A place for children on the autism spectrum to learn, to grow and to belong
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OUR MISSION

The LearningSpring School for children on the autism spectrum in grades K-8 is committed to advance the social, developmental and academic growth of its students through pioneering educational and therapeutic strategies in order to prepare each child to participate in the wider community.

OUR VISION

LearningSpring challenges its students with an academic curriculum consistent with New York State Common Core Standards.

LearningSpring engages its students with an innovative social skills curriculum based on current research and best practices.

LearningSpring recognizes and nurtures each student’s unique gifts and talents.

LearningSpring is a place where students learn in small cooperative groups facilitated by highly qualified and motivated teachers and therapists.

LearningSpring uses a multi-disciplinary approach to address the particular social, organizational, emotional, sensory, motor, pragmatic language and academic needs and goals of each individual.

LearningSpring will continue to collaborate with research institutions to develop optimal programs and share this information.

LearningSpring builds a working partnership with families as an integral part of the school program.

LearningSpring offers a supportive and eco-friendly environment that helps students grow into inquisitive and socially engaged individuals.
My 1st day
of Kindergarten
FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

Dear Friends of the LearningSpring Community,

It gives me great pleasure to tell you that 2014-2015 has been another banner year for LearningSpring School. For the seventh year in a row, every LSS family and Board member participated in our Annual Fund. This level of support is due in great part to the hard work of Margaret Poggi, and our outstanding faculty and staff.

We continued to expand our institutional support with new grants from the Adolph and Ruth Schnurmacher Foundation, the Isko Foundation and the Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Inc. and we advanced our partnerships with The Michael Gordon Foundation, Goldman Sachs, Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation, New York Collaborates for Autism, and The Morris and Alma Schapiro Fund.

Our annual LearningSpring Blooms Benefit was a great success. We raised over $281,000 in gross revenue and had record attendance. We were delighted to honor Ron Suskind, the author of the deeply moving book, Life, Animated: A Story of Sidekicks, Heroes and Autism. It was a very special evening.

The growth that has occurred since LearningSpring opened its doors in 2001 with 32 students is a true success story. This kind of growth can only take place when the Board, the parents, and the faculty regularly ask themselves, “What more can we do for our students?” Through your dedication and generosity, we are able to ensure that LearningSpring is a school where our children will always learn, grow and belong.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you for your confidence in our school and in our mission.

With great appreciation,

Linda Gelfond
Board President
FROM THE HEAD OF THE SCHOOL

Dear LearningSpring Community,

Thank you for your tireless efforts and overwhelming support this past year. Every year, I continue to be amazed by the generosity and hard work demonstrated by our dynamic Board of Trustees, wonderful parent body, dedicated staff, and devoted friends. Your commitment, energy, and kindness enable us to provide each student with an incomparable education and state of the art learning environment. As active members of the LSS community, your support helps us live our mission each and every day.

We have many accomplishments to celebrate from this past school year. LSS had a record 106 students, who were able to participate in the variety of programs organized by our hard-working staff. We are very thankful for our growing foundation support, which enables us to enhance the opportunities that are available to our community. These opportunities include Relationship Development Intervention (RDI), our Arts Enrichment Program, Field Day, our Integrated After-School Program with neighboring schools and our After-School Programs. Through each of these programs, our students had the chance to develop their social and communicative skills, creativity, and further develop relationships with their teachers, therapists, and classmates.

The LSS Alumni Association continues to offer support and guidance to the more than 135 adolescents and young adults who can call themselves LSS alumni. During the summer, LSS hosted alumni interns who helped out in a variety of departments, including Adaptive Physical Education (APE) and Facilities, in addition to many of our classrooms. Through this program, the alumni interns learned about the responsibilities that come with having a job and how to work both independently and as part of a team.

The LSS community continues to demonstrate its loyalty beyond our building. From your attendance at events such as Autism Awareness Day at Citi Field and our annual LearningSpring Blooms Benefit, to your gifts, both large and small, your commitment and generosity know no bounds. On behalf of the students and staff, many thanks to all of our contributors this past year. We are grateful for your support and your faith in us, which has allowed LSS to positively impact so many students and their families.

Sincerely,

Margaret Poggi
Head of School
Dear Fellow Parents, Faculty, Staff, Trustees and Friends,

Thank you for your tremendous generosity and support over the past year, which has allowed us to make a remarkable difference in our children’s lives. We would like to thank the many parents who continue to dedicate their time and resources to our wide range of fundraising and school events. Your enthusiasm, expertise, and efforts support our LSS fundraisers, help foster friendships among families, and strengthen our sense of community.

Working closely with the school and parent body, the Parent Association was able to expand the home/school connection in many imaginative directions, from the New Families Breakfast, parent support groups, and the RDI workshop, to social activities such as Dads’ Night Out and Moms’ Night Out, Autism Awareness Day at Citi Field and the annual camping weekend.

