

Empowering

Unique

Learners

by building confidence and
a foundation for success



miriam
SCHOOL and LEARNING CENTER

Impact Report 2022-2023

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From the Head of Miriam

Dear Miriam Friends and Family,

I hope the Spring of 2024 brings you the abundance of growth and promise that we are experiencing at the Miriam School and Learning Center. Miriam's No. 1 core value, "Learners First," is deeply felt throughout our organization - from our personalized programming in our K-12 school, the way we wrap our arms around Greater St. Louis, providing "soup to nuts" special education services for over 1,500 children through our Learning Center outreach. Finally, it is felt at Miriam Switching Post, where 46 dedicated volunteers and staff work to collect donations and generate revenue to help children get the special education help they need to lead independent, happy and healthy lives after our care.



Fiscal Year 2023 brought so many wins for Miriam. The High School graduated 14 students and supported half of them as they prepared for college - and the other half as they entered the workforce or a career program. We held our first "Next Steps Fair" at the high school, with representatives of colleges and other programs present to talk with students and families in the gym. The Lower/Middle School grew in enrollment and needed to open a fifth middle school classroom this school year. The K-8 community also brought back its Spring Picnic for the first time since before COVID, and it was such a joy to see our families and staff enjoying this special day together. The Learning Center finished its first year of a successful two-year contract with the Archdiocese. Learning Center staff also prepared to begin offering comprehensive autism testing using the ADOS assessment.

There are many wonderful things happening at Miriam this spring. I invite you to come experience the joy of students who feel loved, understood and successful by participating in our Tuesday Talk & Tours. We hope to see you at an upcoming event, such as our Second Annual Next Steps High School Transition Fair on April 19th, our High School Graduation on May 10th, our Middle School Graduation on May 17th or the Young Professionals Trivia Night on June 28.

There is truly no place like our Miriam organization. We are grateful for the way each one of you supports our mission. Please know that my door is always open for feedback and ideas on how we can best deliver our mission to help as many children as possible with learning differences, optimize their potential, and share the beautiful strengths they possess with the rest of the world.

With every good wish,

Meg Bamford





Jonathan's Journey



Miriam was a Godsend, our lifeline. (Educators) identified his strengths and areas where he could use more support, then built that learning plan just for him.

- Angela, Jonathan's mother

Twelve years of learning and growth

Jonathan's love for Miriam is palpable. Since first grade, he has embraced its opportunities for growth and success.

Now, Jonathan is looking forward to graduating in just two short months, and he and his family are reflecting on his 12 years at Miriam School. It has been a transformative journey filled with academic and social growth, friendship, and unwavering support from educators.

When Jonathan was just 6 years old, his parents already knew he would thrive in a small classroom, so they were looking into private school options. After trying two schools, it became clear that Jonathan would need extra support – and they found Miriam.

“After our first visit, it was a no-brainer,” said his mom, Angela. “Miriam has been able to build the support he needed into the classroom, with teachers who could teach to him specifically.”

This personalized support fostered an environment where Jonathan could succeed without feeling isolated or different. He faces challenges in language processing, retention and academics, and Miriam became a beacon of hope for Jonathan and his parents.

“I think the individualized approach has been the most impactful for Jonathan,” Angela said. “They’ve identified his strengths and areas where he could use more support, then built that learning plan just for him. It has given him confidence and space to find his place as a leader.”

Angela said it is evident that Miriam teachers are here because they are passionate about helping students like Jonathan. They are knowledgeable about the support and accommodations Jonathan needs, and they are able to push him out of his comfort zone while providing that support.

“They challenge him, but most of all they are patient,” Angela said. “Their unwavering support didn’t stop in the classroom. They were always making recommendations, and offering additional resources to assure his success.”

She said not only have his teachers been wonderful, but the therapists at Miriam are truly experts in their field. “They are an extension of the classroom. I love that they work with the teachers to support classroom learning.”

It was while Jonathan was attending the lower school that Miriam opened its high school. Jonathan and his parents could not have been more relieved.

“To say we were thrilled is such an understatement, an over-simplified emotion,” Angela said. “Miriam was a Godsend, our lifeline. We had endured such a rigorous, exhaustive, intense search trying to find the best fit for our son. The mere thought of starting that search again, and for a high school kid, was daunting.”

The exceptional, individualized education Jonathan had received at the lower/middle school continued in grades 9-12. The high school also added in life skills courses, experiential learning and transition services.

As Jonathan prepares to embark on the next chapter of his journey, his experiences at Miriam have equipped him with the confidence and resilience to navigate the challenges that lie ahead.

“Miriam has surpassed our expectations. Jonathan wakes up each morning excited to go to school,” Angela said. “He feels successful. The community of teachers, specialists and administrators have been amazing.”

