

Why I Give:

Annie Jones

It was in 2001 that Annie Jones first learned of Benchmark School when her granddaughter, Cordelia (Lee Lee) Jones, began as a student. For the next seven years, Annie watched as Lee Lee began to learn about herself as a learner and gain confidence. “Lee Lee was at Benchmark for a long time, and she thrived there,” Annie said.

While Lee Lee left Benchmark in 2008 as a confident, budding student, Annie chose not to wait for this transformation to begin supporting Benchmark. In fact, she first gave to the school just three months after Lee Lee enrolled “because I wanted to support the people who were helping my grandchild,” she said.

Since then, Annie has continued to support Benchmark in its mission as she watched four more of her grandchildren make their way through the school—Walker '13, Hudson '14, and Holcomb and Harry (current students). Though all five have had different strengths and challenges, Annie said she has seen transformations in all of her grandchildren since they started at Benchmark—specifically regarding their confidence levels. “They have been very happy there [at Benchmark] and have become more confident because they are not so frustrated and because they have had a lot of individual attention and support,” she said. “Confidence is the real base for anybody doing



Annie Jones with granddaughter Cordelia (Lee Lee) Jones '08.


anything well, and I think confidence-building is one of the strengths of Benchmark.”

While Annie does not get to Benchmark very often due to living a distance away, she always tries to attend Grandparent and Special Guest Day in the spring to see her grandchildren “in action” in the classroom. In particular, she commented on how terrific she thought this past year’s event was.

“In Holcomb’s 5th grade class, they did a wonderful presentation—‘Around the World in 80 books’—and the kids got up and discussed the books that they had read through a skit they were doing,” she said. “It was just so refreshing because you could just see that the kids themselves were enjoying every minute of it. It was a really fun morning and stands out as one of the

best Grandparent’s Days because they [the students] were so involved and you could tell that they were really enjoying reading. Plus, it’s so obvious to see how committed the faculty is and how much they care about these kids.”

In addition to giving to The Benchmark Fund every year at a leadership level, Annie has shown her support for the school by serving as the Grandparent Representative for The Benchmark Fund for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 campaigns. “Because I know what a great job [the school] does, I now feel even more strongly about supporting Benchmark,” she said.

Annie has 12 grandchildren in eight different schools, but emphasizes that she is “very grateful for the job that Benchmark does.” While some of her grandchildren are still working through academic challenges, she is confident that with the proper guidance they will all succeed in their own time. “Benchmark has really given them all a chance to get their feet on the ground,” she said. 

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Interested in giving to Benchmark School? Learn more at BenchmarkSchool.org/giving.