

2022-2023 Annual Report



Embracing Holism and Connection



The 2022-2023 school year's annual theme was Embracing Holism and Connection. We grew our commitment to the core values of holistic education and the seven domains. We surfaced a culture of interdependence celebrating the strength of an invested and compassionate community.

When we consider experiences, relationships, and ideas holistically, we transform our patterns of thinking. We foster deep connections and increase our capacity for shared understanding and empathy. Inherently, a culture of gratitude stems from this comprehensive perspective, encouraging a stronger recognition and appreciation of our resources.

Beginning with our littlest learners, we added a new position of Early Intervention Specialist. This role advocates for the healthy development of students during the initial stages of their educational journey. Furthermore, we amplified support for matriculating elementary and adolescence students with the hire of a new 4th-8th Grade Division Head. Finally, the inclusion of an additional counselor on campus supported the social and emotional needs lingering from pandemic education and evolving cultural influences. All of this was achieved alongside regaining our Living Wage Certification to support the rising cost of living in Asheville and increased benefits of additional paid leave for all full time staff.

Holistic engagement is not only a part of our educational model, but also a part of our longevity planning. This year the Board of Directors hired Altura Architects to design a comprehensive campus plan integrating community feedback, facilities development, and protecting green space. The final product will unify our five acre campus and guide our vision for the future.

It is with great pride that we share this year's Annual Report acknowledging and celebrating everyone who contributed to our thriving.

Yours In Service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susie Fahrer".

Susie Fahrer
Executive Director

Mission, Vision, and Holistic Journey



We develop accomplished, confident, and creative learners who are prepared to be compassionate leaders in building a socially just, spiritually connected, and environmentally sustainable world.

Our Method

We provide an engaging, nurturing learning environment to educate the whole child using the seven domains.

We inspire academic excellence with a program in harmony with the stages of child development.

We model within our community the kind of world in which we aspire to live.

The 7 Domains of the Whole Child



The Heart of Rainbow



Seven Domains



6 awards! rainbow omega
days to celebrate!



1st place:
BEST PRESCHOOL!

6 awards! rainbow omega
days to celebrate!



2nd place:
BEST SCHOOL!

Alumni Spotlight



Sunshine Pugh is currently a senior at Connecticut College pursuing a double major in Art and Education. She is a mixed media artist and has played ultimate Frisbee for 10 years (starting at Rainbow).

Sunshine is a RCS graduate who attended from preschool through eighth grade. She has returned to RCS for many summers as a camp counselor.



Wyatt Tintinger is a second-year student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, studying environmental studies and geography. Wyatt enjoys spending time outdoors during his leisure time - skiing, swimming, or bird-watching.

Wyatt graduated from RCS in 2018 and attended high school in France. He returns as a camp counselor or after school staff member during college breaks.

What are the most important aspects to you and your family of Rainbow Community School?

- Responses from the Anonymous Parent Survey 2022-23



“Teaching the whole child, letting the kids have a lot of outside time learning and playing, forming a community with other families.”

“Quality education that is tailored to the individual student. A safe and inclusive environment.”

“Support[ing] our little one in growth across multiple domains to cultivate a sense of curiosity and love for this world.”

Mental Domain



The heart of our programming fosters academic rigor through student-centered, developmentally appropriate pedagogy that encourages thinking dispositions for twenty-first century learning. The holistic lens on learning ensures students develop the confidence and self-reflection necessary to engage scholarship that extends beyond a single textbook, content area, or skill set.

Teacher Quality

97%

Parent Satisfaction

On a scale of Very Good to Very Poor, parents who responded to our End-of-Year Survey ranked teacher quality and our philosophy and approach to education as Very Good or Good.

Philosophy and Approach to Education

97%

Parent Satisfaction

Standardized Test Scores

95%

An Average of RCS/OMS students in grades 4-8 that scored at or above national norms for all tested academic areas as reported by their Comprehensive Testing Program Scores

Teacher Education

165

Internal Professional Development Hours

Teachers participated in 165 hours of internal professional development focusing on themes of differentiation, eco spiritual engagement, and equity and inclusion.



