

WEST END DAY SCHOOL • 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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THE WEST END DAY SCHOOL TEAM

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

Kathrynn Antos, M.S. Ed., Associate Teacher

Andrew Barnes, Business Manager

Jessica Block, M.S. Ed., Associate Teacher

Marley Carhart, M.S. Ed., Head Teacher and STEM Specialist

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

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

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

Marino Ferreras, Building Manager

Akelah Geary, M.S. Ed., Associate Teacher

Liza Gershen, L.M.S.W., Counselor

Emma Henry, M.S. Ed., Head Teacher

Leon Hoffman, M.D., Psychiatrist/
Psychoanalyst

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

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

Marielle Lewis, M.S. Ed., Head Teacher and After-School Program Coordinator

Anastasia Manes, L.M.S.W., Counselor

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Madeleine McGowan, B.S. Ed., 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., Counselor

Florence Perry, Bookkeeper & Payroll Manager

Melissa Putterman-Spitz, M.S., OTR, Occupational Therapist Consultant

Jennifer Rothman, L.C.S.W., Counselor

Alyson Rumley, M.S., CCC-SLP, Director of Communications and Head Speech-Language Pathologist

Danielle Van Arsdale, Administrative Assistant

Allison Shannon, RN, BSN, School Nurse

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

Jenna Stogsdill, L.C.S.W., Clinical Head

Samantha Strahl, L.M.S.W., Associate Teacher/
Group Counselor

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

MESSAGE FROM OUR HEAD OF SCHOOL

Let me start by saying that our mission has never been more clear and guided us so intensely. Our shared vision with our community and the relationships we fostered were the foundation of what made this loving school so many families' second home this past year. West End Day School was not only where our children and families could turn - **it was where we all wanted to be.**

Our families let us be the trusted partner we pride ourselves in being, and believed in us to put our heads together and make a magical school year happen. We did so much more than keeping school running 5 days a week: we kept that positive vibe strong. Our reimaged cohort model, coupled with social-distancing and mask policies, were such a small part of our bigger plans. Reexamining our social-emotional thinking, as well as keeping relationships and our students' individualized needs and concerns at the forefront of our minds, were the factors that guided us most in our blueprint for the 2020-2021 school year.

We continued to have a "feelings approached" program because this was a year with a lot of big feelings. We focused on play and connection, and made sure that our students' proverbial buckets were always filled with love. At the same time, we were helping them strengthen their resiliency muscles as we experienced, processed, and tackled the year together. That resilience was contagious around here and our students learned and made the leaps they would make during any other year.

I look back on this past year with more appreciation for our faculty than ever. Their endless dedication and investment in meeting all of our students' needs deserves boundless recognition. This was **a year that showed us what we're made of.** My pride reflects so much more than our faculty being heroes during a pandemic and showing up for our children during scary times. Not showing up was never an option. I was so in awe of how talented and creative they were in shifting and implementing new interventions and programming to meet the needs of our students. What we have proven is that a West End Day School team member keeps the bar high, no matter what the circumstances are.

To our ever-adapting PA Officers: A wholehearted thank you to Angela Dirks, Jill Margolies, Christine Kattan, and Beth Clarke. You stepped up in ways you may not have even imagined and constantly shifted to meet the needs of parents.

Thank you to our valued Trustees, donors, Alum, and many friends who helped strengthen our community and our shared vision. But of course, it's our students who get the most credit. With all of the unimaginable changes we threw at you- you faced them so bravely and resiliently. Your smiles (evident even under those masks!) and your spirits certainly filled MY bucket each and every day!



Carrie Catapano, LCSW
Head of School

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Welcoming our Community Back to Their Home Away from Home

