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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.
FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

Dear Friends,

When I joined the LearningSpring Board in 2002, I recognized quickly that while LearningSpring Elementary School was a new and small school, it was a very special place for children diagnosed on the autism spectrum. With great pride, I have helped LearningSpring grow from a kindergarten through 5th grade school, with just 32 students, to a kindergarten through 8th grade school with 108 students. This is an exceptional accomplishment for our extraordinary faculty and staff, dedicated families and thoroughly committed Board. All of this is made possible because of your generosity.

After fifteen years of board service, I will be stepping down. While this is a difficult decision, I know that I am not leaving the LearningSpring community. Jim Snyder, a founding trustee and alumni parent, will be the new board president. Jim has been with LearningSpring since it opened in the fall of 2001. He is a passionate advocate for LSS, and he is committed to our innovative multi-disciplinary educational approach and our supportive environment. LearningSpring will flourish under his leadership and his vision.

We have worked hard to put the school on a path of sustainability that will allow its program and educational ideas to thrive. Thank you for the wonderful memories you have given me. It has been an honor to work with all of you.

Sincerely,

Linda Gelfond
Board President

FROM THE HEAD OF THE SCHOOL

Dear LearningSpring Community,

As we celebrate our 15th Anniversary, I look back to the day we opened the doors of LearningSpring Elementary School in September 2001. We have achieved so much these past fifteen years.

I remember the excitement (and a twinge of nervousness) as we welcomed our first 32 students! We occupied one floor of an office building on West 29th Street. It was not a large space, but from the moment you walked off the elevator you knew you were entering a very special school. Our belief in our students and their abilities was so strong; and has grown stronger as each year we celebrate the achievements of our students and the hard work of our faculty and staff.

It is only fitting that our 2016 LSS Blooms Benefit honored our 2002 Seedling Trustees: Rose Brown, Linda Gelfond, Robert Gray, Denise Kranz, Maria Maffucci, Sandy Perlinder, Marilyn Simons, James Snyder and Marisela Staller; and that it was our most successful LSS Blooms Benefit to date. To understand the gratitude we owe these nine trustees is to understand the work and abiding dedication they devoted to LearningSpring School.

It is with sadness that we say goodbye to four of our trustees, Board President Linda Gelfond, Sandy Perlinder, Marisela Staller and Richard Willett. Words alone cannot express our appreciation for their dedication, compassion and generosity. Jim Snyder will be assuming the role of board president. I have known Jim for over 15 years and I cannot think of a more qualified person to lead our Board. I am also delighted to welcome five new members to the LSS Board, Thomas Delaney, Carolyn Kretz, Patrick Mullin, Kerri Tricarico, and Misti Ushio.

LearningSpring School would not be possible without the support of our parents, families, trustees, donors and friends. It would be almost impossible for me to thank each and every one of you personally for all that you give to LearningSpring, or to relate the many ways in which your support helps our students and our faculty. Two of our faculty, Danielle Ferrante and Liz Negron, deserve a special thank you. They were with us as we welcomed our first students in 2001, and continue to welcome our students each morning.

With heartfelt thanks,

Margaret Poggi
Head of School
FROM THE PARENT ASSOCIATION

Dear Fellow Parents, Faculty, Staff, Trustees and Friends,

We are delighted to tell you that 2015-2016 was another banner year for LearningSpring School. Not only did we welcome 22 new students and celebrate 15 graduates, we raised a record $284,126 for our annual fund and had 100% parent participation for the eighth year in a row! And we did this because of the amazing community that supports us – our parents, families, trustees, alumni, and friends of the school who give their time, financial support, and energy so that LSS stays strong.

Throughout the school year we continued our tradition of workshops, parent support groups and events, including our Back to School Night, our Potluck Lunch and Art Show, Friday Movie Night, the Casino Night Fundraiser and Silent Auction, our annual LSS Blooms Benefit, our Staff Appreciation Breakfast, and our popular End of Year Party.

These events would not be possible without the help of our class representatives, our parent volunteers, and our event committees. Thank you to everyone who donated their time and expertise. Your generosity, enthusiasm and great spirit helped to further strengthen the LSS community and its mission and goals.