Our tradition of student, parent and staff events continued, including the popular Annual Halloween Parade, the Thanksgiving Feast (which our students prepare for faculty and staff!), the Pot Luck Lunch and Art Show, Field Day, our Staff Appreciation Lunch and the always festive End of Year party.

We welcomed 21 new families and watched 15 students proudly graduate. And for the seventh year in a row, we reached 100% parent participation in the Annual Fund!

On behalf of the Parents Association, our families and our children, we would like to thank Margaret Poggi and the wonderful LSS faculty and staff. It is hard to express our gratitude for your hard work, your enthusiasm and your dedication to our children and families.

With our heartfelt thanks,

Jennifer DeMatteis  Kraig DeMatteis  Alyceson Reyman
2014 - 2015 FINANCIALS

LearningSpring School is a New York State approved non-public school that receives funding by way of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE). The funding does not cover the entire cost of LSS’ academic and social skills programs; therefore a financial gap must be made up through the generous contributions of our supporters through several fundraising campaigns.

Support and Revenue

- Tuition and Fees: $5,171,097.24 (86%)
- Contributions and Grants*: $643,051 (11%)
- IDEA Grant: $95,764 (2%)
- Investments and Other Income: $94,309 (1%)

*In addition, LearningSpring School received $500,000 toward a $3.5 million multi-year pledge made in 2013.
LearningSpring School is a New York State approved non-public school that receives funding by way of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE). The funding does not cover the entire cost of LSS’ academic and social skills programs; therefore a financial gap must be made up through the generous contributions of our supporters through several fundraising campaigns.

*In addition, LearningSpring School recorded $863,333 of depreciation expenses for the school building in 2015.*
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

We are very proud to say that the 2014-2015 school year was another outstanding year. Exploration through various activities, expanded programs, and enriched classroom learning challenged our students to think and grow in new ways.

With the support of The Michael Gordon Foundation, the Alumni Association Program has continued to evolve. It serves as a wonderful resource that keeps our 143 alumni and their families informed, supported, and connected.

A main focus of the Alumni Association Program is building and maintaining alumni engagement in the community post-graduation. This year we were thrilled to host two information sessions for alumni and current parents. These sessions provided networking opportunities in the workforce and employment resources to our alumni families. In July, alumni parents attended an information session hosted by Marcia Scheiner, President and founder of Asperger Syndrome Training and Employment Partnership (ASTEP), an organization that supports programs that promote long-term employment for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. In August, Gary Schulman, a special needs consultant to parents of children with disabilities, returned to LSS to speak to current and alumni parents about various support services available to them outside of LSS. In addition, alumni parents and students returned to LSS to share their advice regarding the high school search process and life after LSS’ graduation.
Our annual Alumni Reunions continue to grow in popularity as our alumni body grows. The Alumni Reunion events, including the Annual Alumni Halloween Party in the fall and the Autism Awareness Day at Citi Field in the spring, offer former students the opportunity to reconnect with their classmates and teachers and meet soon to be LSS alumni. Parents and families also enjoy the opportunities to connect, socialize and share resources.

Another important facet of our Alumni Association Program is our Alumni Summer Internship Program. This program was created to provide our alumni with support and guidance to help prepare them for future employment. In its two years, the Internship Program has helped our interns develop leadership skills, professional communication skills, time management skills and a myriad of competencies that will serve them in the workplace.

The Alumni Summer Internship Program has proven to be a staple of the Alumni Association Program. It has been so well received that we’ve expanded the number of internship opportunities available. This past summer our 15 alumni interns worked in a variety of positions. Some interns worked in the classrooms and therapy rooms, while others worked with our facilities and administration teams.

To quote one of our interns after his summer internship, “LSS has always been a special place to me and now, after this experience, it is even more special.”

Thank you to all of our alumni and their families for being active members of the ever-growing LSS community, and to The Michael Gordon Foundation for the support that allows us to keep the alumni community connected.
This past school year marked the fourth year of our Integrated After-School Program and we are proud to report that it was a great success! Our partnering schools, PS 40 and the Salk Middle School of Science, have continued to embrace our integrated after school program. The community students so enjoyed it that even though some have moved onto high school, they still come back to volunteer.

The Integrated After-School Program is held twice a week throughout the school year. This past year we had 15 students each day, ages 6 to 13; five LSS students and ten students from the community. Over the course of the year, the students got to know each other and built relationships by playing games and doing a variety of activities. The games and activities chosen were obvious favorites: gaga, hide and seek, imagination playground battles, soccer, playing on the play roof and scooter time.

Each week both the younger and older students worked on SPAT: STAY-PLAY-AND-TALK, where teams would get achievement points each time they stayed, played and talked together. This motivated all students to interact and have fun. Each week the students would ask if they could have free time with each other, so they could make up their own games. It was amazing to see the students create games with each other, while having the staff step back and let the integration happen. New friendships were made and the students created positive relationships with each other.
LearningSpring **After-School Clubs** were more successful than ever during the 2014-2015 school year. Over 40 students participated in the different club programs that were offered this year. Each club incorporated developmentally appropriate activities to support our students in building their socialization skills and facilitating the generalization of these skills into various settings.