Transformative Leadership



In order to develop a meaningful curriculum for our students, Administrators continue their own educational leadership journey. Kate Brantley took part in the Transformative Educational Leadership Program, a 12 month commitment comprised of 99 training hours. Transformative Educational Leadership (TEL)™ is the premiere program

for cultivating educational leadership that integrates the inner life of mind and spirit with the outer life of service and action. Through TEL, educational leaders tap into the inner resources, skills, and development necessary to lead in complex, uncertain times. TEL brings together a racially and culturally diverse group (at least 50% Leaders of Color) who are dedicated to creating a more compassionate and interdependent world. Ultimately, TEL is a Beloved Community of awakened educational leaders who receive the support and skills necessary to create transformative change in the communities they serve.

217+

Specialized Professional Development Hours

Select teachers and staff participated in 217+ hours of specialized professional development including courses on Nonviolent communication, attending the NAIS People of Color Conference (POCC), Singapore Math, NAEYC Conference and more.

(Hours do not include Kate Brantley's TEL Program or West Willmore's Graduate work.)

Literacy Materials



We enhanced our literacy materials in the early grades by ordering Geodes book sets for Kindergarten through Second grade. This resource provides 48 book sets per grade using decodable text aligned with the Science of Reading.

Nurtured Heart Approach in Preschool

Green Door preschool teachers and students worked with Andrea Jacobson, MOTR/L, B.S.Ed., MIM™, Nurtured Heart Approach® Certified Trainer to deepen the child's understanding of the Zones of Regulation. Andrea worked with small groups, the whole group, teachers, and Student Support to provide resources and shared language to help children connect their emotions with their physical body.



Teaching our young learners emotional literacy sets the stage for learning across all the domains.

Omega 7/8 PIP Presentations

Personal Interest Project (PIP) presentations are modeled after TED Talks in the Omega 7th and 8th grades.

2022-23 PIP Topics Included: Electric Transportation and How to Slow Down Global Warming, Sports and Their Effects on Mental Health, Physician Assisted Death in the Medical World, U.S. vs. Norwegian Prisons, and Honoring Ruth Bader Ginsburg



Middle School Electives



Omega students participated in mental domain elective coursework including Spanish A and B, Debate, Equity, Flight Test, Exploring STEM, and Film Study.

“The teachers and administration are EXCELLENT. They really care about the kids, but they also care about the parents as well. Everything is thoughtfully planned and communicated. We love their “Seven Domains” model of education in which social and emotional development are just as important as intellectual development. And finally, there truly is a “community” among families and staff, which helps us to feel a sense of belonging!”

- Parent Review 2022-23



Creative Domain

Engaging the arts and STEAM education empower our students to explore learning through a variety of lenses, mediums, and perspectives. The beauty and diversity fostered through the creative domain seeds our inspired school experience.

6 award! days to celebrate!



2nd place: Laura Blackley
MUSIC TEACHER



6 award! days to celebrate!



2nd place:
ART PROGRAM



Middle School Electives



Omega students participated in diverse creative elective coursework including 2-D Design, Marimba Band, Theatre Rock Band, Artist Study, Chorus, Painting, Podcasting, Game Design, Guitar/Ukulele, IMAGINE: Set Design, IMAGINE: Acting, and Yearbook Creation.

Shine Student Talent Show



The Shine Student Talent Show returned for the first time since the pandemic began in 2020. The show was comprised of 18 individual acts featuring song, dance, and music. Students also hosted 15 specialized craft booths adjacent to the show.

IMAGINE: Let's See What Happens

Students and staff developed an original storyline and musical performance entitled *Let's See What Happens* - an apt title for a long-awaited return to a more traditional school-wide performance. Imagine celebrates the arts and creativity, providing a literal stage for song, dance, visual art, and storytelling to unfold.



"Sure the world is unpredictable and even unfair at times, but if you look for the silver lining...you give permission for hope and joy to guide you."

- Closing Scene: The Echo Chamber, *Let's See What Happens*

Our Joyful Harmony



The theme of our Winter Program was Joy. Joy reminds us to find meaning in the simple pleasures of life. We were excited to come together in smaller groups outdoors to cultivate an experience filled with smiles, laughter, song and JOY!



