



The
IDEAL
School
of Manhattan

ANNUAL
REPORT
of GIVING
2023-24

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME
Celebrating Year One at 5 Hanover Square



Mission

The IDEAL School of Manhattan is an inclusion school dedicated to creating a diverse community that affirms and accepts the full identities of all people, while inspiring academic excellence, creative leadership, and a desire to build a more just and equitable world.

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INTRODUCTION



In this annual report, we recognize and express our gratitude to all of our supporters for their financial contributions in the 2023-24 fiscal year. It is only as a result of the financial support of the trustees, friends, families, and staff members named in this report that IDEAL was able to reach this milestone moment. We are deeply grateful to you, our trustees, donors, families, and faculty and staff, for our beautiful space and for all our forever home makes possible for our students and school.





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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

Dear IDEAL Families and Friends:

In the summer before the 2023-24 school year, IDEAL moved from two buildings on the Upper West Side to our new home at 5 Hanover Square in the Financial District. This is IDEAL's third move since our founding in 2005. IDEAL opened its doors in the community house of a church on West 76th Street in 2006 to 20 students in Grades K-2 and moved just over 100 students in Grades K-7 to 314 West 91st Street in 2012. We expanded our Upper West Side footprint to include two and then three floors at B'nai Jeshurun to accommodate our growing Middle and High Schools starting in the fall of 2014.



Moving to a “forever home” purpose-built for our IDEAL students has been a longtime dream of our founders and of the Board of Trustees, whose Real Estate Committee dedicated over five years to finding the very best possible space and location and to building the financial resources to fund the move. Countless dedicated volunteers and consultants in finance, real estate, construction management, property management, and design also contributed to our team. With the launch of our capital campaign, “Building for Our Future,” we raised over \$500,000 to help fund the move and build-out of our specialized classrooms and spaces.

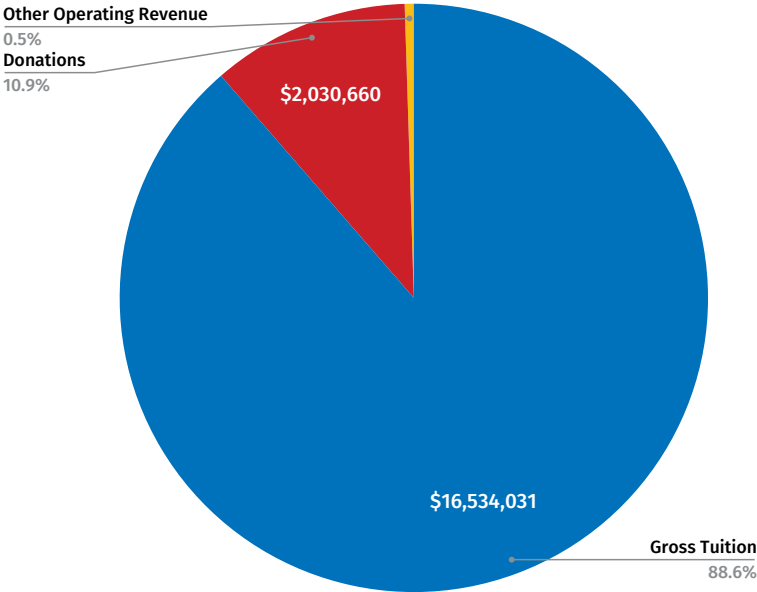
IDEAL's new home at 5 Hanover added over 7,000 square feet to our footprint and includes a dedicated floor for each division, a multipurpose room with a designated pantry for lunch service, a double-height gym, a dedicated Next Steps suite, two art and two music studios, a large Learning Center, and, most importantly, bright and beautiful classrooms. We are excited about all of the ways our new home at 5 Hanover Square positions IDEAL for long-term growth.

Running a school with over 100 employees as well as moving and replacing most of the school's furniture is an expensive operation. Significant annual fundraising is a vital part of our budget. As an independent school, we rely on donations from staff members, families and our many friends each year to meet our annual costs. Of the more than \$2 million we raised in 2023-24, almost \$1,500,000 came from people who neither work for nor have children at the school. I am also happy to share that 83% of our families and 92% of faculty and staff members donated.