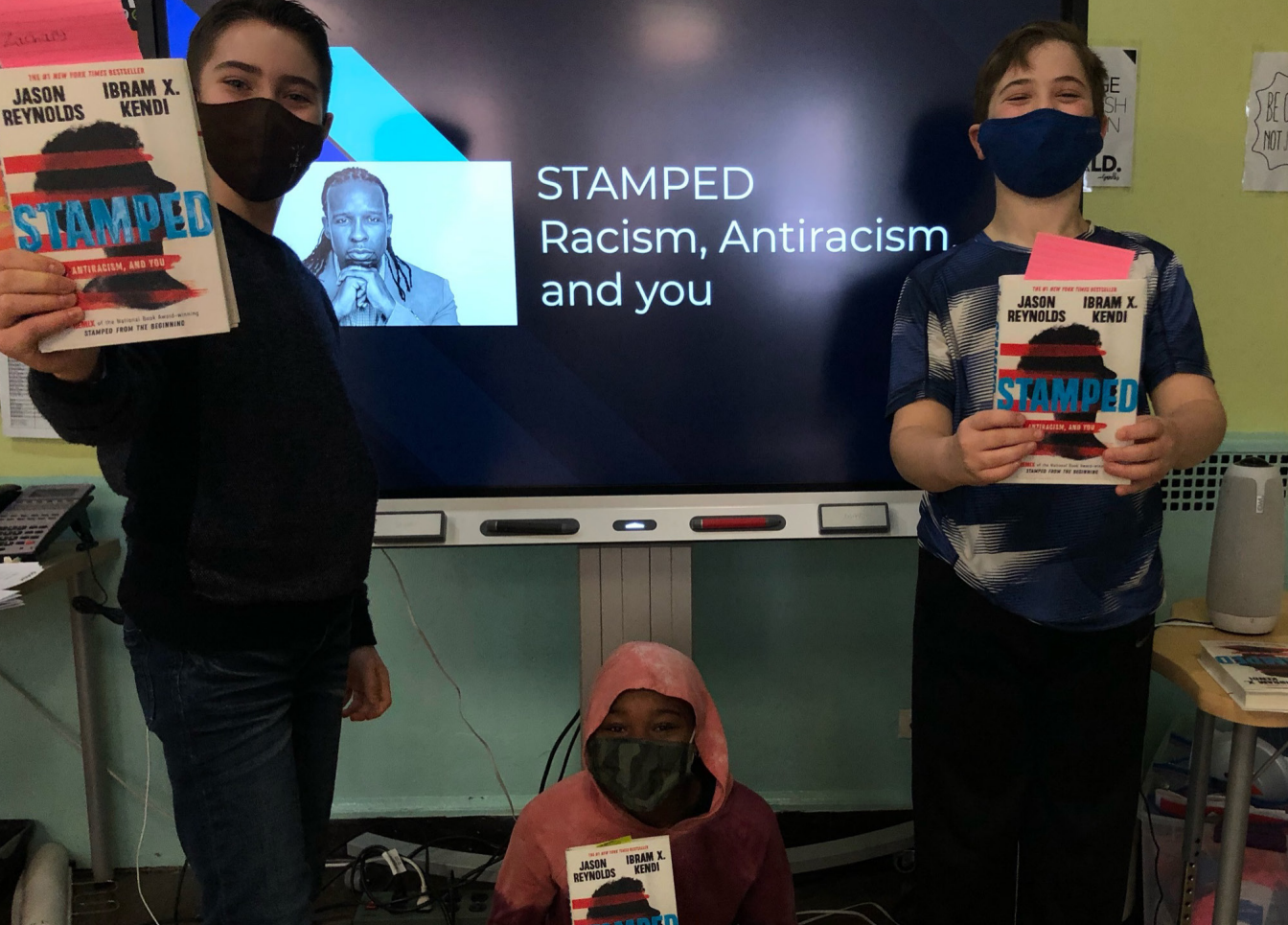
West End Day School was beyond thrilled to reopen its doors in September of 2020 for in-person learning. It was a huge effort with everything you can expect from our incredible team: collaboration full of critical thinking, relentless problem solving, and innovative brainstorming. Our loving school was once again buzzing with enthusiasm and had energy that our classrooms were missing since March. Seeing students play with one another (in new ways!), being able to call a teacher over to a desk for help, giving waves and smiles in the hallways- those are the things that made being back so special. We are so grateful to our faculty who were so dedicated to our students and committed to welcoming them back to their second home.



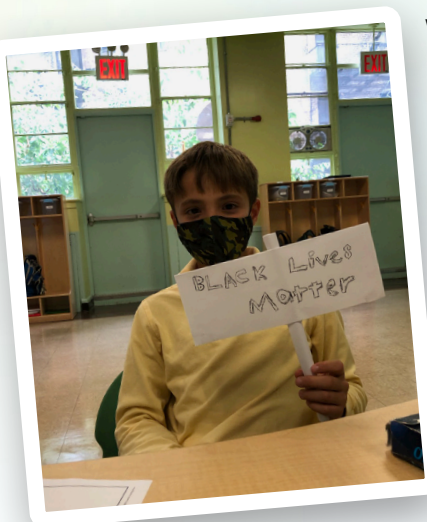
Reimagining Our Programming: Into the Great Outdoors

One of the silver linings of this year was reinventing how we use the abundance of outdoor space our school- and the Upper West Side- has to offer! Our garden area, roof, balconies, and nearby parks were just as much a part of our planning as was the indoor space. Our students enjoyed PE more than ever, getting the opportunity to enjoy the roof and/or field space at Riverside Park; while academic groups and lunch periods were the perfect opportunity for fresh air, as well. We look forward to seeing how we can take this well-received adjustment in programming into the new school year.