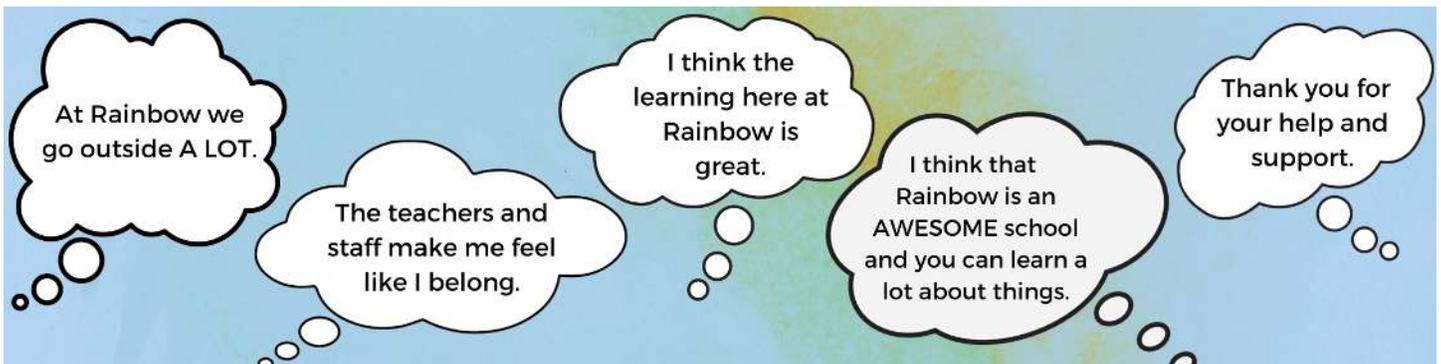
Emotional and Social Domains

The focus on emotional and social development through the ages creates a balance of self-awareness and actualization along with empathy and compassion for others.



Student Feedback

Students in third through eighth grade were surveyed at the end of the year to collect their feedback on our programming and their individual experience. Students reported the following as consistent areas of strength:



I have a peer at school I can turn to for help: 100%



I have an adult at school I can turn to for help: 96%



At school we have a lot of fun together: 94%



I feel empowered to take responsibility for my learning: 95%



Teachers/Staff make me feel like I belong: 97%



I have opportunities to pursue independent learning: 94%



Curiosity is nurtured in our school: 96%

Holding Space for our Graduates



Members of our 2020 graduating class requested space in March for a fireside gathering and opportunity to reconnect.

An Invitation To Our 2020 Graduates:

“As the 8th grade graduates during the initial months of pandemic, we know your departure from Rainbow was anything but traditional. In the spirit of connection, fellowship, and healing...we welcome you back for an informal fireside gathering. In true Rainbow spirit, this event originated among a small group of alumni, and we are honored to support and host this space for you.”

Sixth Grade Entrepreneurship Projects

Our sixth grade entrepreneurs created their own socially-conscious businesses. Students designed and created their own products, which were sold via an online marketplace and at the Spring Fling. Each student selected a local agency that aligned with their business model and social values to which they donated a portion of their profits.



Sixth grade students donated a total of \$225 from the sales of their products to non-profit organizations, including:

Brother Wolf

The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society

Rainbow Community School

Save the Bees

Save the Whales

UnidosUS

World Wildlife Fund - Save the Tigers



Harvest Hoedown Returns



With great joy we welcomed the return of our annual Harvest Hoedown after a two year hiatus during the height of the pandemic. Students, families, staff, alumni, and friends came together for our autumn celebration, fundraising, and fellowship.



Physical Domain

Our bodies help to define the multi-sensory experience of learning. Providing intentional outlets for movement, health education, and physical exploration engages one of the most critical modalities for educational wellness.

Special Events Highlighting the Physical Domain



Students run, skip, hop, jog, dance, or walk their way through our annual **Tofurkey Trot**.



Students in grades 4-8 took to the slopes for a day of fun physical activity with the return of our annual **Ski Trip**.



Field Day provides a multitude of physical activities including Gaga Ball (Israeli dodgeball), team sports and games, a dance party, water play, and Dr. Bronners Magic Foam Experience .

Middle School Electives



Along with traditional Physical Education courses for preschool through fifth grade, physical elective offerings for our middle schoolers in the 2022-23 school year included soccer, pickleball, team sports, net sports, hockey, basketball, and roller rock.