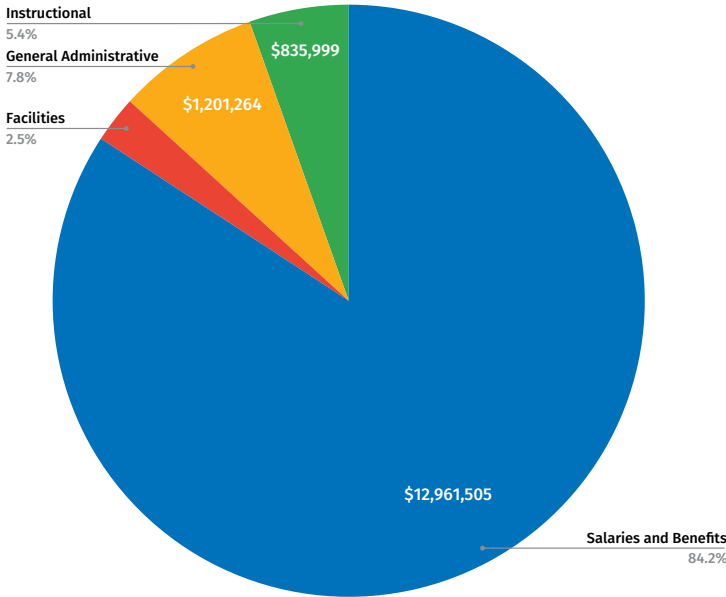
On behalf of the entire Board, thank you to each and every one of you for your contributions of time, talent, and treasure. We are extremely grateful for the generosity of our wonderful IDEAL community.

Jay Eisenhofer, President of the Board of Trustees

OPERATING INCOME



OPERATING EXPENSES



A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear IDEAL Families and Friends:

This has been a remarkable year for IDEAL. Moving to our forever home at 5 Hanover Square has made a world of difference to our students and community.

In so many ways, IDEAL's new home embodies the relationships among students, staff, and families that are hallmarks of our school. From the welcoming park in front, where families gather at arrival and dismissal, to the shared foyer and wide hallways lined with cubbies and lockers, inclusion and connection are visible. In our new space, we were able to launch a buddy program that brought Lower and Upper School students together in meaningful ways throughout the year. To celebrate our first Harvest Fest at 5 Hanover Square, for example, the big and little buddies read *The Giving Tree* together in classrooms, then sang "Simple Gifts," an IDEAL tradition, in our gym and multipurpose room. They cooperatively populated our own Giving Tree in the foyer with leaves naming the gifts we each bring to our community.



Our new home also inspired an expansion of experiential, hands-on, and leadership opportunities. In their new music studio, Lower School students got to learn the recorder and guitar, and we launched our first-ever Lower School rock band. Next Steps students developed career skills in internships at organizations like Luv Michael, Invictus Bakery, GE Law, and the New York Public Library. Our High School basketball team entered the Metro League. We staged *Wonka, Jr*, our eighth annual spring musical, at Edmond Safra Hall at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, and our seniors visited Washington, D.C., for their Civil Rights Journey.

Today, art and music fill our new walls and halls, student work fills our bulletin boards, and the voices of students and faculty members resonate throughout the building. Graduates of the class of 2024 attended colleges and postsecondary programs such as American University, CUNY Guttman, Howard University, Muhlenberg College, Rochester Institute of Technology, SUNY Maritime College, SUNY Polytechnic Institute, and our own Next Steps Program.

It is thanks to your donations of time, expertise, and funds that IDEAL students at 5 Hanover Square are able to pursue personal and academic excellence and develop the creative leadership skills needed to build a more just and equitable world in more ways than ever.

Thank you for all you have contributed to the growth of IDEAL and the success of our students.

Janet Wolfe, Head of School



CLASS OF 2024



The 12 members of the Class of 2024 were accepted to 35 different colleges or postsecondary programs. They were offered \$269,500 in scholar dollars and five scholarships. The full list of acceptances is below, with an asterisk designating multiple acceptances and bold representing the schools where our students matriculated.