Jonathan will receive his diploma on Friday, May 10. He is planning to attend the University of Missouri St. Louis SUCCEED program in the fall.



Miriam by the Numbers

2022-2023

14

Graduating Seniors

10

Graduating Eighth-Graders



1,600

Students served at the School and Learning Center



106

Partner Schools

Miriam Learning Center partners with area schools to place special education professionals on an as-needed basis, allowing the schools to provide specialized services for children who learn differently within their own schools.



85

ZIP Codes

represented by School and Learning Center families



96%

of high school students say they feel welcome at school.



38

Miriam Maintainers

Maintainers are superstars of our mission, consistently supporting our educational programs with monthly donations to the Annual Fund.



8:1

Teacher-to-student ratio



Our teachers get to know the strengths, interests and challenges of every student, so they are able to develop a personalized learning plan.

2,321

Services rendered at the Learning Center

Miriam Learning Center provides private services such as counseling, diagnostic testing and evaluations, therapies, tutoring, summer camp, professional development, and educational consultation.



5,618

Hours of therapy services at the Lower/Middle School

At all levels of Miriam School, speech/language and occupational therapies are built right into the school day.



1:1

Technology

Every student receives an iPad, Chromebook or laptop for use on schoolwork.



38%

of students at the School and Learning Center represent minority groups.



98%

of school-aged children completing the Learning Center's counseling program reduced mental health symptoms to a nonclinical range on the Pediatric Symptom Checklist.



2022-2023 Miriam Headlines

July 18, 2022

NEW EXECUTIVE LEADER STARTS TENURE AT MIRIAM

Meg Bamford looks forward to leading Miriam into the future

St. Louis, Mo – Meg Bamford had seven months to think about her first day at Miriam. After her hire in November as Head of Miriam School and Learning Center, Bamford officially began her tenure on July 1 and has hit the ground running.

“Miriam captured my heart almost instantly. The deep-rooted commitment of Miriam to serve children who learn differently in the St. Louis community is a dream come true for me,” said Bamford, who moved with her family from Maryland to St. Louis.



Miriam is in motion!



Experiential Learning Program launches

Following nearly two years of limited socializing during a pandemic, and in the age when any answer is just a Google search away, many teens in 2023 haven't had the real-world experience needed for after graduation.

“Now that they're older, the stakes are so much higher, because again we need them to be independent, successful, healthy, happy people,” says Meg Bamford, Head of Miriam. “And it's harder and harder for kids to make that leap.”

That's why at Miriam High School we're making a strategic effort to give our students these hands-on, out of classroom experiences through our Experiential Learning Program. Bamford believes, for our unique learners on the brink of adulthood, classroom learning alone is not enough.



‘No other place like it’ *Miriam community helps families feel at home*

When Anneliese Flynn thinks of Miriam, she thinks about the supportive community she and her family have found here.

Her son, Danny, developed severe anxiety in kindergarten. Autism made social skills a challenge for Danny, and over the course of his year in kindergarten at a public school, he became less interested in interacting with peers and teachers. He was upset each night before going to bed, and then again in the morning before school.

It was frustrating to see her son struggle, and Annaliese knew she needed a better solution.

Read more here: miriamstl.org/danny



‘I feel like I’ve actually made an impact’ -SLUH Student

Eight Saint Louis University High School students spent the month of January 2023 volunteering with Miriam’s unique learners, acting as mentors and friends.

Joey, one of the SLUH volunteers, says he really got to know each student on an individual level. “One thing I found that was interesting was that I when found myself journaling, I would talk way more about the kids than the experience of being here,” Joey says.

“And I feel like it’s helped me find more of the human connection. Because I’ll be recognizing with certain kids what I need to do to specifically help them out.”

Read more here: miriamstl.org/SLUH

Miriam High School hosts “Next Steps” fair exploring options for students, parents

By Caroline Hecker
Published: Apr. 19, 2023 at 4:58 PM CDT

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (KMOV) - The transition from high school into the “real world” is being made easier for students at Miriam High School.

The independent special education high school in St. Louis is home to 58 students in grades 9 to 12. It

hopes to expand to 85 students in the next few years.

“Some of our parents’ greatest fears is the thought that their kids may graduate to the couch,” said Meg Bamford, Head of Miriam School and Learning Center.

“So our job at Miriam is to make sure the kids have a really good transition plan when they graduate.”



Scan here to watch the news story.

MIRIAM ANNOUNCES NEW HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

April 6, 2023

Miriam School and Learning Center, is pleased to announce the hiring of Vicki Thurman as High School Principal.