In closing we would like to thank the Board of Trustees for their work and generosity, the faculty and staff for their dedication to our children, and Margaret Poggi, for her wise counsel and leadership. LearningSpring is a very special school and we thank you for preparing our children to engage and participate at home, with friends, and in the community.

It has been an honor to serve as PA Co-Chairs for the past two years. We truly have a group of families that care about one another, our children and our school.

Sincerely,

Jennifer DeMatteis              Kraig DeMatteis              Alyceson Reyman
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**: $5,330,769 (87%)
- **Contributions and Grants***: $680,614 (11%)
- **IDEA Grant**: $94,111 (2%)
- **Investments and Other Income**: $0 (0%)

*In addition, LearningSpring School received $500,000 toward a $3.5 million multi-year pledge made in 2013.

### Expenses

- **Salaries and Benefits**: $5,125,081 (83%)
- **Facilities**: $406,208 (6%)
- **Program**: $282,082 (5%)
- **Administration**: $227,178 (4%)
- **Fundraising**: $149,472 (2%)

*In addition, LearningSpring School received $500,000 toward a $3.5 million multi-year pledge made in 2013.*
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

2015-2016 After-School Programs

This past school year was a busy time for our Community Outreach Coordinator Kristen Cortese as we expanded our social and life skills-based after-school programs. Over 80 of our students participated in the different programs that LSS offered. The various programs built on the academic, social, emotional, and vocational skills needed by our students to be successful.

LSS launched the new socially-based Winter Saturday Program that was open to all classes. For three hours on each Saturday during the six-week program, students from various classes engaged in team building games, arts and RDI-based activities. Students enjoyed hanging out together in an environment in which they were comfortable – with the only requirement being that they have fun! Through this program, our students were able to meet and develop relationships with their peers from other classes.

During the 2015-2016 school year, two new sports programs, Celebrating Movement with Empowered Sports and Fitness! and Sports Stars, focused on the joys of being active, and promoted the importance of exercise. In the Celebrating Movement with Empowered Sports and Fitness! program our students participated in interactive games and movement regiments designed to promote proper movement and a love of exercise. Through these activities our students developed their communication skills and a sense of team morale. Students also learned important sportsmanship skills, such as playing by the rules, respecting coaches, and being a good sport when winning or losing.

During Sports Stars, a sports-specific program open to students at all levels, our students learned the skills for various sports including soccer, hockey, and basketball. In addition to developing their athletic skills through adaptive fitness and sports, our students also developed their team building skills.

LearningSpring partnered with TasteBuds Kitchen (Voted “Best Kids Cooking Class” by New York Magazine) to offer a weekly After-School Cooking Program. Donning their own decorated aprons, our students compiled recipes to make their own cookbook. The students then cooked their way through the book as they learned to use different cooking tools. Many LSS students enrolled in the popular Out + About Club, which engaged in various community-based activities. Our students ventured out of LSS, developing their transportation and adaptive skills as they took the city bus and traveled to different locations throughout the community. The Out + About Program offered our students the opportunity to develop functional skills in more natural settings in the community. Students traveled to restaurants to practice their dining out skills, went to local grocery stores to make purchases and practice their math and social skills, and attended special events that took place throughout NYC.
The Homework + Interest Club offered our students the opportunity to receive individualized support to complete homework each week. Students’ specific interests were included in each session to allow them to recognize mutual interests. The students cooked, created games, and completed art projects together.

For the second year, LSS offered a Yoga Program, which continues to be very popular among our students. The program focuses on yoga-based activities, such as physical yoga poses, breathing exercises, and deep relaxation. Students also engaged in activities to help them with mindfulness, compassion for others, and meditation.

Boys Clubhouse continues to serve as a program that provides peer-modeling opportunities for our male students. Our older students serve as role models for their younger peers. The selection of a weekly club leader helped our students learn more about each other and celebrate each individual. Our students’ favorite activities included Sardines, Gaga, and a Christmas-time “Secret Snowman.” Many of the students in our Boys Clubhouse have been members since its inception and have done a phenomenal job of welcoming new members. It is a weekly favorite!