American University
Borough of Manhattan
Community College
Catholic University of America
Clark Atlanta University
Cooke School Transitions
Program
CUNY BMCC
CUNY Guttman
CUNY Hostos
Drexel University
Howard University
Iona University
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Mercyhurst University
Morgan State University
Muhlenberg College
Next Steps Transition Program*
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Technical State University
Pace University
Pennsylvania Western University
Rochester Institute of
Technology*
Saint Joseph's University
Saint Thomas Aquinas College
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SUNY Canton

SUNY Cobleskill
SUNY Delhi
SUNY Maritime College
SUNY New Paltz
SUNY Oswego*
SUNY Polytechnic Institute
SUNY Purchase
SUNY Stony Brook
University at Buffalo
Western New England University

THE OPEN DOOR SCHOLARSHIP FUND



IDEAL's student community reflects the rich diversity of New York City, and we are extremely proud of our socioeconomic diversity. The Open Door Scholarship Fund, established in 2010, allows us to continue to provide access to an independent school education for students from under-resourced communities. Every dollar donated to the Open Door Scholarship Fund goes directly toward the tuition of students in the Standard Program.

We seek individual, corporate, and foundation partners to support this effort by funding scholarships for children in need. More than 83% of IDEAL students receive financial assistance, and the average financial aid award is 94% of tuition. This represents an investment of approximately \$2.5 million annually, which is approximately 15% of the school's expenditures. Open Door Scholarship funding allows the school to continue to invest meaningfully in the program and to meet the needs of our diverse student body. Thanks to the generosity of donors to the Fund, our Open Door Scholars are thriving.

If you are interested in supporting the Open Door Scholarship Fund, please contact CFO Margaret Conklin at mconklin@theidealschool.org. All gifts to the Open Door Scholarship Fund are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

ALUMNI NEWS

In September of 2023, IDEAL hired its first two alumni as faculty and staff members.

Max Rubin was in IDEAL's first graduating class of three students in 2018. He was also a member of the first cohort of 20 students who blazed the trail when the school opened in 2006.

Max works part-time at the school, supporting the IT and facilities departments, and acts as our first alumni ambassador, personifying the school's mission at events throughout the year.

Another kindergartner that first year was Bianca Jeffrey, who joined IDEAL's staff as an associate teacher in August 2024.

Nora Gross joined IDEAL in its second year as a first grader, and rejoined as an associate teacher starting in the 2023-24 school year.

Both Bianca and Nora graduated in Grade 8 before IDEAL started its High School program.



In January of 2025, the three staff members plus Audra Zuckerman, co-founder and Secretary of the Board of Trustees, as well as Max's mom, joined Head of School Janet Wolfe to talk about the past, present and future of the school.

When asked what drew their families to IDEAL, Bianca said, "For my mom, we were already at another independent school, and she wanted a different set of values."

Nora's mom also learned about the emerging school and "gravitated toward the message of inclusion and having us in

the classroom with a bunch of different types of kids."

Max, of course, "didn't have a choice," Audra laughed, and talked about the motivation for founding the school.

"Well, it's interesting listening to Bianca and Nora because the things that they described that attracted their parents to the school were exactly the aspects of education that we were hoping to do a little differently from other places. So, to have an inclusive environment, to have a small community where you could get to know and be friends with everyone or anyone and feel safe



Photo courtesy Positive Exposure

and comfortable being yourself, so you're in the best position to learn to your maximum potential and to offer everything an independent school offers... to have that available to everyone in the community. Those were really motivating factors ... a school where someone with a disability would be welcome and accepted. That's why we started the school."

When asked what resonated with the school and drew them back, Bianca, Nora, and Max spoke about how the mission and the values remain the same as when they were in school as children, how they made them into the people they are today.

"I really feel like going to IDEAL set me up for in my future life to just be a more accepting person and to make friends with anyone, no matter their abilities. And my mom makes a show about how I can be friends with a rock," Nora said.

Bianca said that starting at IDEAL so young, she felt they were able to absorb the mission, and when she was starting her professional career, she sought out the same values.

Max agreed, saying, "I love that IDEAL values come full circle."

The group discussed differences and similarities, such as the

space – the school's third since its founding – a huge difference being the new building is fully accessible, built exactly for our students' needs, and compared that to the first space in a church that was not accessible, and nothing could be done to bring that building up to date.

While the space brings IDEAL students together throughout the year, it's the traditions that are the emotional glue. From Earthfest and ArtBeat to the Civil Rights Museum and Community Day to the school song, the heart of IDEAL is when we celebrate our planet, our past, creativity, and connections.

PARTNERSHIPS

The IDEAL School of Manhattan is approaching its 20th birthday, and its programs continue to grow and change to keep pace with advances in education plus address the needs and skills of a diverse student body and teaching staff. One way that we are becoming part of the larger community is through partnerships with other organizations and leaders in a variety of fields.

