

Reaching

new heights



miriam
SCHOOL and LEARNING CENTER
Impact Report 2024-2025

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From the Head of Miriam

Dear Miriam Friends and Family,

Spring is always an exciting time of renewal, and it's no different this year at Miriam. It is our deepest joy to see our children blossom in our organization. We look forward to new programming, new fundraising efforts, and opportunities to serve new students and their families.

At the same time, it's important to reflect on how we are working to change the trajectory of children's lives in this Annual Impact Report. The 2024-25 fiscal year brought growth and innovation to the Miriam community.

Miriam Learning Center expanded its teacher training offerings to address both a shortage of special education teachers and a need for a deeper understanding of neurodiverse populations within the general education setting. These trainings are strengthening special education programs throughout the St. Louis metro area.

Our K-12 school is building students' confidence and competence across a wide range of learning needs. At the high school, the second year of our teacher-developed Miriam Essentials curriculum added even more skills for life to students' portfolios, and the transition program continues to expand. Once again, 100 percent of our seniors graduated with a diploma AND a post-graduation plan. At the lower-middle school, our counselor implemented the third year of a three-year social skills curriculum she created, and administrators responded to parents' requests for expanded after-school programming by adding Dungeons & Dragons, a basketball clinic through MAC, Girls on the Run, and a Lego club.

We hosted our second annual Minds in Bloom Spring Soiree in April, raising more than \$200,000 for scholarships that help students and their families afford Miriam School. We also began implementing our 2025-2028 Strategic Plan. I'm so proud of our amazing team of Board members and educators, who have developed this plan with dynamic objectives and action steps that were set in motion immediately. Our goals are ambitious, as the need for Miriam's services continues to grow, and as students' needs intensify. Children who learn differently, their families, and the people who serve them are seeking support, tools, and specialized educational approaches.

We are so deeply grateful for our generous community members whose contributions make this vital work possible. I hear from parents every day that they truly don't know where their children or their families would be without Miriam, and I am blessed to bear witness to children's growth each and every day. This is a testament to your support and to every supporter who helps us carry out our mission to empower unique learners.

With every good wish,



Meg Bamford



A weight lifted



Small classes, individualized learning turn turmoil to success

When you see Major happily walking laps around the hallway at Miriam School or Lucy hanging out with her friends, you wouldn't guess the turmoil they and their family were dealing with just a few years ago.

For the Bridges family, traditional public school felt like a source of constant stress, rather than a place of learning. Each morning was a battle to get their twins to school, and each evening brought a breakdown after another overwhelming day.

Between Major's autism diagnosis at age 4 and Lucy's ADHD diagnosis at 7, the twins struggled in school from the very start. In their experience, classes were too large, and teachers often lacked the specialized training to work with students who learn and think differently.

Then, the pandemic hit - and they spent second grade falling even further behind as they tried to learn virtually. The twins' parents, Amy and Mitch, knew they needed to find a different school environment.

Lucy had received her ADHD diagnosis from Miriam Learning Center, so the Bridges were familiar with the school. They visited the summer before third grade, and both Major and Lucy came home excited about Miriam.

"Mitch and I knew at that point Miriam was where our kids needed to be," she said. "They started at Miriam in third grade and have been there ever since. It has truly changed their life!"

Now in seventh grade, Major and Lucy are still benefiting - each in their own way - from life at Miriam.

