





# **MESSAGE FROM OUR HEAD OF SCHOOL**



This past school year certainly challenged us in many ways. Not only were we in the epicenter of a pandemic, but we also experienced the devastating impact of longstanding racial injustices in our country. Our recipe for addressing struggles, conflicts, tough emotions (you name it- we felt it this year!) is often a combination of empathy, understanding, and thoughtful brainstorming. In other words, the groundwork for my preparation in dealing with this pandemic was

already set. Combine that with an implausible team who continued to provide that "WEDS Magic"- we were able to provide stability in a time of such uncertainty. All in all, what has gotten us through this unprecedented year is our precedent that always guides us- growing through collaboration.

Every year we choose a school-wide theme and it's really incredible that we had the foresight to pick growth-mindset for 2020! Building resilience in our students has always been important, but this year they really had to put skills to practice. This notion of fostering perseverance is deeply rooted in our mission and within every moment, lesson and interaction we have. It was especially put to the test after March 13th when we made the decision to close and offer remote programming. Initially we did not think that offering synchronous remote learning was a viable option for us, but soon realized we had to evolve and we quickly changed our mindset. We told our families not to worry because "we got this"- and together we did. In the pages ahead, you'll get a snapshot of how we endured changes and persevered as a community. Not only did we offer a synchronous, engaging virtual program- we offered all of the services that make us "more than a school". And we did not stop there. Our Spring Semester was full of all of the events you can expect from WEDS: Our Annual Benefit, Awards and Graduation Ceremony, and of course our Grand Finale June Show that knocked it out of the park.

They say that during challenging times you learn who you are, and the same is true for organization. For us at WEDS, working through 2020 as a community was- by far- one of our proudest moments. I am incredibly grateful to our faculty and staff whose passion and resolve never floundered. Our parents deserve considerable recognition because they were likely the most challenged during a remote model, although they continued to support us every step of the way. WEDS was also so fortunate to have our Trustees, Alum and many friends who helped us continue to stay #wedsstrong. The credit of this school year's success will be like any other and goes to our students. They may have had to work harder than other years, but their achievements continue to inspire us all.

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Carrie Catapano, LCSW Head of School

# THE WEST END DAY SCHOOL TEAM

Omar Afzaal, M.S. Ed., Head Teacher

Robert Aitchison, B.F.A., Art Specialist

Andrew Barnes, Business Manager

Marley Carhart, M.S. Ed., STEM/ HeadTeacher

Carrie Catapano, L.C.S.W., Head of School

Jessica Chambers, M.A. Ed., Co-Education Head

**Emily Cotton,** M.S.W., M.S. Ed., Associate Teacher

Vanessa D'Auria, M.S., CCC-SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist

Liza Gershen, L.M.S.W., Social Worker

Emma Henry, B.A. Ed., Co-Head Teacher

Leon Hoffman, M.D., Psychiatrist/ Psychoanalyst

Katy Jenkins, M.S. Ed., Co-Education Head

Brendan Kelly, M.S. PE, Physical Education Specialist

Greg Kinsey, M.A. Ed., Technology Specialist

Nicole Levine, M.A. Ed., Co-Head Teacher

Marielle Lewis, M.S. Ed., Head Teacher

Anastasia Manes, L.M.S.W., Social Worker

Emma Marks, M.S. Ed., Co-Head Teacher

**Aiyana Matondo,** COTA/L., Occupational Therapy Assistant

Madeleine McGowan, B.S. Ed., Co-Head Teacher Abigail Page Moore, M.S., CCC-SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist

Courtney Moss, M.A. Ed., Head Teacher

Katie O'Keife, L.M.S.W., Social Worker

Florence Perry, Bookkeeper & Payroll Manager

Melissa Putterman, M.S., OTR, Occupational Therapist

Felix Rosa, Building Custodian

Jennifer Rothman, L.C.S.W., Social Worker

Alyson Rumley, M.S., CCC-SLP, Advancement Director

Alexandra Scacalossi, Administrative Assistant and Receptionist

Allison Shannon, RN, BSN, School Nurse

Hannah Steinfeld, M.S. Ed., Head Teacher

Molly Sulds, M.S. Ed., Associate Teacher

**Jenna Stogsdill,** L.C.S.W., Head Social Worker

Samantha Strahl, L.M.S.W., Social Worker

Jennifer Greene Susser, L.C.S.W., Admissions Head

Sarah Treanor, B.M. Ed., Drama/Music Specialist

Juan Vernaza, Handyman

**Emma Yovanoff,** L.C.S.W., Supervising Social Worker and DEI Leader

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# DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION CODE OF CONDUCT

