

Development Overview 2015-2016



Make Every Day A Thacher Day

In June, some 60 parents and children participated the first Thacher Day at the Wakefield Estate—with Wakefield staff, AP students, and children helping parents discover the joys of specimen dogwoods, chickens, sheep, and Jack the Llama.

Transformative discoveries happened throughout the 2015-16 school year:

- Every day, Thacher students followed their curiosity to explore reading, writing, math, art, science, music, and a host of other academic, artistic, environmental, and social/emotional frontiers.
- Students and staff created group initiatives that bound those individual discoveries together—from learning hope banners to assemblies, project nights, and performances.
- Parent volunteers also provided events that helped us uncover community ground, including the opening picnic, around the world brunch, auction, and teacher appreciation week.

At the end of the school year, the rising ceremony celebrated the individual growth of our 8th graders and those students who completed a Montessori level. One member of the class of 2016 credited Thacher staff for his progress over the years here, and he added, “I can speak, but I also have a voice.”

I feel fortunate to serve as head of such a dynamic, growing, learning community. Looking forward to discovering more of our potential as individuals and as a school and to making every day a Thacher Day in 2016-17!

Best,
Don

Thacher Getting Ready to Celebrate: 45 Years and Counting

When classes resume this fall, Thacher will begin its 45th year of nurturing boundless curiosity in students. Over the years, one class of 20 children has grown into 11 classrooms of more than 200 children from toddlers though adolescents.

The school’s commitment to providing a rich Montessori education has remained strong throughout it’s growth. Thacher’s students and alumni are a testament to that commitment, as confident, competent learners who are well poised for the world they enter.

We look forward to celebrating this milestone with the entire school community and welcome volunteers to join in the planning. Contact Lisa Crist for more information (lisacrist@thacherschool.org).



Ground breaking ceremony when construction of the current school building began in 1989.

From the Board

In addition to overseeing the operation of the school, the Board's recent work has focused on a long-term school strategy. To this end, we have identified priorities for our own work to support the school's mission, program, and community. Last year, three sub-committees comprised of trustees, parents, and staff worked together on critical goals:

- The sustainable enrollment of families who are committed to the school's mission.
- A connected school community engaged with each other and with the Montessori method.
- More seamless transitions between program levels and greater integration of outdoor education with classroom learning.

The work done we have done so far on these efforts has strengthened our foundation and initiated many tools to fuel the forward momentum of the school. Some examples of this work include expanding the monthly missives from Lead Guides with greater explanation of Montessori philosophy, bringing in an AMI consultant to assist with educational programming, and articulating the school's core values to enable a shared language and understanding of Thacher's mission and culture.

In the upcoming school year, the Board will be inviting parents to learn more about and actively participate in the school's strategy. We look forward to these discussions.

Anadi Risal, President of the Board
Father of Sagar '15 and Ilisa '17

RESULTS FROM THE 2015-2016 ANNUAL FUND

Dollars Raised

- Total Amount: \$40,253
- Goal Amount: \$42,520

We made it to 95% of our goal!

Participation Rates

- 100% of Board members
- 63% of Staff members
- 31% of Parents



New Volunteer Energy for Thacher Parents Association

Last September, Thomas Adams Martin and Sue Ruiz stepped up to lead the Thacher Parent Association (TPA) and helped energize the community during a time of transition as long-time volunteers moved to new roles. Together, and with the help of other dedicated volunteers (see the list below), Thomas and Sue made another great year of community building possible.

The TPA's annual benefit auction, Noche de Encanto, was also led by new volunteers. Kate Ellingson and Lisa Franz joined Sue as tri-chairs of the event. Netting more than to \$40,000 in funds for the school, the auction brought the community together for a festive evening of celebration and helped support critical academic and enrichment programming for students.

Staff ended the year feeling much appreciated, not only during the impressive events of Staff Appreciation Week, led by Randi Laufman, but also from the end-of-year luncheon during work week. The effort from all of our parent volunteers is a fundamental part of what makes the Thacher community an amazing group. Thank you!