Weekly Physical Activity



Students participate in a minimum of 3.25 hours of physical activity and play a week through daily recess and other scheduled activities. Many classrooms exceed this amount in support of hands-on lessons and movement integrated into learning objectives.

“Play is often talked about as if it was a relief from serious learning, but for children, play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.”

- Fred Rogers



New Enrichment Opportunities



We installed pickleball courts adjacent to our athletic fields to enrich physical activities available to students and staff. We also purchased a bus to offer more comprehensive transportation for field trips and expeditionary learning.

Natural Domain



Commitment to nature play and environmental stewardship protects the inherent connections children have with other living beings and their surroundings. It cultivates wonder and inquiry and eventually leads to a sense of protection and personal responsibility toward human impact on the environment.

RiverLink Art and Poetry Contest Winners!

RiverLink promotes the environmental and economic vitality of the French Broad River and its watershed. Entries to the Voices of the River: Art & Poetry Contest are inspired by student connection to the Natural World. Congratulations to our third grade winners!

Individual student awards:

- 1st Place - Poetry (3rd-5th grade): Amelia Meade
- 3rd Place - Poetry (3rd-5th grade): Asha McAuley



Robins

by Amelia Meade, 3rd Grade

Fly mama bird fly
Your babies are waiting
From the skies...
You search the ground
For the juiciest most
MONSTROUS
Worm
You see **four huge worms**
You swoop down and grab them
And your crimson red
Feathers glow in the sky
You fly to your nest
Your babies are chirping
And you land on the brim of the nest
They open their mouths
Face up to the sky
You drop
Them down...
Into their mouths and they chirp
Cheerfully.
You and I are not so different
Here are a few examples
You love, we love
You care, we care
You protect, we protect
The point is we both have love.
In our hearts
Thank you robins for
Showing us the way.

Middle School Electives



Middle school students had the opportunity to take part in new Natural Domain Electives such as Reading and Writing in Nature, Stewardship and Sustainability, and Medicinal Herbs.

Protecting Our Trees



We invested in the health of our old growth trees on campus through the care of arborist Chardin Detrich with Smart Feller Tree Works.

This included widening the protected area around the treasured American Beech to buffer transportation impact along with vertical mulching for the Red Oak and Chestnut to help the trees recover from soil compaction.

Ecospiritual Fellowship



Dr. West Willmore led the staff in a year-long professional development opportunity centering on Ecospirituality, the heart of her doctoral dissertation, and a beautiful exploration of our responsibility to educate for the healing of our earth.

Upgraded Outdoor Space



We designed and installed a canopy over the back of Rainbow Row to provide a covered play area for preschool and afterschool encouraging outdoor play in all types of weather.

Spiritual Domain



The capacity to entertain meaning within and beyond the individual and collective experience is at the heart of our contemplative practices. Students learn to cultivate a sense of “center” to prime their learning, encourage humane connection with others, and consider impact beyond the immediate environment.

Daily centering practice equates to a minimum of 81 hours spent in contemplative practice annually in every classroom.



“We have centerings in the morning, which are so great to just get into the mentality of like, ‘Okay, now I’m at school and I can leave whatever else behind and move on to the rest of the day’.”

- Cady Hoffman, Class of 2023

Sixth Grade Rite of Passage



Fire Circles are offered as safe, sacred spaces for staff, students, and community members to mark periods of transition, to sit in contemplation, to grieve, and to celebrate. Sixth graders mark their entry into adolescence with a rite of passage around the fire, releasing to the fire aspects of their childhood they wish to let go of and igniting something they wish to give life to as they begin their Omega Middle School journey.

Engaging Summer Camps



Camp Themes by Domain



Mental

- Creative Science
- Sign-it
- Tinker Time
- Goofing with Games
- Dungeons & Dragons
- Hands on STEAM
- Adventures in Asheville



Physical

- Field Games
- Kid Cycle
- Sports & Field Games



Creative

- Adventures in Art
- Crafting
- Cooking, Creatures, Crafting
- Interior Design
- Music
- Rock Band
- Wood Working
- Improv
- Cooking & Crafting



Natural

- Surf & Turf



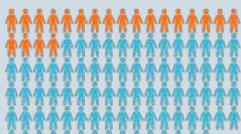
weeks of camp



26
summer camps



147
campers served



campers receiving
financial assistance
or discounts

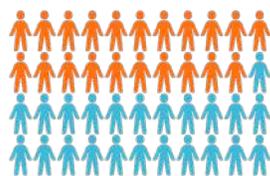


\$65,947 estimated
income generated

Camps are staffed by current/former RCS teachers, alumni, and student volunteers.