IDEAL seniors conduct interviews and attend shadow days with professionals as a part of their **career exploration** projects. Next Steps students take on internal and external internships where they learn important job skills.



The IDEAL Speaker Series brings professionals who give presentations on subjects affecting the lives of students with disabilities and their families to the school. Topics this year included Maximizing Benefits for People with Disabilities, A-Z of a Special Education Case, and Preparing for Transition. These online meetings are open to the public, and recordings can be found on the IDEAL website.

Civil Rights Community Day

Three years ago, our Civil Rights Museum – an end-of-year culmination of learning about social justice–broadened to include speakers who do important work in the field. Speakers at our **Civil Rights Community Day** have included disability rights activist Judith Heumann, and Ben Holtzman and Sammy Lopez, producers of *How to Dance in Ohio*, a Broadway musical with a cast of autistic actors. The speakers at our 2024 event were Braynard “Bobby” Brown (pictured left), a former NFL player – now an attorney who opened the civil rights office at GE Law, and Dayton



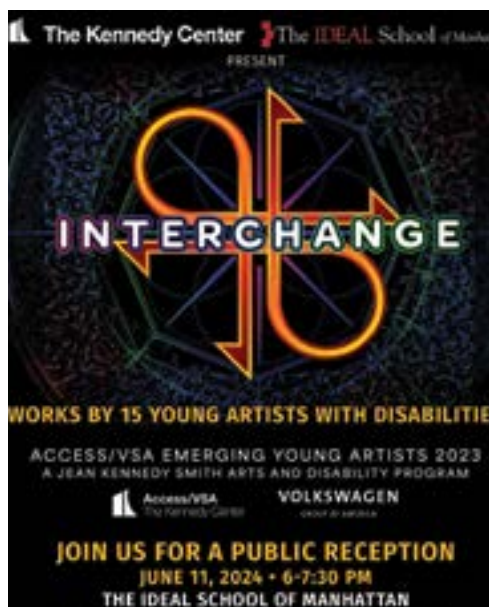
Campbell-Harris of the ACLU Voting Rights Project (pictured, center) of the ACLU Voting Rights Project.

Interchange

Last June, IDEAL partnered with the VSA Emerging Young Artists Program of the Kennedy Center to host **Interchange**, a traveling exhibit of works by 15 artists with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 25. The exhibit, installed in IDEAL's lobby for a week, was the only showing of this exhibit in New York City and brought in viewers from the greater arts and disability communities.

The final day of the show coincided with IDEAL's **ArtBeat**, where the full year of student artwork is displayed throughout the halls, and includes a performing art showcase and upcycled fashion show. Melina Ahmad a Brooklyn artist (pictured on the right below with fellow Interchange artist Sophia Gibbins), whose piece, *Fragmented Self Portrait*, was in Interchange, gave an inspiring presentation to the students during the day, and to a large group of adults who joined for the evening's public reception.

Thanks to Trustees Jay Eisenhofer and Rob McQueen and our community members whose connections allow us to broaden our students' experiences as well as the financial donors who helped cover costs associated with these partnerships, and to the visitors and professionals who donated their time.



THE IDEAL PARENTS ASSOCIATION



The IDEAL Parents Association fosters a spirit of community and bridges communication and cooperation among IDEAL families, faculty, and administration. The PA also coordinates volunteer efforts and helps organize various fundraising and community-building events that support IDEAL's mission. All parents or guardians of IDEAL students are automatically members of the PA, and volunteer class representatives keep families informed about school life and PA initiatives.

In the 2023-24 school year, the PA was instrumental in our fundraising efforts that saw family giving to the Annual Fund reach 83%. We

want to thank the leaders of the PA for their hard work and generosity and all of our families who make up the PA.

Parents Association members were integral in organizing and participating in events such as our annual 5K The IDEAL Way, Potluck Dinner, and Hot Chocolate and Used Uniform Sales. Class reps and other parents stepped up to contribute significantly to events such as Giving Tuesday, the Scholastic Book Fair, the Annual Gala, the Lower School Movie Night, and the Eighth Grade and Senior Dinners. Working together, we are able to provide these fun, extracurricular opportunities to students and their families.



PA LEADERSHIP 2023-24

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 Caroline Collins
 Denise Gildea
 Rachel McQueen
 David Mensah
 Rosalia Rodriguez
 Michelle Smawley
 Cheryl Thomas
 Gissely Urena
 Yolanda Wyns



THE 19TH ANNUAL GALA



IDEAL's Annual Gala commemorates our mission and raises significant funds to support the school's operating budget. The 2024 Gala, titled **There's No Place Like Home**, displayed our strong community support, with more than 400 tickets sold and \$358,575 raised.