Parent Volunteers

Thomas Adams Martin, TPA Co-Chair
Kortney Adams Martin
Leah Andrews
HR Britton
Laureen Cahalane
Lani Chou
Marie Cora
April Coyne
Michael Courtney
Ashley Crittenden
Laura D'Amore
Caren Demello
Erich Doubek
Kate Ellingson, Auction Co-Chair
Andy Ellingson
Teronda Ellis

Deirdre Eschauzier
Chase Eschauzier
Charles Faris
Jenny Finden-Watson
Lisa Franz, Auction Co-Chair
Kate Greer
Ben Hall
Vanessa Holroyd, Picnic Coordinator
Dave Jamrog
Evelyn Knight
Tricia Kendall
David Kokorowski
Randi Laufman, Class Parent Coordinator
Jess McDaniel
Ann Mici
Bill Mofford

Pam Montes
Doug Rodman
Terry Rodman
Sue Ruiz, TPA Co-Chair/Auction Co-Chair
Rene Ruiz
Dana Sasso
Diane Scott
Amanda Smallwood
Julia Tatsch
Deb Thayer
Grant Thayer
Jess Trach
Susan Treichel
Anna Utech
May Zhao

Update from the Development Committee

Central to the school's strategic plan is to continue to deliver a Montessori education that is second to none. To deliver on this promise requires a highly-qualified teaching staff (check!), a beautiful environment and school campus (check!), and classrooms supplied with engaging and mission-appropriate materials (check!). The key to making this happen each year, without setting tuition at an unreasonable level, is Annual Fund giving. Each year, contributions to the Annual Fund help bridge the gap between tuition and the actual cost of providing the Thacher education our children enjoy.

To be completely candid, annual giving in past years was lackluster. However, thanks to the generosity and understanding of donors, the year just ended marked a *dramatic* upswing in donor participation. Last September, at the inception of the Annual Fund drive, the Board led the way by once again achieving 100% participation and increasing total dollars given by more than 50% year-over-year. Over the months that followed, parent giving more than doubled, hitting our near term goal of 30% participation. For those who gave, at any level, thank you.

In the coming year, I intend to work with the Board and Development to increase giving at all levels, with a target of 50% participation. With your help, we can position Thacher and our children for continued success over the long-term.

Christian Atwood, Chair of the Development Committee
Father of Griffin '22, Sawyer '24 and Dashiell '28

Annual Fund Donors

Ana Maria Lopes and Ricardo Abech
The Aghdasi Family
Elisa Antonuccio
Vera and Mark Alexander
Wendy Alguero
The Allaire Family
Anonymous
Susan O'Bell and Christian Atwood
Joanne Baggerly
Michael Bagiackas
Andrea Barsomian-Dietrich
Pamela Montes
Sara Garland and Nick Black
Michal Blech
The Bright Family
Karla Hoxha Brown and Anthony Brown
Peter Brown
Laura Caso-Manning
Maria and Mike Connor
Rosemary Connor
Nancy Jamrog-Couret and
Michael Couret
Lisa and Harris Crist
Jill Lurene DesRoches
Kimberly Urban DeVeau and
Mark DeVeau
The Dickson Family
Erika and Brian Doherty
The Donovan Family
Lisa Franz and Erich Doubek
The Draydor Foundation
Kristin Drozek
Deirdre and Chase Eschauzier
Randi Laufman and Charles Faris
Gayle Feldman
The Fischer Family
Sally Fitzgerald
Steve Genchauskas
The Goolgasian Family
Catherine and Don Grace

The Grassl Family
Thom Greenlaw
Carolyn Griffiths
Mindy Grinacoff
Makeda Essayas and Bruck Habtemariam
Kathy Hall
Kelly and Benjamin Hall
Pat Jackson
Maya and Alex Katz
Miriam and Misha Katz
Catherine and William Kelly
The Kendall Family
The Knight Family
Emily Koechlin
Jennifer Aft and David Kokorowski
The Laoui Family
The Lutz Family
Sheryl and Timothy Lyons
The Maher Family
Nancy Millstein and Charles Marks
Quan and Tony Masiello
The McFatter Family
Victor McSurley
Alleana and Carvey Miller
Kristyn Mills
Marshelle Mitchell
Diane and Tam Mohamed
Carla Moore
Laurie and Jason Mundt
The Nagy Family
Dana Sasso and Marc Normandin
Marya Woodruff Ochs and Adam Ochs
Eoin and Jamie Eoin O'Riordan
Deba and Obdulio Palma
Adam Percy
Shakira Perry
Jeannie Pini
Richard Pini
Debra Polucci
Barbara and Mert Prince

