

West End Day School: ROOTED IN COMMUNITY



ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

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Message from Head of School

In 2015, West End Day turned 30. And I am thrilled, lucky, overjoyed and humbled (I could go on) that I have been a part of this amazing school for nearly half of its lifetime. As we enter our fourth decade, we will continue to focus on all of the principles that have helped us become the school we are today:

No two children are the same (nor would we ask them to be).

West End Day School recognizes each and every student as a unique individual.

We focus on their personal strengths and challenges so they have the best chance at success.

With this they can realize their true potential —

and we can watch them soar in only the way they can.

Our sum is greater than our parts.

Our solid community is an integral part of West End Day School. We could not do what we do without the dedication of our students, faculty and parents. Our success is a result of our shared understanding that relationships matter — a lot — both inside the classroom and out.



We are small, but mighty. Our size may be small but our achievements are vast when our community comes together. This year we were able to open a state-of-the-art Science and Art Center that will certainly inspire our youngsters to explore and create. And we are already planning more great achievements to come.



We are thankful. I would like to say thank you to all of you for yet another successful year at West End Day School. To our faculty for their talent, endless patience and commitment. To our parents for all of their support and for being our biggest fans. To our Board Members for their continued dedication. And last, but never ever least, to our students for inspiring us and teaching us something new each and every day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carrie Catapano".

Carrie Catapano, LCSW
Head of School

Our Mission Statement

WEST END DAY IS MORE THAN A SCHOOL:

it is a community of students, staff and parents who have a shared vision. We create a safe haven for learning, strive to be a trusted partner for parents and foster the development of resiliency in children to build a strong foundation for their lifelong success.

TOGETHER WE:

- ★ Establish an **individualized** and challenging educational program that supports our bright students and their **unique** learning styles.
- ★ Cultivate our students' **inner strengths** by recognizing the impact **emotions** have on learning.
- ★ Provide a flexible atmosphere, where children feel comfortable meeting high expectations.
- ★ Promote, nurture and engage relationships, because they are central to our well-being.
- ★ Ensure that families feel valued, supported and understood.





Our Art & Science Center: Where Innovation and Imagination Meet

Our Science and Art Center has come to life and we have our Parent Association leadership and our community to thank for it. If you have not had the chance to see it for yourself, we can tell you that this beautiful new space grants our students a place to create, imagine, experiment, discover and grow. The design by Michael Schmitt Architect incorporates natural resources such as wood, organic tile, and cork walls. We have also integrated large butcher block project tables for groups to gather and collaborate.





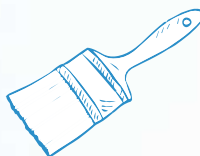
Our science curriculum is also evolving to mirror the innovative new space that we have created. We are enhancing our already inquiry-based science curriculum to create an even more interactive and collaborative learning experience. In addition to having new science equipment and models, we have included new science kits across all grade levels. These science kits include experiments, investigations and fun explorations.

This space will also allow students to create and explore different, more complex mediums of art. With the open space and large tables, students will be able to participate in larger scale projects. This also means that they will be able to work with more interesting materials and be able to create 3-dimensional art using themes from our science and social studies curriculum. We know this space will become a student favorite and will cultivate an awe of the Science and Art every day.



A Sky High Mural

This year, the West End Day students took their talents sky high — to our roof space — where they worked together to create a large colorful mural. Under the direction of community artist Ellen Alt, the staff, students and parents all got involved. First the teachers came up with the theme: play, animals, a park and New York City.





Then each class designed one aspect of the mural, which Ellen put together into a final sketch. The parents and staff pitched in to paint the mural over two weekends. When it was all done, each student had the chance to make their personal mark with an individual flower that they painted in the “garden” section of the mural.



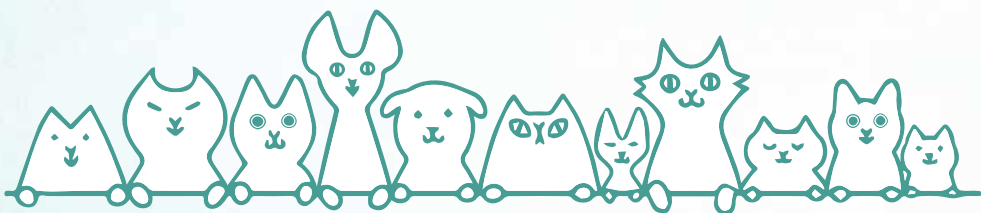
Philanthropy:

Giving Back, Giving Back, Giving Back

This year, our most senior class lead by Mr. Kassel, came together as a community to help the larger New York City community. Through group process and exploration, the children selected organizations they felt were most in need and formulated an outreach initiative for each. They started with an annual food drive for City Harvest, a hunger relief organization that helps to feed hungry families throughout the city. By forming a strong campaign, our oldest students were able to collect over a hundred pounds of food from the school community.