Scampers Camp sessions (grades K-2 and 2-4) offered a low counselor-to-child ratio of 1:5 and included two specialty teachers, one alumni leader, two high school alumni, and one to two middle school volunteers. Specialty camps for 4th-8th graders were lead by one specialty teacher and one alumni counselor.



21 out of 44 counselors
& mentors were
alumni

Building a Culture of Belonging

Dear Community Members,

One of the things that makes Rainbow Community School so unique is that we educate the whole child. We acknowledge that their identities are a part of the child, and not something to be ignored. This pedagogy helps build authentic connections between us and our community, in addition to helping create a culture of belonging. In a culture of belonging, people are appreciated for their individuality, and the differences that make them unique.

A culture of belonging does not just happen in large settings, but it is also fostered in smaller settings, such as affinity and alliance groups. This was our second year of affinity and alliance groups here at Rainbow. I had the privilege of seeing the importance of having this space for the children involved. A first-grade student described the affinity groups to a fellow student as a space where “you can just be yourself.” This confidence to be themselves does not just stop when they leave the group once a month, but it ripples out and creates an impact amongst the whole community.

This culture of belonging is not only reserved for all students but also a culture that RCS is working on cultivating for the whole community, including the adults. In the fall of 2021, I took a workshop by Desiree Adaway entitled “Transforming Cultures of Nice.” One of the questions she posed was, “Do you want to be right or in right relationship?” Though this workshop was from a couple of years ago, this quote is something I revisited and unpacked throughout that year. There is bound to be some tension while doing equity work, because specific topics (i.e., race and gender) might make some people uncomfortable. In contrast, there are others who will be more than comfortable conversing on a multitude of topics. Some people may have strong opinions, while others may just have been introduced to these topics of conversation and are still formulating their own views. We all come from different backgrounds and experiences that influence our communication styles and our views.

Desiree Adaway’s question spurred hope within me. A hope that regardless of identities, ideas, feelings, knowledge, communication styles, etc., we can all come from a place of curiosity and care for each other and children. I hope we all find this commonality to connect and engage with each other because only once we, as a whole community, recognize each other as individuals deserving of care and grace, will we be able to truly build a Culture of Belonging.

With progress in mind,



Bali Mitchell
Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging



Bali Mitchell
Director of Diversity, Equity,
Inclusion, and Belonging

“True belonging doesn’t require that we change who we are. It requires that we be who we are.”

- Dr. Brene Brown

Equity Circle Mission Statement

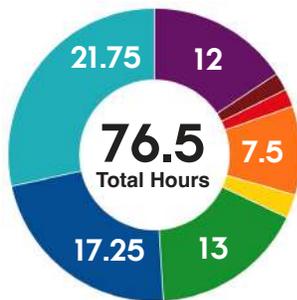
Equity Circle strives to dismantle systems of oppression through actionable steps grounded in community building, curiosity, empathy, continued learning, & accountability. We recognize inequity as an institutionalized issue; we work to institutionalize the solution. (Adopted 2022-23)

Equity Events



*Staff, Student, and Parent Equity Discussions

- Equity Circle
- Talking to Kids About Race
- Talking to Kids About Gender
- Staff Trainings and Discussions
- Parent Discussion Groups
- Affinity and Alliance Groups
- Q2 Equity Elective
- Q4 Equity Elective



*This data does not include the Pollyanna Curriculum and other work within the classrooms, staff attendance at the NAIS POCC, or equity work completed by the Administrative Team, as these hours are difficult to measure.