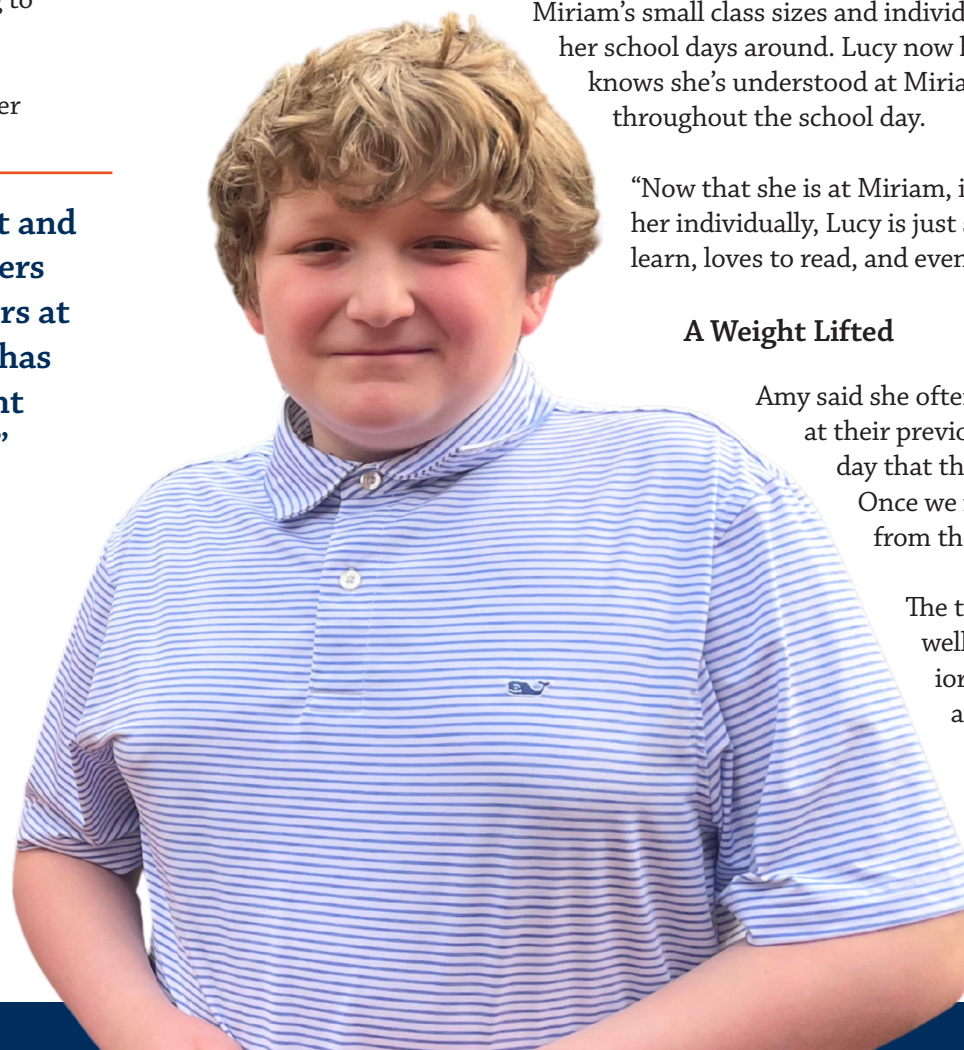
Major's Victory: Literacy and Security

When Major was still in public school, Amy and Mitch were told that he may never learn to read. "We just could not accept that for him," Amy said.



"I have so much trust and faith in the teachers and administrators at Miriam that it has lifted a weight off my soul."

- Amy Bridges



Because of Miriam's small classes, therapeutic services, explicit instruction and academic accommodations, they didn't have to. "At Miriam, Major has not only learned to read, but he no longer fights with us to get him to read," Amy said. "He still has a ways to go before he will be at grade level for reading, but the strides he has made while at Miriam are amazing."

Teachers at Miriam fundamentally understand autism and how to help students work through their challenges. "Major knows Miriam is a safe environment for him," Amy said. "He no longer fears being punished for behaviors that overwhelm him and sometimes get away from him."

Major is learning strategies from his teachers and therapists to deal with difficulties he faces both socially/emotionally and academically.

"He tells us all the time that Miriam is where he needs to be, and that he loves the school."

Lucy's Growth: Confidence and Competence

With inattentive ADHD and struggles in math, Lucy was falling through the cracks in public school. School days were completely overwhelming for Lucy, and after keeping it together all day, she would fall apart in the evenings with her family.