A Greater Commitment to Our DEIB Curriculum

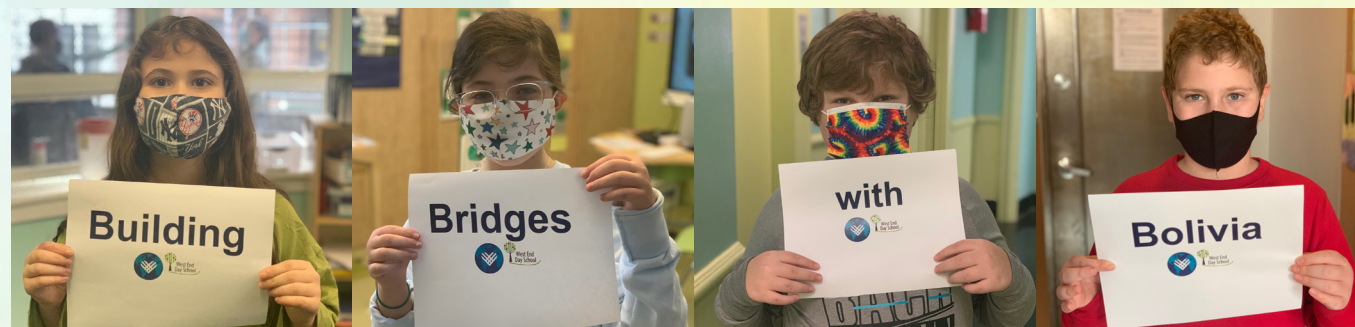


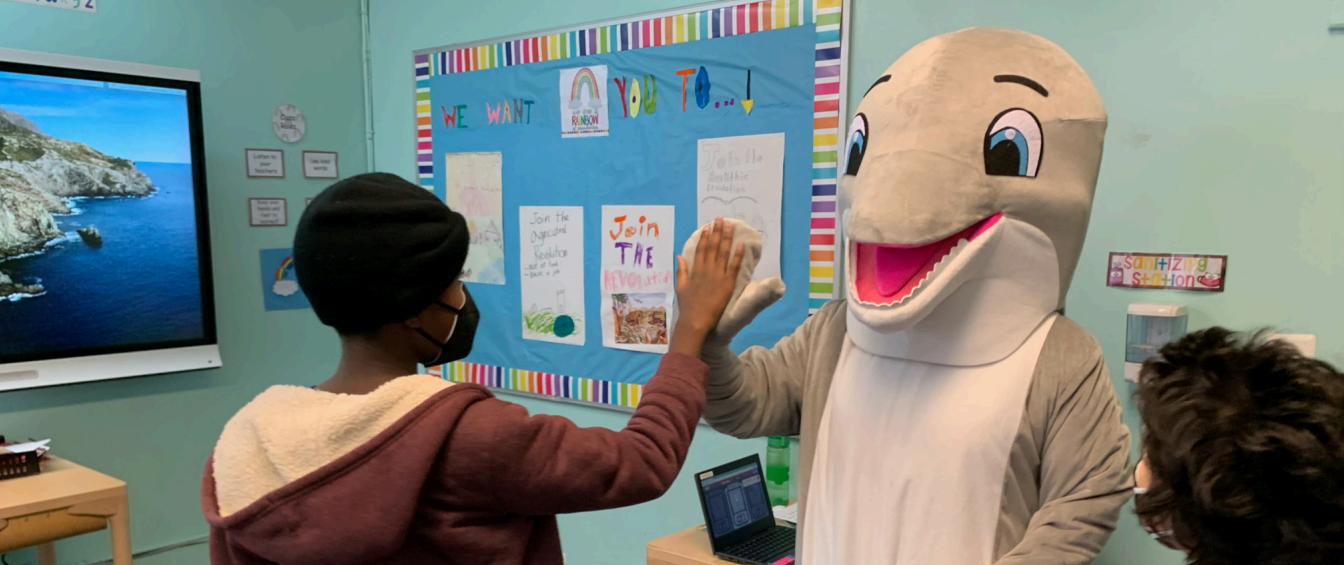
We have made a commitment to make Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) work a part of our every day at WEDS. This mission was front and center: to combat injustices and expand our students' and our own understanding of what it means to address racism and inequality. Our DEIB Task Force, formed in the fall of 2020, was our space and opportunity to brainstorm how we could best celebrate all diversity. We have implemented staff wide training as a way to educate ourselves so we can better educate our students. We've also added the Pollyanna Racial Literacy Curriculum that brings weekly lessons into our classrooms that focus on inclusion, respect, and confronting difficult truths about the treatment of people of color in the United States. We are proud of the impact we have made in a year and look forward to continuing the progress ahead as we focus on belonging and ensuring all of our students see themselves in our school.