"I think it's important to go to a gender-affirming school because it can really boost a kid's confidence in themselves... And it can prevent any later on depression or things that may stem from not having that early care about it."
- Omega Middle School Student

Love in Action

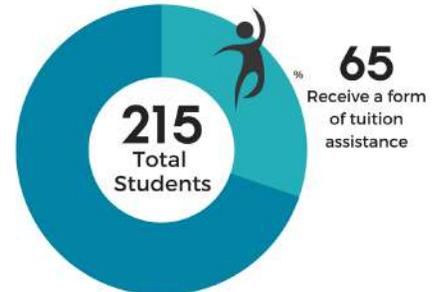
The mission of Love in Action is to strengthen our Rainbow family by providing equitable access to resources for members of our community.

In addition to providing after school scholarships and club scholarships and discounts, LIA assisted families by sourcing specific needs such as car seats, mattresses, clothing, bicycles, holiday meals and gift cards to purchase holiday gifts.



Tuition Assistance

\$261,459 Distributed



Sources of Tuition Assistance:

- RCS Financial Aid
- Staff Discounts
- Opportunity Scholarships
- Disabilities Grant
- Preschool Vouchers



*Opportunity Scholarships, ESA+ Disabilities Grant, or Preschool Vouchers



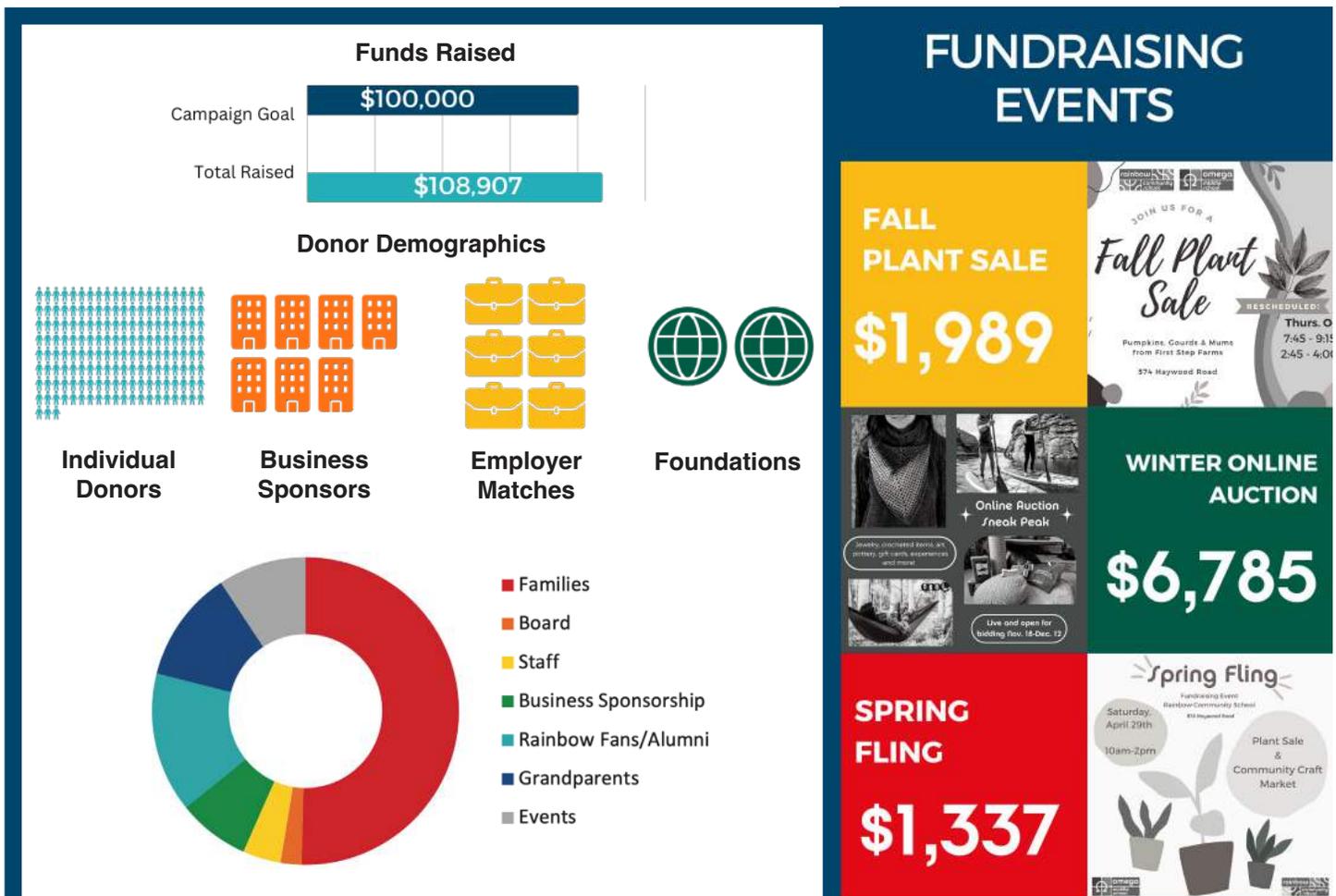
36 RCS Families
CONTRIBUTED
\$55,768 to the VET Program