Miriam's small class sizes and individualized learning plans have completely turned her school days around. Lucy now has confidence in herself and her abilities. She knows she's understood at Miriam, so she doesn't feel the need to mask throughout the school day.

"Now that she is at Miriam, in a smaller classroom and with teachers who help her individually, Lucy is just soaring," Amy said. "She loves school, loves to learn, loves to read, and even likes math now."

A Weight Lifted

Amy said she often tells other parents about her phone-call anxiety at their previous school. "We used to live in fear from day to day that the public school would call about one of the kids. Once we moved to Miriam, I have rarely received a call from the school."

The twins feel that sense of comfort and security, as well. Major understands that his challenging behaviors do not define him, and Lucy knows she is smart and capable despite her occasional difficulties paying attention.

"It has just been such a night-and-day difference between our public school experience and Miriam," Amy said.



Miriam by the Numbers

2024-2025



Development News

A legacy that lasts: Make a planned gift

The Miriam Legacy Society recognizes individuals and families who have chosen to make a lasting commitment to Miriam School and Learning Center through a planned gift. These generous supporters help ensure that students who learn differently will continue to receive the specialized education, therapeutic support, and life-changing opportunities that define the Miriam experience.

By including Miriam in their estate plans, Legacy Society members provide long-term stability that strengthens our mission for years to come and helps ensure future students have access to the support they need to thrive.

Planned gifts can be arranged in a variety of meaningful ways, including:

- Bequests through a will or trust
- Beneficiary designations (IRA, life insurance, or annuity)
- Payable on Death (POD) or Transfer on Death (TOD) designations
- Charitable Gift Annuities or Charitable Remainder Trusts
- Gifts of real estate or other legacy contributions

Legacy Society members receive special recognition and opportunities to stay connected to Miriam, including Legacy Society updates and invitations to special events. Most importantly, their generosity helps secure a future where Miriam remains a place of belonging, growth, and hope for students and families.

To learn more about joining the Miriam Legacy Society, please visit miriamstl.org or contact Heather Kemper at hkemper@miriamstl.org.

We are deeply grateful to the following Legacy Society members whose planned gifts will make a lasting impact on Miriam:

Dan & Barb Bindler
Susan Bower
Marcia Broddon
Susan Craft
Gretchen Davis
George Diederich
Rick & Michelle Dyer
Bill & Susie Hizar
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Judith Le Doux
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Sarah Scott
Linda Shubert
Barbara Silver
Gloria Spitzer
Cathy Steele
Andrew & Lisa Thorp
Anne Tolan
Judy & Jerry Zafft
Lon & Judy Zimmerman

Monthly giving is crucial

Miriam Maintainers are our everyday heroes - loyal supporters who give monthly to strengthen our Annual Fund and sustain the programs our students rely on all year long.

Their consistent generosity helps ensure that students who learn differently receive the individualized instruction, therapeutic supports, and encouragement they need to grow in confidence and thrive. For as little as \$0.80 per day, you can make a lasting impact in your community.

Why Monthly Giving Matters

- Efficient: provides steady, reliable support for students
- Convenient: gifts are processed automatically each month
- Flexible: you can change your amount at any time
- Impactful: your support benefits unique learners 365 days a year

Become a Maintainer today at miriamstl.org/maintainer.



2024-2025 Miriam Headlines

Second Annual Spring Soiree yields more than \$200K

Thanks to our incredibly generous community, the Second Annual Minds in Bloom Spring Soiree was a huge success!

The event, held on Saturday, April 5, at Clayton Plaza Hotel, raised more than \$212,000 in total, with \$121,308 specifically going to our Fund the Future scholarship fund to help make Miriam more affordable for families who need us.

Dan and Cathy Flynn served as honorary chairs for the night, and Judi Scissors and Stephanie DePlanty led a volunteer committee to ensure the event's success. Mariah, a Miriam freshman who received a scholarship, spoke at the event. "The time I got my first A ... I knew what I was doing, but I had no faith in myself. All the support that I had up to taking the test, I wasn't used to it," Mariah told the crowd.