Liliana Rosselli-Risal and Anadi Risal
Melissa Robinson
The Rodman Family
Bobby Rohla
The Rooney Family
Sue and Rene Ruiz
Vijey Sarathy
Kasia Savill
Michelle and Christopher Seyller
The Shea Family
The Smallwood Family
Debra and Wayne Smith
Holly Smith
Joy and Richard Tardiff
The Thayer Family
Pat Thompson
Susan and Carl Treichel
Vicky Varnum
Caren Demello and Carlton Vaz
Christine and Gabe Vincenzo
Ashley Crittendon and Phuc Vinh
The Watson Family
Samantha and Darrell West
May Zhang and Fang Zhao

Matching Gifts

Arabella Insurance
ITW Foundation
Pearson Education

Other Contributors

AmazonSmile
Montessori Movers
Synopsis, Inc.
Target Take Care of Education
United Way of Greater Atlanta

Other Gifts and In-Kind Donations

Linda and Jim Da Costa
The Palashis Family
Daniel Reed

New Fund Expands Student Opportunities for Nature Exploration

In December 2015, Thacher launched the Arielle K. Da Costa Memorial Fund for Environmental Education with a gift from the family of a former student, Arielle Da Costa. Her parents, Jim and Linda Da Costa, say that the whole family felt very close to the Thacher community, which they joined in 1994 when Arielle began in a primary class. She completed her elementary years at Thacher and went on to attend the Dana Hall School and Georgetown University. In 2009, Arielle passed away unexpectedly at the age of 20.

The fund serves the Thacher student community in meaningful and relevant ways while also promoting Arielle's love of reading and animals. Fund priorities include purchasing relevant books for the Thacher library, creating a dedicated sharing space for student nature-themed displays, and funding for field trips and programming around environmental education.

In its first year, the fund paid for several new books for the library as well as transportation for a field trip to the Blue Hills for the students of Children's House A (see photo right). CHA Lead Guide Isadora Howard-Karp said of the trip, "All of the children made it to the top—quite a victory for us! Our youngest child made it up last, put her fists in the air and shouted, 'I made it,' as the rest of the class clapped in triumph."

For more information on the fund, contact the Development Office.

Alumni Make Positive Impact on Community

Thacher alumni are a vital part of our school community. Whether sharing their own experiences with eighth graders getting ready to graduate, or leading school tours for prospective families, our alumni are the school's greatest ambassadors.

In the past year, many alumni returned to Thacher to volunteer and visit. Clay Andrews '12 spent several weeks at Thacher as an intern with Gym Teacher Todd Sullivan, assisting with classes and coaching after-school sports. Clay will head to Xavier College in the fall. Kyle McFatter '15, who currently attends the Newman School, facilitated a trivia game show for staff, students, and alumni in June. Several alumni also worked in the Summer Program (see photo right).

We encourage all former students and graduates alike to be in touch.

Stay in Touch

- Follow Thacher on social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram).
- Stay connected by sharing news of your academics and activities with us.

Volunteer

- Be part of an alumni panel to talk about your transition to high school.
- Help at Admissions Open Houses and other visiting days.
- Assist the Development Office in writing thank you notes to donors.

Visit

- Join us for school events.
- Visit the Thacher website for more information (See the Alumni section under the Our School section).

"The land is where our roots are. The children must be taught to feel and live in harmony with the Earth."

-Maria Montessori



CHA students celebrate at the top of the Blue Hills during their spring field trip.



Alumni working at the Thacher Summer Program take a break for a group photo.

Thank You Alumni Volunteers!

Paolo Alguero '13
Clay Andrews '12
Rachel Goulston '15
Annika Gregg '15
Nicholas Green '15
Cedric Joseph '15
Kyle McFatter '15
Siena Nagel-Thompson '13
Christopher Seyller, Jr. '13
Joshua Silva '14
Daniel Tardiff '12
Arianna Urekew '14