Since 2016 Rainbow families have had the option to participate in the **Voluntary Equitable Tuition (VET)** program, in which they can elect to pay more than the required tuition in order to help fund scholarships and to keep tuition moderate.

Development

Every independent school has an annual campaign that helps cover the gap between the cost of tuition and cost of operating the school. At Rainbow, 80% of the school's outgoing expenses pay for compensation and training for our highly qualified faculty, staff, and contracted employees. Tuition covers most of our outgoing expenses; but, as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, we also rely on tax-deductible donations, grants, and other fundraising efforts to help close the gap.

The 2022-23 school year's fundraising goal was \$100,000.



Admissions

RCS served 215 students and welcomed 31 new families for the 2022-2023 school year. We were fully enrolled with waiting lists in grades P-5 with just a few vacancies in Omega Middle School. We hosted two successful open houses and were able to share the magic of our school with many prospective families.

We are grateful for the support of our community!



In Deep Appreciation for Our Donors

Foundations

The Fletcher Foundation
The McMichael Foundation

Employer Matching

CDK Global
Duke Energy
HCA
HCA
Nvidia
Publicis

Community Members

Alec & Susan Taylor
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Alicia & Lee Johnson
Alison & Nate Banchiere
Amanda Campisi
Amber & Daniel Baseman
Amber Acheson & Michael Greenfield
Andrea & Peter Rosal
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Thank you 2022-23 Business Sponsors!

Silver Level Sponsors



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Katie Lannon & Andy Schrader

