physical distancing, made us attractive to a larger community. The school capitalized on these strengths to achieve our highest enrollment ever, which contributed to record earned revenue for the school. Although we were unable to gather in person, the Woodland community came together to support the Annual Fund and auction at record levels, leading to a strong year for donated revenue as well.

All of this has put Woodland in a strong fiscal position as we look ahead. The school made great strides on a five-year financial plan, putting in place operating reserves and establishing a PPRRSM (provision for plant replacement, renewal and special maintenance)account, which enables Woodland to forecast funding requirements for deferred maintenance and capital improvements. This sets the school up to responsibly manage both annual and long-term finances and is an important tool for strategic planning.

As I conclude my service as treasurer, I am thrilled with the financial position of the school and the stewardship we have in place with Dr. Warren and the finance committee of the Board. The team performed exceptionally well in a demanding year and will be a valuable resource as James Brundage assumes the role of treasurer. I couldn't be more excited for his leadership and the financial management he will provide for the school.

### 2020-21 Financials



\*Please note that all the information above reflects unaudited figures. Our annual audit concludes in October.

# WOODLAND By the Numbers







\$858,282 ANNUAL FUND TOTAL

A NEW WOODLAND RECORD



ANNUAL FUND PARTICIPATION



**\$294,774** AUCTION PROCEEDS A NEW WOODLAND RECORD

**557** AUCTION BIDS PLACED **5,235** COVID-19 TESTS

50,000+ HEALTH SCREENINGS





3 INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS
DISTANCE | FLP | IN PERSON



















## The Impact of Your

The Annual Fund provides critical support for Woodland, contributing more than 8% to the school's

Outstanding academics and a low teacher-student ratio that enhance learning and individualized attention are hallmarks of the Woodland experience and are expensive to deliver. Each year, the Annual Fund invests in maintaining these prized features of a Woodland education.





Faculty recruitment, retention and development are always top priorities of the Annual Fund and this was particularly true in 2020-2021, when Woodland added personnel to proctor classrooms and supervise stable cohorts in support of health protocols, vaccination appointments, and faculty absences.

COVID-19 required Woodland to make a substantial investment in community safety including COVID-19 testing, health screenings, new desks and partitions to equip classrooms for physical distancing, Merv 13 air filters, and campus-wide signage, sinks and PPE supplies.







## Annual Fund Support

annual operating budget. Here are highlights of what your generosity makes possible at Woodland.









Woodland also made significant technology investments to deliver robust learning experiences for each and every student while at home and in person. This included Zoom licenses, Owl video conferencing cameras, external monitors, adapters, and charging stations to support distance and flexible learning models, as well as new hotspots and increased bandwidth for indoor and outdoor classrooms. Our faculty's enhanced expertise in technologysupported teaching methods will serve the school for years to come.





Most important of all, your Annual Fund gift fills the gap between tuition and the full cost of a Woodland education. Like most independent schools, Woodland relies on the generosity of our community to provide each child with an extraordinary educational experience. At Woodland, this means developing the whole child through rigorous core academics and a spectrum of specialists with expertise in world languages, the arts and design/Maker Education.

# 2021 AUCTION FUND A NEED Playground Renovation

With terrific support from our community, Woodland reimagined our playground area, transforming a cracked and fragmented blacktop into a safe and inviting space for recess and PE. The new playground features lines for basketball, pickleball, volleyball, foursquare and hopscotch.





As this report went to print, installation of the new play course was underway. Jump pads, a climbing dome and bell tower are just some of the stations where students across all grades will build strength and increase agility.

Shading the playground are new crepe myrtle trees with non-invasive roots that will keep our blacktop smooth and safe for years to come.





Students lost no time exploring this exciting new space and putting it to use in both structured, skillbased PE classes and all kinds of free play at recess.

### 2021 AUCTION FUND A NEED Integrated Curriculum Workshop

With the generous support of the school community, 30 Woodland teachers gathered in early August for an intensive, weeklong workshop focused on curriculum design. Their creativity and collaboration resulted in 13 newly designed, multi-disciplinary projects that will be implemented this year across all three divisions.





Workshop participants were supported by stipends, as well as three visiting coaches during their week together, and they enjoyed an in-person visit from a curriculum-design expert, Kim Saxe, to kick off the event. Kim is a lecturer at Stanford's d.school, regularly delivers addresses across the world on Design Thinking, and is a former PK-12 teacher who speaks from experience on the power of creative curriculum in the classroom.

During a special session on Tuesday afternoon, faculty took time to explore Woodland's mission, vision, and values to ensure the curriculum they were designing for their students was aligned with the school's larger purpose.





Feedback on the workshop was incredibly positive. One faculty member wrote: "I really enjoyed collaborating and sharing ideas with my colleagues. Coming away with a written, tangible, unit we can use and implement early in the school year is super exciting!" Woodland will look to extend the work done by faculty this summer, and is aiming to make the Curriculum Integration Workshop a regular part of its professional-growth program.

# Volunteer Honor Roll

Woodland thrives thanks to community involvement and the dedicated volunteers who serve the school in a wide range of roles. We are grateful for the many acts of service that supported our faculty, students and staff throughout the year.

A special shout out to the Woodland School Parents Association (WSPA), which worked creatively and tirelessly to reimagine community events like the Fun Run, create new events like Movie Night, and to support faculty and staff with a thoughtful adaptation of Teacher Appreciation Week.

#### ANNUAL FUND AMBASSADORS

Beth Carr Christine DeLuna Clark Fisher Abby Kirigin Janet Land Dennis Payne Danielle Reid Sonia Arrison Senkut Pratima Sethi Aida Soto Nikki Trunnell Angie Wang Lisa Widup

#### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Michelle Gabriel, Chair Luciana de Almeida Aguiar Sharon Binger James Brundage Beth Carr Sharon Chang Julie Galles Mac Harman Abigail Kirigin Michael Mastrandrea Karuna Mukherjea **Roel Peeters** Keith Randall Sonia Arrison Senkut Pratima Sethi Michelle Morcos Smith Aida Soto

### GALA AND AUCTION COMMITTEE

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### WSPA BOARD AND VOLUNTEERS

Luciana Aguiar, President Christine Abrego, Vice President Becca Chambers, Communications Angie Wang, Treasurer Archana Anand, Early Childhood Room Parent Coordinator Kristine Griffith, Lower School Room Parent Coordinator Lisa Thai, Middle School Room Parent Coordinator

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Emily Lowe Jason Mendelson Shabnam Nemati Danielle Reid Sandra Schofield Denby Sellers Jinanne Tabra Flore Tolland Ilaria Turner Joshua Valdez Erin Walters Natalie Whearley



## Congratulations Class of 2021



































#### FUTURE HIGH SCHOOLS

Aragon High School Archbishop Mitty High School Carlmont High School Design Tech High School Eastside College **Preparatory School** 

Gunn High School The Harker School Junipero High School Menlo School Notre Dame Belmont The Nueva School

















Palo Alto High School Pinewood School Sacred Heart Preparatory Saint Francis High School Woodside High School Woodside Priory School







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