Mrs. Thurman will come to Miriam on July 3, 2023, with more than 22 years of experience working in both public and private schools to educate and support students with learning differences.

Mrs. Thurman currently works at MICDS as Director of Student Support Services. In this role, she serves as



a member of the Academic Leadership Team.

“I am so excited to welcome Vicki to our Miriam family,” said Meg Bamford, head of Miriam School and Learning Center.

“It was clear from the moment I met her, the wonderful talent, experience, care, and commitment to helping change the trajectory of students’ lives that she will bring to Miriam High School. I feel lucky

to be able to partner with her on the many good things to come for our high school students.”



‘Peace is always beautiful’ - Walt Whitman

Teaching peace and empowering students with self-regulating skills they can use every day is an important part of our mission to create a safe, supportive educational environment for unique learners.

Our K-8 students were among the millions who celebrated International Peace Day on September 21, 2022.

Their morning started with a reading of the book “I Am Peace” by Ms. C, a few mindfulness practices, and reciting the peace pledge.

After the assembly, students gathered at the school entryway to plant windmills they had made in class.



Girls on the Run

In spring 2023, a few Miriam students and educators finished their first-ever season of Girls on the Run St. Louis with a 5K in Forest Park.

They prepared for the race throughout the spring, with lessons on empowerment and friendship at the heart of each practice. The program is designed to enhance girls’ social, emotional, and physical skills and behaviors while integrating running into fun group activities.

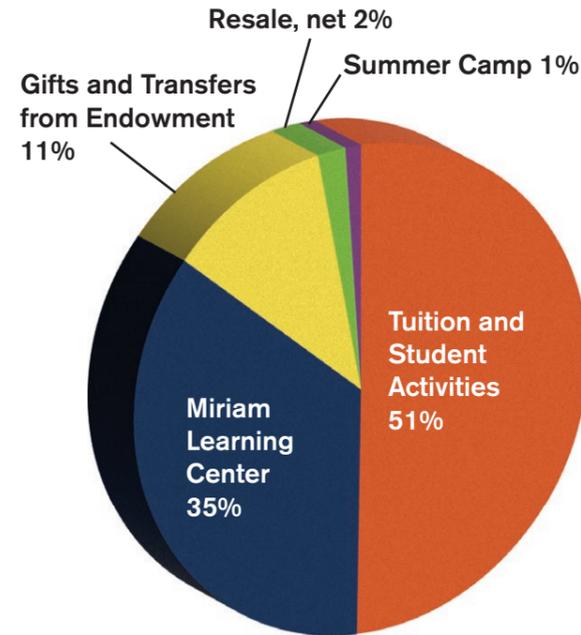
“Coaching Girls on the Run was such a gratifying experience,” said Keira, an occupational therapist at Miriam. “The girls learned so much about themselves and each other, and it was so special to see them empowered and confident. It was exciting to see them flourish on race day!”

Operating Revenues and Expenses Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

Revenues and Support

Tuition and Student Activities	\$5,907,547
Miriam Learning Center	4,139,932
Summer Camp	161,290
Gifts and Transfers from Endowment	1,299,311
Resale, net	197,672
Special Events	24,040
Miscellaneous	14,280

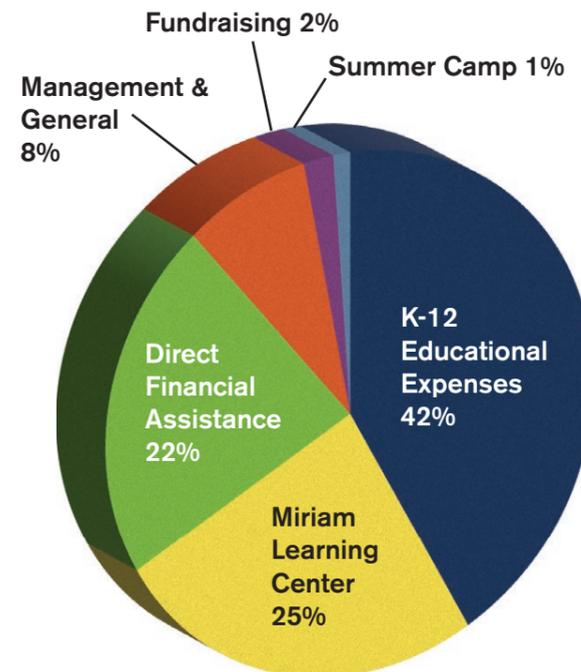
Total Revenues and Support \$11,744,072



Expenses

K-12 Educational Expenses	\$5,124,835
Direct Financial Assistance	2,719,615
Miriam Learning Center	3,049,377
Summer Camp	94,447
Management and General	915,497
Fundraising	298,511

Total Expenses \$12,202,282



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