Throughout this transformative year, we have been committed to making changes for our community of students, faculty and families. Our intention with our messages was to be clear about our collective beliefs and to ensure we explicitly express what we will not tolerate in our loving "More Than a" School. We hope this is a positive step in making our whole community feel more safe, valued and understood. Check out our new Code of Conduct and please share your feedback with us.

At West End Day School we believe all students, regardless of who they are, deserve a welcoming and challenging learning environment that supports our students and their unique learning styles

At West End Day School we believe in celebrating all differences that shape our community members and their collective identities and so we may continue to grow and learn together

At West End Day School we believe all children deserve a flexible atmosphere where positive behaviors and engagement with our community are celebrated

At West End Day School we believe the learning environment should represent all of our students and incorporate topics of race, socio-economic status, family composition, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical differences, disability, national and ethnic origin, and similarly recognized categories.

At West End Day School we believe in elevating student's voices and promoting conversations that are inclusive and respectful of others

At West End Day School we do not tolerate discrimination of any form based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

At West End Day school we do not tolerate a lack of respect for others

At West End Day School we do not tolerate behavior or conduct that denies others their rights





# THERE ARE NO LIMITS TO WHAT WE CAN DO

## Growth Mindset: Together We Tackled Obstacles-Both Big and Small

Boy...did we pick the right year to focus on Growth Mindset! Before we welcomed our students back, Mary Cay Ricci (Learning & the Brain) led our staff in a professional development focused on "Mindsets in the Classroom: Strategies for Building a Growth Mindset Learning Environment." Throughout the school year, we tapped into these strategies for cultivating perseverance and resilience, as well as working through challenges- some we had never faced before! Even our Winter Sing theme, "The Power of Yet: Music Promoting Perseverance, Positivity, and Growth," reflected this message! We will continue to embrace discomfort with a growth mindset attitude, and flex our emotional muscles so we could continue to grow when faced with obstacles.



# Mutt-i-grees Curriculum: Just Another Day at the Paw-ffice for Stella

One of the biggest highlights of the year- and we think most would agree- was the introduction of our Mutt-igree curriculum with Stella, our sponsored rescue dog. The Muttigree program integrated seamlessly with our social emotional learning curriculum. Their mission is to guide and support students and animals, while working towards a more compassionate society at large. Now that's a mission we can stand by! Through the Muttigree program, Stella joined our students to help them develop empathy, resiliency, and social awareness.



## Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Task Force: Looking Inward to Encourage Change



2020 has been a year of many things, but for WEDS it was (and still is) a year of growth. West End Day School began reflecting on what was missing from our Mission from a Diversity, Equality and Inclusion standpoint in reaction to the exposure of longstanding racial inequities in our country. We began by reexamining our programming and decided to incorporate Pollyanna, a Racial

Literacy Curriculum. But we didn't stop there. Emma Yovanoff, supervising social worker and now DEI Task Force Leader, led our staff in an effort to continue the drive

and necessity to more directly discuss racism, equality and justice in our school. The goal of this Task Force was to create an anti-racist curriculum, further develop our own relationship to race, and continue to educate ourselves and our students. These are important first steps, but we are committed to ongoing growth and education for our WEDS community on the global and personal impact of systemic racism.



# TOGETHER WE MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

# **Crafting Confidence for Kids**

For our 4th Annual Community Thankfulness Event, our community focused on providing hope and comfort to children dealing with the complex problem and stigmas of homelessness. We teamed up with Enchanted Makeovers for our "Crafting Confidence for Kids" initiative. The WEDS community spearheaded two community projects: Capes for Kids and The Doll Adoption Project. Our students designed capes for children in shelters to provide them with an armor of strength, imagination and hope; and created handmade dolls out of different fabrics to give them a WEDS companion. We are so proud of our students and community for rallying behind this meaningful project!