The Integrated After-School Program is held twice a week throughout the school year, during which LSS partners with PS 40 and Salk Middle School of Science. This program introduces our students to situations with other peers in an everyday setting. Students support each other in navigating social situations, competitive games, and other fun activities. This past year we had 15 students each day; 5 LSS students and 10 students from our partner schools. The students played games and participated in sports, activities which encouraged working together as a group to achieve a goal, developing referencing skills and leadership skills.

This past year, we also introduced our first Lunch Group to our middle school students. During this 8-week program, a chess instructor taught a group of 5 students the game of chess. Students began their weekly sessions learning about the different chess pieces. By the end of the program, our students were playing team chess games, supporting each other during the game. The Lunch Group was such a success that we plan on introducing additional Lunch Groups during the 2016-2017 school year!

Overall, it was an exciting year for extra-curricular activities at LSS! As one student said, [I like after school because] “I get to see my best friends!”

Our After-School Programs are supported through the generosity of New York Collaborates for Autism.
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Our Alumni Association Program continues to grow and serve as a valuable resource for our 143 alumni and their families. Our alumni are an important part of the LearningSpring family, and this past year we continued to develop and broaden the program in various ways. We introduced a number of new outreach efforts to further involve our alumni and their families, such as programs and resources, both here at LSS and at other NYC organizations, including a workshop with Stuart Flaum, an expert in special needs family planning, and “IncludeNYC’s Guide to Transition and Life After High School” workshop.

Alumni parents have found great value in the community workshops and programs that LSS has hosted. In December, we announced a new partnership with Public Health Solutions (PHS) to help our current and alumni families in obtaining Medicaid and the Medicaid waiver for their children. Special needs consultant Gary Shulman led a workshop at LSS entitled, “Needs, Wants, Wishes, and Dreams: Programs and Services that Bring Relief to Parents of Children with Disabilities,” which complemented this new partnership.

To maintain more consistent contact with alumni and their parents, our new Alumni Association Program Coordinator, Ruby Russell, introduced a monthly Alumni E-Newsletter. Our alumni and alumni parents look forward to receiving the E-Newsletters, which include a Parent to Parent Tips & Resources section, Alumni News & Highlights, and a calendar of workshops and programs for our alumni families.

Our annual Alumni Halloween Party continues to serve as a wonderful opportunity for alumni to reconnect with former classmates and LSS faculty and staff, as well as meet other LSS graduates. The annual Alumni Halloween Party was held in the LSS gym, which was decorated and transformed into a spooky haunted house. Dressed in festive costumes, alumni reconnected with friends and met other alumni as they danced, played games, and enjoyed a night out. Many faculty and staff attended the event as it was a wonderful time to see their former students.

Alumni parents also enjoyed their own reunion that evening as they shared stories of the growth and success their children have experienced beyond LSS. Many alumni families have known each other for years, thus the Alumni Reunions are highly anticipated events that serve as opportunities for families to reconnect and rekindle friendships.

Similar to other components of our Alumni Association Program, The Alumni Summer Internship Program continues to grow; last summer 15 alumni participated in the program. Through skill-based and vocational internship experiences, our alumni developed independence, interpersonal skills and other abilities needed for future employment. Summer jobs included Classroom Recreation Assistant, Occupational Therapy Assistant, and Office Assistant in the finance and development departments. The internship experiences were wonderful opportunities for our alumni to develop their skills and gain more self-confidence.

LSS is very proud of all that our alumni have achieved since moving on to other schools. Through the Alumni Association Program, we enjoy keeping in touch with our alumni and alumni families and providing them with valuable support, resources, and experiences. We are thrilled to see alumni excitedly reuniting during Alumni Reunions and thriving during their internship experiences, as well as witnessing alumni parents finding value in our workshops. It is these experiences that reveal the value of the Program.

Our Alumni Association Program is supported through the generosity of New York Collaborates for Autism.
2015-2016 Arts Enrichment Program Activities

Aliza Greenberg, our new Arts Enrichment Coordinator, dove into the 2015-2016 school year with many new and enriching activities as a way to explore arts in the community and encourage our students’ creativity and social skills.

Each of our classes enjoyed field trips to museums, including the Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Museum of Design to see a Pixar design exhibition and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum to view their permanent collection and learn about the museum’s unique architecture (this field trip was definitely a highlight of the middle school classes).