"Building Bridges": Our Long-Term Initiative Inspired By Giving Tuesday

West End Day School launched a long-term, community building project with a concept built upon the idea that relationships matter. We teamed up with The Alalay Foundation because of the special connection it has to our very own school community. Mr. Robert, our Art Teacher of 17 years, has collaborated with this Bolivian-based organization for the past six years. Its mission is to help change poverty conditions in high-risk children and families. We eagerly organized a pen-pal system between the WEDS and Bolivian community and provided both groups of children a special keepsake- a coloring book that was a collaborative set of drawings from both communities. Ultimately, our community helped us "go the distance" and support our school's initiative with our year-end Walk-a-thon. Students jumped/ran/walked to raise funds for the Alalay Foundation, and proceeds went towards fulfilling academic and art supply wishlists for this Bolivian community of children and adolescents.





Swimming to Victory! The Dolphin Takes Over as School Mascot

WEDS prepared for its own important election this year- our new school mascot! The voting process transcends all ages here at WEDS and everyone had a voice that we wanted to be heard. After focusing on qualities such as kindness, empathy, friendliness, intelligence and grace- our oldest class decided that they would be campaigning for the dolphin! Our entire student body cast their ballots to determine a winner: a great way for our students to engage in the electoral process. After the victory of the dolphin on November 3rd, the leopard- our mascot of four years- was integral in ensuring a peaceful transfer of power. We are looking forward to the dolphin bringing joy and spirit to this (More Than a) School and representing all of the children within this loving community.



Halloween Spook-tacular

We had all that you would expect to make it an exciting day celebrating Halloween: pumpkin decorating, Halloween crafts, and Field Day inspired games. And most importantly (some may say!) was our door-to-door Trick or Treating. The costumes did not disappoint, nor did the decorations by our Halloween Committee. We missed our families joining us in-person, but we made sure they did not completely miss out on the fun. Be sure to check out our WEDS Halloween Spooktacular video on our West End Day School youtube channel under videos!



Field Day: It's Always Fun & Games

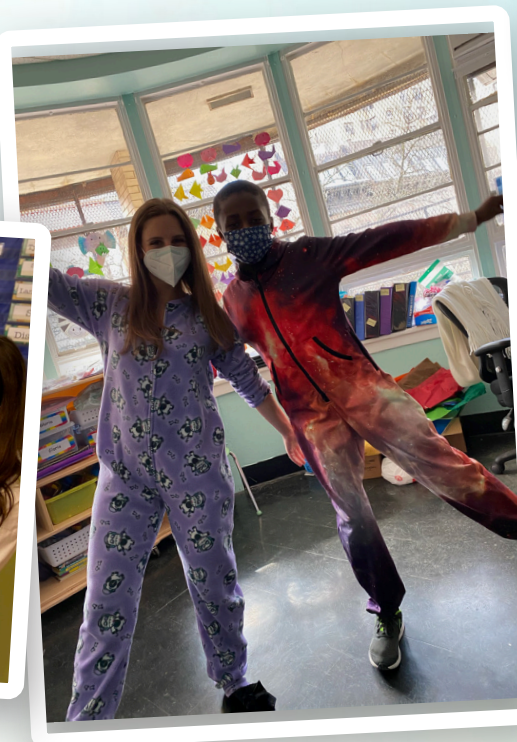
Following our year-long initiative to maintain certain traditions, while implementing modifications that took into account current safety guidelines, allowed us to enjoy a wonderful Field Day with our families! And let's just say that they accepted the challenge, especially tug-of-war!

We've Got Spirit, Yes We Do!

Community is at the heart of everything we do- and we KNOW that we have the best one out there! We are always considering how we can be better connected to one another and we were so excited to incorporate another all-school event that does just that!



Pancakes, slime, jammies, dream catchers....it could only mean one thing: Pajama Day! Next up, our community embraced Wacky Day with no shortage of silly wigs, hats, socks, activities, and energy! To close out the week, what better way to celebrate School Spirit Day than by welcoming our newly elected mascot with an official Inauguration.