Katie Washburn & Dustin Mason

Keith Costello

Kelly & Jake Saunders

Kendall Wright

Keri Justice

Kevin Markham & Annie Riker

Kiersten Derby & Evan Tiderington

Korie & Sean Kennedy

Kristen & Jeremy Winstead

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Lynne Meachum

Mahabisa Etzem

Marci & Daniel Bernstein

Marcus & Sarka Cade

Margaret Gerleve

Marguerite Hogan

Maria & Carmelo Saraceno

Marissa & Darren Green

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Fiscal Operations

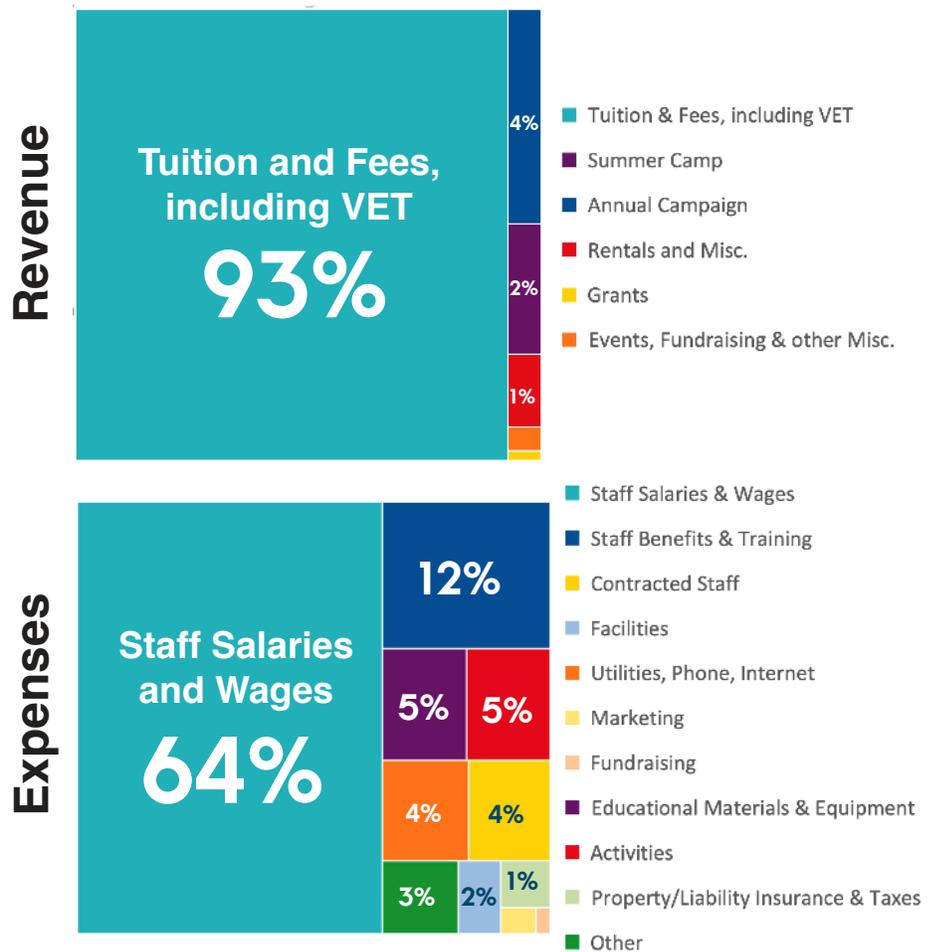
... Donor Appreciation Continued

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 Will Ray
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 Zachery Adam

Total Revenues \$3,155,702
 Total Expenditures \$3,108,419

The total value of all assests at the end of the 2022-2023 fiscal year was estimated at \$4,937,803.

We ended the year with a cash/savings reserve of \$1,597,712.



Additional Funding & Resources Outside of Our Annual Budget in Support of Our School Programming

- Title I Tutors were provided by Asheville City Schools.
- \$2,895 in Title II Funds (supports professional development)
- \$1,331 in Title IV Funds (supports well-rounded education)
- \$105,550 in Preschool Stabilization Grant Funds (supports teacher bonuses and facility upgrades.)

Community School

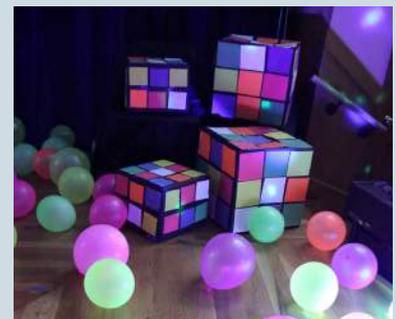
As a community school, we foster meaningful relationships between and beyond our campus community.

Grandfriend's Day

We welcomed an estimated 150 grandparents and special friends to our campus, fostering joyful connection between family and school and providing opportunity for intergenerational learning.



Connection on the Dance Floor



In addition to dances on our campus, Omega Middle School students took part in collaborative dances off campus with Hanger Hall, Odyssey School, and The Learning Community.

Asheville Maker Fair

A group of fourth grade students represented Rainbow at the Asheville Maker Fair hosted by Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College.



Alumni Panel

Alumni joined our Omega Middle School Open House for a Q&A to provide families with the opportunity to learn about Omega Middle School through the eyes of our graduates.



A Look Ahead



Visioning Into the Future

The RCS Board formed a Futures Committee and partnered with Altura Architects to design a comprehensive vision for the future of our facilities. This process culminated with a plan entitled "The Green Heart" that will be used to guide next steps in campus development.



The RCS Board also hired Kaplan CFO Solutions to consult with Rainbow regarding financial strategy and long term thriving. This consultation is proactively informing best practices with budgeting, investing, and futures planning.

RCS/OMS Board of Directors

- Kali DeWine, Chair
- Dusty McKeelan, Vice Chair
- Nate Banchiere, Finance Officer
- Pamela Goodrum, Secretary
- Ruth Bhakta
- Jean David
- Stewart Stokes
- Jen Tracy



*Each member volunteering at least 10 hours monthly toward school visioning, governance, and longevity.

*Community is the heart of our story.
We look forward to writing the next chapter with you.*