Our oldest students visited the New York Transit Museum, after which they worked together to create their own “LSS Subway Station.” The subway station included handmade mosaics, subway posters and stained glass designs. To the delight of our students, parents and staff, the “LSS Subway Station” was mounted on the wall in the lobby atrium, complete with subway announcements recorded by each student!

Dance and theater also played important parts in our arts program, with visits from teaching artists to help our students prepare for the performances. Two of our classes went on a field trip to Lincoln Center to see Up and Away, Trusty Sidekick Theater’s production designed for students on the autism spectrum. Prior to their field trip, teaching artists from Lincoln Center Education came to LSS to help prepare the classes for their theater experience. Following their field trip, the students constructed their own hot air balloons, featuring pictures of themselves in the baskets. These whimsical works of art were proudly displayed at our Potluck Lunch and Art Show.

In the fall, our upper school students attended a ballet performed by American Ballet Theatre’s Studio Company. Prior to their field trip, a teaching artist from ABT visited LSS, introducing our students to the seven core ballet movements. This program was so popular that we returned in the spring to see a full ballet at the beautiful Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center.

On April 8th, we held our always popular Annual Student Talent Show, which featured dances choreographed by our students themselves, puppet shows, and several lively musical performances. We had a wonderful turnout of families, friends, faculty and staff again this year -- it was quite an enthusiastic audience!

To the great pride of everyone in the LSS community, our Sequoia students participated in an exciting collaboration with a neighboring high school, the Institute for Collaborative Education (ICE). Over the course of two workshops, our students and the students from ICE adapted fairy tales and developed characters and staging. The project culminated in an invitation from NYU to present the project at the Educational Theater Forum at the Steinhardt School!

Perhaps the greatest achievement of the past year has been our success in increasing our students’ social skills through their involvement with assorted arts organizations in the New York City community.

Our Arts Enrichment Program is supported through the generosity of The Morris and Alma Schapiro Fund, the Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Inc. and the Adolph and Ruth Schnurmacher Foundation.
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 2015-2016 NYS Comptroller Award was Christopher Marullo. Out of the fifteen graduating students, Christopher exemplified leadership, modeled positive behaviors, and was always helpful to his friends. Christopher demonstrated exemplary compassion towards others, was always actively involved in class activities, and was eager to learn. Christopher set a great example for his peers and excelled both academically and socially here at LearningSpring. We look forward to welcoming Christopher to the Alumni Association Program.
GRANTS

This list includes all program grants made to Learningspring School from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016. 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, 2015 to June 30, 2016.

TWIG COMMUNITY ($15,000+)

Linda Gelfond*  
Max Herrnstein* and Danielle Curi  
Marilyn* and James Simon  
Esme Usdan and James Snyder*  
The Lyle Foundation

ROOT BENEFCTOR ($2,500+)

Kraig and Jennifer DeMatteis  
Goldman, Sachs & Co. Matching Gift Program  
Joan Goodman and Keith Goldsmith  
Google  
Marcus Mitchell and Courtney Lee-Mitchell  
Michael and Susan Moss  
Random House, Inc.  
The Robert G. and Ellen S. Gutenstein Family Foundation, Inc.

SEEDLING FRIEND ($500+)

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SEEDLING VICTORIA ($500+)

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Sally Ann Jacobs* and Joel Quall  
John and Allison Rapaport  
Satya Scainetti  
Samuel Stanley Jr., M.D. and Ellen Li  
Tracey Tiska*  
Alex and Victoria Tsukerman

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This list includes Annual Fund contributions made in honor of, in recognition of, or as a memorial.

In memory of Francescina Agresti
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Del Bove

In memory of Barbara Ammandola
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Del Bove

In memory of Edna Brookman, great grandmother of Josh Gonsalves
Stephen and Stephanie Axinn
Janet Salon

In memory of Edna Fisch Brookman
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The Brown Family Charitable Fund
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In honor of Justin Cabassa
Raymond Cabassa and Helana Perez

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Steven and Dorothy Cochin

In honor of Jeremiah Concepcion
Marie Flores

In memory of Rose Costa
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Del Bove

In memory of Salvatore Cucuzza
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Del Bove

In honor of Jagger DiLillo
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Patrick and Valerie Carey
William and Grazia Carey
Angelo DiLillo and Laura Croke DiLillo
Carmina Demeo