# Student Council: St. Jude Bake Sale and Move-a-thon For Our Frontlines

Our Student Council was busy feeding the needs of our local and global community this year. This winter, West End Day School chose to support St. Jude Children's Research Hospital for our Student Council-led Bake Sale. St. Jude's mission in understanding and treating children, regardless of background and circumstances, spoke to West End Day School. Students, families, and staff rallied behind this charity event by donating baked goods and bringing big appetites- and wallets!

This spring, to help sustain NYC during the pandemic, our students got in gear for a Move-a-thon benefiting the charitable work of Feed the Frontlines. We jumped, biked, ran, walked- you name it- all to raise funds for providing nutritious meals to feed healthcare workers and New Yorkers experiencing food insecurity. Both were a collaborative effort, much like everything we strive to do at WEDS.





# BRINGING OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER

# Art Exhibit: Reuse, Reduce, Recycle, and Recreate



West End Day School students gained an understanding of how people and methods can contribute to our ability to "Reuse, Reduce, Recycle, and Recreate" resources in our everyday lives. As a school, we wanted to highlight the positive impacts we can make to preserve our natural world. Each class focused on different aspects of this theme to showcase a wide variety of art and writing that reflect the importance of protecting our environment. Our exhibit was adorned with projects like water-color resist paintings to show the difference between healthy and bleached coral reefs to a hanging origami sculpture using a week's worth of recycled materials from West End Day School

We even had students create water bottle robots who "wrote" diary entries about their recycling adventures and the process they go through. We were so proud to display artwork that was predominantly recycled materials to really get our message across!



# Website Launch: Giving An Online Lens Into the Incredible Work We Do

It was just before the beginning of the pandemic that we launched our new website, and we could not think of a better time to show off what it means to be "More Than a School." Our goal was to better reflect our incredibly unique mission and high level of integrated social-emotional thinking throughout programming - and we did just that! It was a great time to highlight our core principles: we understand each child's feelings, emotions, struggles, gifts, and beauty in such a personal way. Of course, it was also important to capture how we build upon our collaborative approach with our team, parents, and the child- all to help our students build their own ordinary magic we call resiliency. We love any reason to celebrate, so our Launch Party was a great opportunity to collectively appreciate the updated online lens into our "More than a School."



# TOGETHER WE CAN DO "VIRTUALLY" ANYTHING

Annie Manes

# **Remote Learning: Shifting Our Way of Teaching**

Our community was put to the test back in March, but together we were up for the challenge. We had to reimagine what a typical day at WEDS looked like; especially since our students were no longer learning in a classroom but rather their homes! We managed to revamp our way of teaching in record time and go remote just days after the announcement of NYC school closures- all because we had the forethought to create an executable plan. We managed to stay connected through a synchronous, virtual program and continued to offer all of the services that make us "More than a School." It may not have been how we anticipated our school year going, but we managed to come together as a community and end the year stronger than ever before!



# Shrek: Our Very First Virtual Standing Ovation



Nothing - not even a pandemic - could stop us from having a June Show! While the preparation and final performance may have been a bit different this year, Shrek was still just as fun to watch and another wonderful showcase of our students' talents. Ms. Treanor worked her magic and directed a cohesive final performance, even with all of the actors in different zip codes. The final production was showcased on Zoom for family and friends to enjoy; and this year, everyone got the best seat in the house! It was a great way to end our school year...even Lord Farquaad would have been impressed.

# OUR WEDS COMMUNITY ALWAYS SETS OUR STUDENTS ON A PATH TO GREATNESS

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We have so much gratitude for the support West End Day School receives each year from our generous community of families, alumni, trustees, faculty, and friends. Your tremendous support helped us to continue our focus on giving students a strong foundation so they can continue to grow. By strengthening our Giving Tree, you also gave our students firm ground to stand on so they could overcome bigger challenges and meet higher expectations. With you by our side, working with us hand-in-hand, their needs and their growth will always be fostered. Thank you for your commitment to our mission and helping ensure we continue to offer a highly individualized, therapeutic approach to learning so our children can thrive.

### **Annual Fund**

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# ANNUAL SPRING BENIERI

# Virtual Benefit: Our Network is Always Connected



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CAR -

# Congratulations Emma Yovanoff

for 10 years of incredible work with our childrens and families.



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