In addition to an exciting live auction and a moving testimony from a current Miriam parent, Miriam honored four individuals with awards recognizing their dedication to the organization: Trish Winchell, Fannie Landau Award for Volunteerism; Carol Walton, Miriam Lifetime Achievement Award; and Stanley and Lucy Lopata Charitable Foundation, Legacy of Giving Award.



Dungeons & Dragons club fosters creativity, confidence for students

By Emily Adams, St. Louis Magazine, May 20, 2025

The fantasy of an alternative persona - a strong, confident, smart identity among peers - is one that many high school students can appreciate. For students at Miriam School and Learning Center, a school geared toward students with learning differences, that fantasy is reality thanks to a special club centered on a timeless game. **Scan the code to read the story.**



Learning Center addressing special ed teacher shortage

Miriam Learning Center is continually working to address needs in the community regarding students with learning differences. It's no secret that we, as a society, are in the midst of a teacher shortage - and special education teachers are in even shorter supply.

Enter Miriam's Gen Ed to Special Ed teacher training program.

This is the inaugural year of the program designed to train and mentor teachers as they receive their certification and spend their first year in a special education classroom.

Read the story at miriamstl.org/sped



Miriam graduations celebrate the joy of the journey

"This day is about honoring each of [us] - not just for reaching graduation but for the strength, growth and courage it took to get here. We have all overcome obstacles, discovered new abilities and proven that nothing can hold us back when we believe in ourselves."

Those words from Miriam High School graduate Demetrius during graduation served as the perfect introduction to the ceremony for the 12 members of the Class of 2025.

Demetrius' words began an hour of pure joy and emotion as - in keeping with Miriam's philosophy - each graduate was recognized and celebrated for their unique strengths and abilities. Each graduate has a unique path they will follow,



now that high school is behind them. Eleven of the 12 students will attend a two-year or four-year college or university, while one graduate will enter the workforce via a job he has already secured.

Similarly, each of the 11 eighth-graders has an exciting path to high school, whether it's continuing on to Miriam High School or transferring to a different school in the area.

The featured speakers at both ceremonies were Miriam alumni, with Aaron Francis speaking at the eighth-grade event and Dominick Atwood at the high school.

Congratulations to the class of 2025!

A lesson in giving: Students work together to bring Thanksgiving feast to classmates

By Caroline Hecker, First Alert 4, November 22, 2024

A group of high school students took part in the Thanksgiving holiday rush this week, pushing the boundaries of their comfort zones to deliver a Thanksgiving meal to their classmates.

Students learn a variety of life skills in the classroom. Topics like unit pricing, tax, sales, comparing brands and quality were discussed before students were able to test their knowledge in a real-world setting.

"It's one of my favorite days of the whole year because we're able to take what they're learning in the classroom and see how applicable it is in the real world," said Donna Higgins, a teacher at Miriam High School.

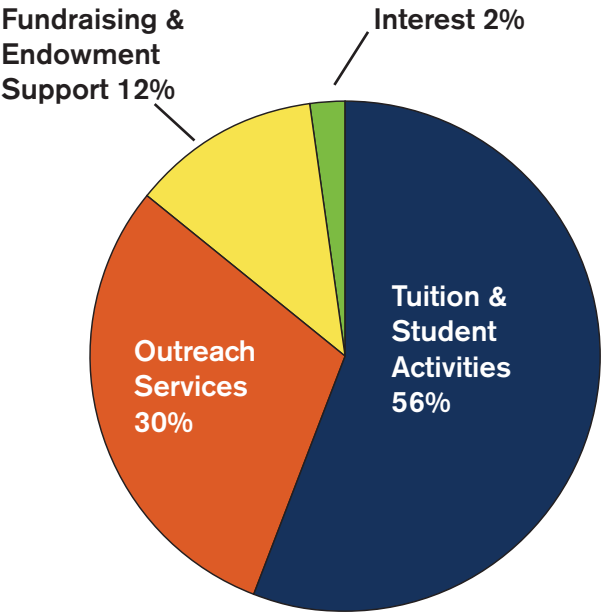
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Operating Activities
Fiscal Year July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