Together on February 27, we celebrated our school's unification at 5 Hanover Square and honored the people who made the move to our new building possible. These four teams recognized our school's possibilities and worked

to create an inclusive, beautiful, accessible, and inspiring new home for our students.

Our honorees were **Alexander Gorlin** and **Quncie Williams** from Alexander Gorlin Architects, **Bob Bennis** and **Rich Bennis** from Robert Bennis Consulting, **Leslie Harwood** and **Brent Ozarowski** from Newmark, and **Gregg Weiner**, **Daniel Stanco**, **Thomas Wechsler**, and **Eddie Thiele** from Ropes & Gray.

Through ticket sales, the raffle, silent and live auctions, donations, and a hand raise for the



school's two physical and occupational therapy rooms, more than 200 supporters contributed to the school. There were also nearly 100 in-kind donors who made the auction and raffle possible.

We are grateful to the very special guests who helped make the evening a success: Veteran Broadway artist **Gayle Turner**, Emmy award-winning television host, on-air lifestyle expert, and media coach **Marisa Brahney**, and auctioneer **Nicole Sales Giles**, a VP at Christie's. Thanks also to Upper School music teacher **Will Simbol** and the Class of 2024 for their exciting performance



of "Careless Whisper" by George Michael. Thanks also to our Lower and Upper School art teachers, **Maria Papas** and **Megan Roper**, and their students for making Wizard of Oz-themed table numbers and to students and staff in the **Next Steps Transition Program** for donating their handmade candles for centerpieces.

Our Board of Trustees made tremendous contributions to ensure the success of our event, and we are deeply grateful to IDEAL's Board President, **Jay Eisenhower**, Advancement Committee Chair, **Tracy Nixon**, and IDEAL Co-



THE 19TH ANNUAL GALA

Founder and Secretary, **Audra Zuckerman**, for their support in many ways.

The entire IDEAL family thanks you, our friends, for making IDEAL's 19th Annual Gala a success and for sharing in our joy. Your support, as always, will make a lasting impact on the lives of our students.

The Gala would never have been possible without the hard work and thoughtful planning of our tremendously talented Gala Committee: Chair **Christine Mickletz, Elizabeth Brizzolara, Liana Burdman, Brady and Sammi Clifford, Lucy Guinness, Grace Kaynor, Rachel and Rob McQueen, Larissa Regala and Matt Sloan, Cate LaFarge Summers, Meredith Summerville, Fernando Torres, Yolanda Wyns, Margaret Conklin, Wilmaris De La Cruz, and Joseph Kemp.**



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Aritzia	Iryna Sosnovska Photography	RAND Engineering and Architecture
Asphalt Green	Jade Trau	Real McCoy Collectibles
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CompleteBody	Margaritaville	Todd Haiman Landscape Design
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Danbee Arts and Dance Camp	McQueen Consulting LLC	Tosler Davis Salon
Delmonico's	Meredith Summerville	Tracy Nixon
Disney Theatrical Group	Michelle Smith	Verizon/Madison Square Garden
Elements Natural Healing Arts	NBA	
Empire Office	New York Jets	

ANNUAL FUND CONTRIBUTORS

Donations to The Annual Fund also include all contributions to the Faculty and Staff Gift Fund and the Open Door Scholarship Fund.

KEY: A= Alumni, G=Some or all donations made at the Gala, T=Trustee

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FAMILY GIVING BY GRADE

Each year, IDEAL builds a significant amount of fundraising into its budget, which virtually all independent schools do. We can't reach our goals without financial support beyond tuition.