Our **Homework + Interest Club** provided students with an environment in which their individual interests were used to help them build social relationships. Some of the interests explored included video game characters, transportation and books. The program provided a fun place for enhancing their interests, while learning about their peers’ interests.

The **Homework + Out and About** program provided various opportunities for students to apply the social skills they are taught at LSS into different settings in our community. This year our **Homework + Out and About** program grew, adding a second day to accommodate all of the interested students. The students worked on various skills such as taking the city bus, making independent purchases at different locations, and dining out together. They visited local grocery stores, worked together to create meals, purchased ingredients, and cooked for the group, making this a great social skills building event.

The **Boys Clubhouse** was a program favorite this school year, with many of the boys having completed their third year as part of the program. **Boys Clubhouse** continued to provide opportunities for peer-modeling; each week the students learned from one another with the support of a teacher. Student’s relationships were evident this school year, and the boys naturally began to support each other and work together for a common cause. As our students continued to learn different social rules, we worked to support and encourage them in adapting these rules to changing contexts, as well as situations in which making exceptions to these rules is necessary. The boys worked on various teamwork activities and games and overall had a fantastic time together.
During the 2014-2015 **Arts Enrichment Program**, our students’ creativity continued to shine and their enthusiasm bloomed. Over the course of the school year, the Arts Enrichment Program was divided into 3-4 week segments, which allowed the students to explore new art genres. Each segment aligned with the other class curriculums. The genres explored included Science Fiction, Abstract/Realism, Fantasy, and Early 20th Century Silent Cinema. Throughout the school year student art projects were proudly displayed in the hallway galleries and at the Pot Luck Lunch and Art Show.

In the spring, our students looked at some of the most famous pointillist paintings and used these masterworks as a model for their own paintings, using q-tips to replicate the pointillist style. To commemorate National Poetry Month in April, students composed a poem to accompany their paintings. The paintings and poems were displayed in the hallway galleries throughout April.

A highlight of our drama curriculum was our long running, “Magic School,” an imaginative scenario that allowed our students to exercise self-expression and creativity by simply using different colored scarves. Another favorite costume-related drama activity was our “Taxi Scenes,” during which students invented characters using a prop, and then practiced asking a taxi driver for directions as that character. This was an important exercise in communication in real life settings.

In addition to our work in the Arts Enrichment Program, our students experienced live theater through a new partnership with Lincoln Center Education and Trusty Sidekick Theater Company. Through a residency with Trusty Sidekick, our students interacted with teaching artists to explore ideas for the upcoming production of **UP AND AWAY**, a show designed specifically with children on the autism spectrum. The work with our students informed the creation of the production, after which the students were invited to a preview performance in April.
STUDENT SUCCESS

Every year, LearningSpring School awards a student from our graduating class with the NYS Comptroller’s Student Achievement Award. This award is given to the student who demonstrates leadership and involvement in activities that improve their school and their community.

The winner of the 2014-2015 NYS Comptroller Award was Sebastian Galvez-Marin. Out of the fifteen graduating students, Sebastian exemplified leadership, modeled positive behaviors and was always helpful to his friends. Sebastian demonstrated exemplary compassion towards others, was always actively involved in class activities and was eager to learn. Sebastian set a great example for his peers and excelled both academically and socially here at LearningSpring. We look forward to welcoming Sebastian to the Alumni Association Program.
GRANTS

This list includes all program grants made to Learningspring School from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015. We thank all of our longtime supporters and welcome our new foundations and corporations. Your gifts are deeply appreciated.


ANNUAL FUND GIFTS

The following list acknowledges with sincere gratitude the LSS parents, families, friends, foundations and corporations that contributed to the LearningSpring Annual Fund from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015.

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In memory of Rosemary Varriano
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Del Bove

In memory of Howard H. Weston
Carolyn Weston

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

This list includes contributions made to the Texas Hold ‘Em Tournament and Fundraiser, the End of Year Party and the Achilles International Hope & Possibility Race.

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LEARNINGSPRING BLOOMS BENEFIT

The 2015 LearningSpring Blooms Benefit was both a wonderful evening and a celebration on many levels. We had the pleasure of honoring Ron Suskind with the LearningSpring Spectrum Award. Ron Suskind is the author of the deeply moving book Life, Animated: A Story of Sidekicks, Heroes and Autism. Life, Animated chronicles his family’s struggles to communicate with and create a meaningful life for his son Owen. It is a story that resonates with all of our LSS families. We also had the pleasure of welcoming our alumni Jane Krause. Jane started at LSS in second grade and stayed through sixth grade, during which time we watched her grow into the delightful young woman she is today.

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If there is an error or omission, please accept our sincerest apologies and notify the Development office at 212-239-4926.
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