In memory of Gertrude Falcicchio
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Del Bove

In honor of Linda Gelfond’s Birthday
Sunny R. Rothenberg

In honor of Aaron Giglio
Charlotte Goldberg

In honor of Stephen Gordon
Ellen Banner

In honor of William Henri
Bill and Sharon Henri

In honor of Ingrid Hernandez
Elizabeth Masiyiwa

In honor of Malik Jones
Charles and Sharon Jones

In honor of Sophia Kealey
Michael and Sandra Castella

In honor of Collin Kelso
Lori Seto and Kyle Kelso

In memory of Milton B. Knaster
Suzanne Knaster

In honor of Sam Kretz
Jacquin Fink
Bonnie L. Holiday
The Rachel & Drew Katz Foundation

In honor of Daniel Libenson
Terry and Barbara Divelbliss

In honor of Liam Lonergan D’Emic
Roy and Alma Hill

In honor of LSS Faculty and Staff
Melissa Millay

In honor of Andrew Lyle’s Birthday
Jacob and Judith Saulig

In honor of Nicholas Mascialino
Thomas and Christine Mascialino
Lisa and Joseph Patti

In honor of Vincent Mazzone
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Del Bove

In honor of Annajean Morales
Linda Pelc

In honor of Matthew Morelli
Susan and Michael Morelli

In honor of Matthew Morelli and Family
Sondra Filosa

In memory of Esther Moss, our beloved mother
Emily Moss and Larry Reader

In honor of Ivan Moss
Jose and Zeneida Roque

In honor of Isaac Nevins
Michael and Cathy Nevins

In honor of Ryan Park
Robbin and Karen Park

In honor of Margaret Poggi
Steven L. Goldstein
Chrystia and Maya Slywotzky

In memory of Dara Sclar
Adelle Cohen
Jonathan Ende
Richard and Cindy Feiner
Lois Feldman
Aaron Ford
Chester Han
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Monica MacAdams and Michael Smith
Wayne S. Stanton

In honor of Jim and Marilyn Simons
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In honor of Marilyn Simons
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Mr. and Mrs. Geoffrey Menin

In honor of the Steiner-Chilton Family
Daniel Dzen

In honor of Robin Stephenson
Richard Birkhold and Lee Stephenson Birkhold

In honor of Aaron Thomas
Merlene Burke

In honor of Benjamin Zwerling
Michael and Roselyn Silverberg
**FUNDRAISING EVENTS**

This list includes contributions made to the Casino Night Fundraiser, End of Year Party and the Achilles International Hope & Possibility Race.

**INDIVIDUALS**

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Susana Montes and Socrates Aquino  
Tyrone and Jaime Canaday  
Francis Castillo and Leslie  
Ann Caraballo  
Robert and Meredith Cavalluzzo  
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Michael Weinberger and  
Cecily Chester  
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LEARNINGSPRING BLOOMS BENEFIT

Our 2016 LearningSpring Blooms Benefit was particularly special, as we celebrated the kick-off of our 15th Anniversary and, fittingly, honored our 2002 Seedling Trustees: Rose Brown, Linda Gelfond, Robert Gray, Denise Kranz, Maria Maffucci, Sandy Perlbiner, Marilyn Simons, James Snyder, and Marisela Staller.

The evening was infused with both warmth and humor as we welcomed alumni parent, former trustee, and award-winning film, TV and stage actress Ann Dowd as the Master of Ceremonies. Marilyn Simons, our first Board president, was the keynote speaker. Our guests were transported with emotion as they listened to Marilyn speak about her relationship with LearningSpring and the special qualities each of our Seedling Trustees brought to the Board.

We also had the pleasure of welcoming Vincent (Vinny) Mazzone as our alumni speaker. Vinny was one of our first students when we opened our doors in 2001. Today he is an assistant teacher at LSS! Todd Drezner once again produced a benefit video, which featured the honorees as they recounted the history of LearningSpring School.

Thank you to everyone who attended and supported our 2016 LearningSpring Blooms Benefit. The success of the evening was a wonderful start to our 15th Anniversary!

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The Annual Report reflects contributions committed to LearningSpring School between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016. Every effort has been made to include all gifts during this period. 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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