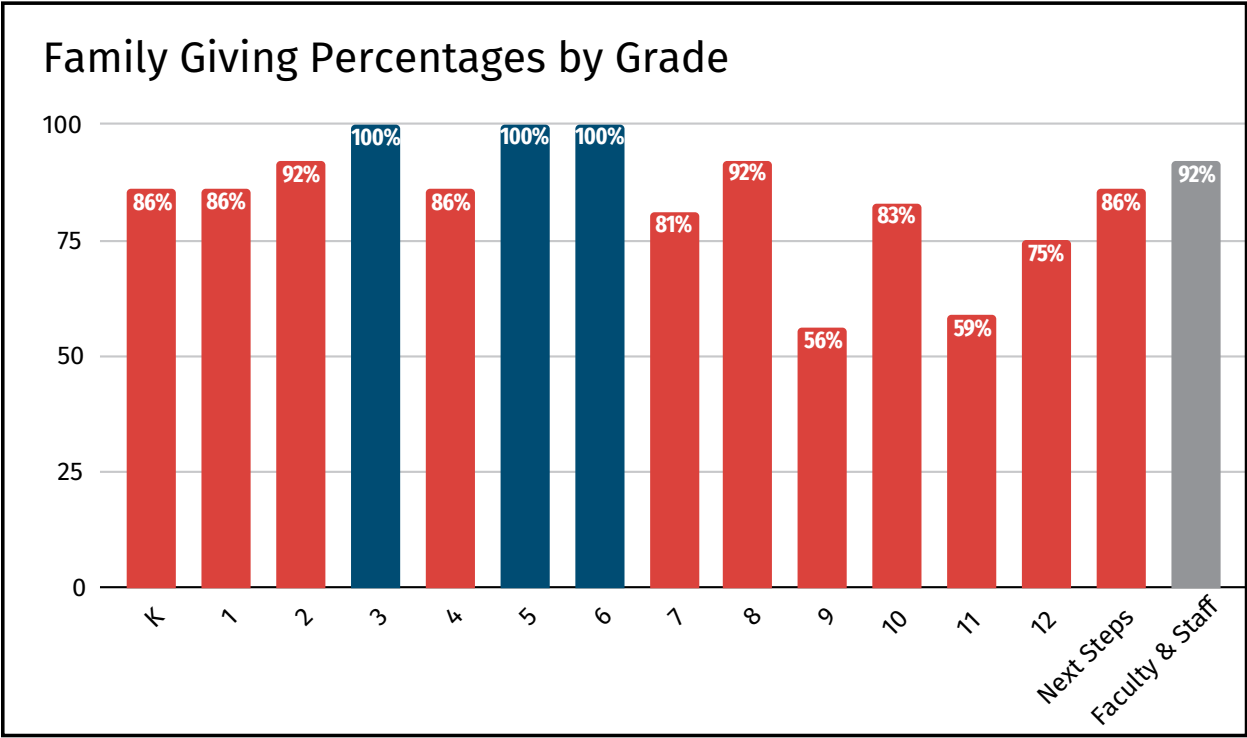
We ask every community member to make a donation back to the school. We count every donor, no matter the amount they contributed, with a goal of 100% participation.

The importance of giving back financially to IDEAL is that a high donation percentage among

families, faculty, and staff is a powerful tool to use when we reach beyond our community to institutional donors and seek grants. Small donation can lead to much larger amounts.

In 2023-24, family giving to the Annual Fund reached 83%, and faculty and staff giving reached 92%. Three grades completed their 100% goal.

Donations to The Annual Fund also include contributions to the Faculty and Staff Gift Fund and the Open Door Scholarship Fund.



TRUSTEE FUNDRAISING INITIATIVES

Two annual summer fundraisers hosted by IDEAL trustees and their families raised \$69,450 for our school this year.

Evan Azriliant has been an IDEAL trustee since the school's founding. He is a staunch supporter of the school's mission, and he is an important part of our Gala fundraising. In July, 2023, Mr. Azriliant brought back his annual **Yale Club Cocktail Reception** fundraiser after a pandemic break.

At the 14th annual event, Mr. Azriliant's friends, family, and IDEAL community guests gathered for a fun evening of cocktails and conversation and raised more than \$17,700 for our school.

Jane Providenti, mother of Troy '21, has been an IDEAL trustee since 2019, and Troy's father, **Anthony Providenti**, is a member of the Board Advancement Committee. For more than 20 years, the Providenti family has held a



fundraiser in East Hampton to raise money for LuMind, which raises funds for Down syndrome research and IDEAL. The Annual **Summer Double Dip**, a fun day of swimming and mingling

with an annual basketball tournament, has raised more than \$2.7 million over the years, benefitting both organizations. This year, the Summer Double Dip brought \$51,750 to IDEAL.



IN MEMORIUM – LEITH RAGHEI

In the spring of 2024, the IDEAL community received exceptionally sad news. Along with his family and many friends, we suffered the loss of third grader Leith Konrad Raghei.