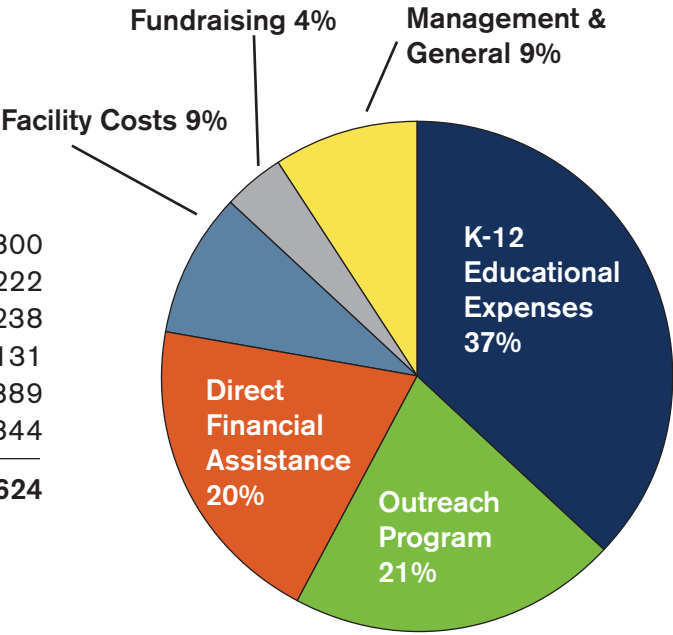
Revenue and Support

Tuition and Student Activities	\$6,165,750
Outreach Services	3,329,873
Fundraising and Endowment Support	1,374,664
Interest	239,732
Total Revenue and Support	\$11,110,019



Program and Facility Costs

K-12 Educational Expenses	\$4,511,800
Outreach Program Service Expenses	2,605,222
Direct Financial Assistance	2,419,238
Management and General Expenses	1,139,131
Fundraising Expenses	505,389
Facility Costs	1,040,844
Total Program and Facility Costs	\$12,221,624



Note: This report is designed to report on operational activities and is not presented in accordance with GAAP standards, which are represented in Miriam’s annual audit report.

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IRA Tip

Giving Through an IRA

Supporters age 70½ and older may be eligible to give directly from their IRA through a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD).

This type of gift allows donors to direct up to \$100,000 annually from their IRA to Miriam School and Learning Center. IRA charitable gifts may count toward Required Minimum Distributions and are excluded from taxable income, making them a tax-efficient way to support Miriam's mission.

For more information, donors are encouraged to consult their financial advisor or contact Heather Kemper, Director of Advancement at hkemper@miriamstl.org.

Have you met Magic?

During the 2024-25 school year, we introduced Miriam's new mascot - MAGIC!

At Miriam, magic isn't just a word; it's a way of life. Choosing our mascot, Miriam Magic, was a decision that was heartfelt and symbolic.

Magic, our enchanting dragon, embodies the spirit of wonder and possibility that defines our school. Dragons have long been symbols of mystery and power, representing the kind of transformative magic we strive to create every day at Miriam.

The stars emerging from Magic's wand are whimsical, and also signify the stars of our community - our dedicated teachers, enthusiastic students and supportive families.



**Empowering
Unique
Learners**

Stay in touch!

**314.962.6059
info@miriamstl.org**



@miriampotential

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MINDS IN BLOOM
Annual Auction & Dinner

Saturday, April 18, 2026 | 6 – 10 PM

Clayton Plaza Hotel | 7750 Carondelet Ave. | Clayton, MO 63105

Reserve your seat at



**miriamstl.org/
BLOOM**