The Art of Connection: A Fine Arts Performance Like No Other

WEDS is always focused on partnership and we figured....why not "bridge" our Winter Sing with community building projects already in place. We were overjoyed to showcase our theme of connection and show our community how music and art bring us all together. Our reimagined WEDS Fine Arts Performance, appropriately titled "Celebrating Connection", was a wonderful opportunity to put the talents of our students on display. Ms. Treanor masterfully created a music ensemble for the whole community to enjoy- a compilation of pre-recorded songs by our talented students that resulted in a creative and fun performance! Our students were also invited to collaborate on art projects to further celebrate "The Art of Connection". By joining individual contributions together into final projects, we are reminded that we are stronger and more beautiful, together.



A Real Page Turner- Celebrating "I Love to Read" Day

We celebrated I Love to Read Day with all of our favorite activities: guest readers joining different classes for read-alouds, students reading stories to Stella, bookmark making activities, and an in-person Book Fair sponsored by Fork and Pencil. Although this year it was reimagined on a smaller scale to accommodate the event taking place in our courtyard one cohort at a time, we were thrilled to welcome parents to join their children outside while they pick up books- and to enjoy some socially distanced mingling!





Planting Seeds for the Future of our Planet

WEDS showed support for our planet on Earth Day, serving as a conscious reminder of how fragile our environment is and how important it is to protect it. Every class planted seeds and decorated planters to bring home; and also painted rocks with words of Gratitude to adorn our ever-blossoming garden. As a way to explore how much plastic we are using as a school, we also participated in weekly “waste audits”. After weighing how much we’d been using and recycling each week, we challenged ourselves to reduce the amount each week by reusing rather than recycling. We are always looking for opportunities to help reduce our carbon footprint, and it won’t stop here!

Closing Out the Year—Together!

We made it happen: in-person year-end Award Ceremonies, Cohort Performances, and Graduation. Seeing our families in our auditorium as we closed out this remarkable year was the goal we had from the start! The performances were filled with wonderful art, tons of talent, and lots of collaboration; and we were so excited to have The Lorax as our source of inspiration for Mr. Robert

and Ms. Treanor’s artists and actors. Our award ceremonies and graduation were a wonderful way to celebrate our students’ many triumphs and accomplishments, and reflect back on what we know will be a year for the books!



Camp WEDS: “More Than” a Summer Program

This year, more than ever, we dedicated our six-week summer learning program to connection, play, and nature. Our WEDS team transformed our typical summer camp in light of wanting to give our campers just what they need: a break from screens and a summer full of building

strong friendships, exploring the outdoors, and making memories. Camp WEDS incorporated traditional summer camp programming with a consistently integrated social-emotional, hands-on curriculum. We embraced being outdoors at Riverside Park; channeling our creative energy into Drama, Craft, and Cooking classes; and engaging in interactive multi-sport activities with FunFit Kids. We think the biggest highlight of summer was the addition of our “WEDS Lagoon” on our roof- complete with a splash pad, water tables, and kiddie pool.



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Green Leaves \$500

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Gifts in Kind

Angela Dirks

Still Feeling the Magic from our Spring Benefit

Our second-ever (and hopefully last!) Virtual Spring Benefit was nothing short of magical as we celebrated the year's accomplishments and honored West End Day School's true miracle workers: our faculty. Our Spring Benefit featured an interactive magic show with acclaimed mentalist and magician, Gary Ferrar; opportunities to bid on some of our most phenomenal items; and a special celebration of our wonderful community members. We want to thank all of our families and friends who have supported us in our effort to remain "WEDSstrong" throughout the pandemic. We managed, no matter how challenging, to continue providing our students with in-person learning - and that's a tremendous achievement worth celebrating. And celebrate, we did!

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Magician

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Thrive Market

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Andrew Barnes

Marley Carhart

Carrie Catapano

Jessica Chambers

Liza Gershen

Katy Jenkins

Marielle Lewis

Anastasia Manes

Abigail Moore

Kati O'Keefe

Stella, our school dog

Jenna Stogsdill





DOLPHIN
4
MASCOT
INTELLIGENT • EMPATHETIC
LOYAL

LOVE

APPRECIATE

CONSIDERATE

HELPFUL
FRIEND

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We gratefully acknowledged the donors who have supported West End Day School with gifts between July 1, 2020- June 30th 2021. Every effort has been made to include each person or organization who contributed to West End Day School during this period. If a name has been omitted or listed incorrectly, please accept our apologies and notify the advancement office at arumley@westenddayschool.org.

NIKO
Did you know that
many Native Americans



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