Leith’s parents, Britt-Louise Gilder and Jamal Raghei, shared with the school how happy Leith was at IDEAL, how much he loved his friends, teachers, and therapists, and that he had an especially wonderful last day at school.

Leith was an exceptional young man, beloved by all who knew him. He had an incredible spirit and a great drive to make everyone who he encountered laugh.

Leith was the kind of person who naturally drew others to him. Adults and children sought Leith out because of his authenticity, confidence, kindness, warmth, and irrepressible sense of humor.

Leith inspired our community with his tremendous courage and strength, an IDEAL student in every way.



IDEAL Donors in Leith’s Memory

Sarah and David Della Roca	Margaret Larkin
Brad Farber and Atika Capital	Mount Sinai Physical Therapists
Lisa Ferraro	The Peral Family
Rochelle Friedlich	Hilary Smith
Sharon Gilbert	Lara St. John & Stephen Judson
Kenny and Kim Habul	Scarlet Sumner
Henk’s Education Cohort at Eagle Hill	The Taft Foundation
The Hess and Helen Klein Foundation at the suggestion of Denise Levy	Alka and Nik Thukral
Lorene C. Janowski	Richard Trifan
Ilene Lainer Family Fund	Tom and Maggie Vaughan
	Carol and Tom Wheeler

Building for Our Future

A capital campaign to fund IDEAL's next chapter at 5 Hanover Square

IDEAL is building its future in Lower Manhattan. The school's building is so much more than a new space. It symbolizes the power of IDEAL's mission and the potential for future growth. Your continued support will help us reach our new home's potential.

With an IDEAL foundation in place, we can continue to outfit and improve classrooms, athletic facilities, and therapy suites, grow our programs and provide students with learning opportunities inside and out of the classroom. The goal of the capital campaign is to raise \$2 million over five years. We have received gifts and pledges totaling over \$500,000 so far. Gifts can be made all at once, or over the course of the campaign. See the next page for a list of donation and naming opportunities.

The members of the IDEAL Capital Campaign Committee are happy to meet with you to discuss your choice of naming opportunities and funding options.

Please reach out to any of the individuals listed below to make a gift to the capital campaign.

Jay Eisenhofer, President of the Board of Trustees, jeisenhofer@gelaw.com

Dan Kesten, Vice President of the Board of Trustees, dankesten@gmail.com

Alyssa Picchini Schaffer, Capital Campaign Committee member, apicchinschaffer@gmail.com

Janet Wolfe, Head of School, jwolfe@theidealschool.org

Audra Zuckerman, Founder and Secretary of the Board of Trustees,
azuckerman@theidealschool.org





WAYS TO GIVE TO THE IDEAL SCHOOL OF MANHATTAN

Cash Contributions, Checks, and Credit Cards

A gift of cash is the simplest and most efficient way to support The IDEAL School of Manhattan. Cash donations are put to immediate use for programs, financial aid, salaries, professional development, and other projects. Checks can be sent to the attention of CFO Margaret Conklin. Donations can be made by credit card at www.theidealschool.org/giving or by contacting Margaret Conklin at 212-769-1699 or mconklin@theidealschool.org.

Matching Gifts

Your gift can be doubled if you are employed by one of the more than 1,000 businesses and companies that match employees' and retirees' donations to nonprofit organizations. You can obtain the appropriate forms from your company's human resources department or corporate foundation and forward them to IDEAL with your gift. You will receive credit for both the original gift and the matching gift, and your employer will also be listed as a donor.



Securities

Gifts of appreciated securities may enable the donor to take a tax deduction on the full value of the gift and avoid capital gains on the transfer. In many cases, the actual cost to the donor is far less than the value of the gift to the school. To make a gift of stock or for more information, please contact CFO Margaret Conklin at 212-769-1699 or mconklin@theidealschool.org.

Planned Giving

Planned giving can offer many tax advantages for donors and their heirs by naming The IDEAL School of Manhattan as a beneficiary of an estate, trust, or insurance policy, or by establishing a charitable gift annuity. Prospective donors should seek the advice of an attorney since gifts of this kind require variations to accommodate individual circumstances.

Gifts-In-Kind

Gifts-in-kind are tangible items, such as works of art, auction items, equipment, books, furniture, real estate, and similar non-monetary contributions. A gift of tangible property may result in a tax deduction for the donor.









5 Hanover Square

New York, NY 10004

www.theidealschool.org