Another initiative on the list was animal appreciation. The kids spent several weeks creating soft cat blankets and cat toys for local shelters. They were puuurfec! As they continued to look outside of our school community and at our surrounding city, our students wanted to reach an even larger community: those affected by cancer. After some experiences of knowing friends and family members affected by the disease, they felt empowered to raise money for cancer research. They sweetened this tough topic with a school wide bake-sale and raised funds for this important cause.



Assemblies:

Where West End Day Comes Together

It's critical that we help our students experience the communities outside of our hallways, but it's just as important that we gather from time-to-time as our own community. Our school-wide assemblies foster a sense of unity amongst all of students — no matter their age. Here are a few assembly highlights from the year:



WEDS welcomed ScienceTellers, a group who combines storytelling and science experiments to create amazing theatrical learning experiences. Their show was called “Dragons & Dreams” and students participated in exciting experiments involving dry ice, fog, and smoke-filled bubbles.

Symphony Space came to WEDS for their performance on “European and African Influences in American Music”. This interactive assembly introduced students to the historical roots of both types of music and gave them the chance to sing and play along with unique instruments from both cultures.



For Earth Day, our school celebrated together with an assembly promoting awareness for endangered animals. Each class chose an animal to research, created a compelling PowerPoint presentation about that animal and designed custom T-shirts for sale. The students also gathered donations for the World Wildlife Foundation from the larger WEDS community.

Field Trips: Getting Up Close with Our Community

It's one thing for our students to hear about different cultures and communities, but nothing can replace the experience of actually getting out of the classroom and seeing things for themselves. That's what our field trips are all about. And this year we had many.



Our students visited Wave Hill to participate in a workshop titled "A Walk through Time". They explored how the land has transformed over time, from the pre-Colonial period to the development of the Wave Hill estate during the Industrial Revolution. As they toured the grounds, the students discovered some of the traditions and teachings of the Lenape people and even had the opportunity to hold and handle actual artifacts that were used by the people who lived on the land (yes, from way back then!)

Another great excursion led our students to the New York Hall of Science, where they participated in a "Science Detectives" workshop and solved a mystery using forensic tools and scientific deduction.



One of our lucky classes headed to the Central Park Zoo, where they participated in the “Polar Habitats” workshop. The students learned about the arctic biome, and the animals that call this extreme environment home. To end the trip, the class had the opportunity to watch the sea lion feeding. Boy, were they hungry!



The Sony Wonder Lab, a hands-on museum of technology, was another trip that our students were able to experience. A scavenger hunt led them from one amazing exhibit to another. Some of the more popular exhibits were the Production Studio, where the students filmed, reported, and hosted their own news broadcast and the Movie Maker, where students chose from movie clips and music to create their own movie.

And last but not least, another class crunched some numbers and had a blast at the Museum of Mathematics. The dynamic exhibits and program allowed the students to solve logic puzzles and revealed the wonders of mathematics.



Our Spring Benefit: Celebrating 30 Years of West End Day!

Thanks to the support of the entire West End Day School community, this year's Annual Spring Benefit was a lovely evening filled with joy and generosity to celebrate our 30th Anniversary as a school. Over 130 guests gathered at the Upper West Side's Calle Ocho in support of our school.



We raised an incredible \$128,864 at the event and the funds were used to create our brand-new Science and Art Center.

We are so grateful to all whose support made this night possible and such a success.



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Our Grand Finale: Showing off for our Community

There is no better way to end a successful school year than with a performance like no other. For this year's June Show, the entire WEDS community of children, staff and families gathered together for the production of *Annie*. With the help of Vanessa Fiasconaro, who lead this effort, West End Day came together to theatrically bring the NYC community to life.



It was the perfect opportunity to unify the school and utilize curriculums that span the different grade levels. Since *Annie* was set back in the 1930s, the school studied what NYC was like for *Annie* back at that time and each art class brought to life the orphanage, the mansion and even NYC vendors. In music, each classroom had a unique song showcased harmonies and solos. It was the added comedic performances that really brought out the smiles (and let's face it, you're never fully dressed without one!). Every single student was an integral part of bringing the production of *Annie* to life!



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