McADAMS
WISHING WELL

Staff name: _____ Date: _____

Brief description of items needed (item, quantity, sizes if applicable, etc):

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Item procurement:

- ☐ I would like to be reimbursed directly via check by FRIES in 3-5 business days. (Please submit receipts for our records)
- ☐ I would like the items to be ordered or purchased by the front office. (If choosing this option please be very specific in the description above.)

Winthrop School and the Paul F. Doyon Memorial School each have up to $2,500 per year to support staff in addressing student and family needs. These funds have already been allocated, therefore we will not need to individually approve each Wishing Well request. We will make every effort to issue reimbursements as quickly as possible, and we hope that this allows staff to quickly assist a child or family as soon as a need is noticed.

A letter from Sheila

The erosion of self-worth begins with the noticing. Noticing that not everyone's sneakers are falling apart. Noticing others never seem to wear the same few shirts each week. Noticing that your refrigerator doesn't contain fruits and vegetables at the end of the month, or that there never seems to be any snacks to bring to school.

Lack of confidence grows like an invasive weed, winding its way through peer interactions when discussions of activities, trips and experiences come from first hand knowledge. Vocabulary expansion, associated with each gained opportunity, withers. Growing at an incredible rate, however, is one's awareness of the differences between the lives of their peers and oneself.

Need exists in places we don't often expect. Many households experience the financial strains of prioritizing needs. Buying new boots in November can mean shifting funds from holiday spending plans in December. The costs of summer camps, sports fees or after school activities can quickly become a barrier for a family with multiple children. Opportunities, the shining beacon of a parent's wishes for their children, can be bypassed in lieu of daily living costs.

My youth, while idyllic in some very special ways, was filled with this understanding. As a farming family, cash flow was always an issue. We wore ill-fitting hand-me-downs. Back to school shopping consisted of one pair of jeans and a couple of t-shirts. On a rare occasion I would take Saltine crackers to school for a snack. Experiences away from the farm were incredibly limited. I learned not to take anything for granted.

As an adult, working in education, I can see the difference that self-worth and confidence can make for a child. All children naturally yearn to belong. Signs of belonging are often the small things-- new toys and clothes, home-packed lunches, new sneakers, and something familiar to share when asked, "What did you do this week?" Schools, as the great social equalizers, are more than simply deliverers of academic skills. By social construct, they must strive to eliminate deficits in the soil in which learning, self-confidence and social connections grow.

At the core of my entire educational career has been my driving need to help every child realize their own value, expand their skills, knowledge and confidence and involve them in experiences that create shared bonds with their peers. **For some students, this may require supporting them and their families in non-traditional ways. Funds for these needs are rarely found in school budgets. Creating a fund that allows a staff member to address inequity needs is a dream of mine in hopes that these priorities can be met in the future.**

I often say that I fell in love with educating youth. It wasn't, in fact, my initial choice of a career as I entered college. I simply fell in love the first day a child ran off the bus bubbling over with joy at the prospect of being at school. Every child deserves that love of belonging. **What an incredible world we would live in if, through their journey to adulthood, one could maintain this same expectation of belonging and success.** –Sheila McAdams

Illustrations by Tina Nous-Projects

McADAMS
WISHING WELL

The **McAdams Wishing Well** is a fund established in honor of Sheila McAdams, former teacher and principal of the Winthrop School. **The fund provides resources for the teachers and staff at the Winthrop and Doyon Schools** to meet the needs of their students and families by providing support in ways not covered by the school budget.