



## COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

February 2023

Dear Wonders Family and Friends,

**I realized the other day that this month marks my 34th anniversary at Wonders.** After my small gasp, I thought about what it is that has kept me engaged, challenged, and fulfilled after all of these years: community. Wonders is a community of children, families, educators, and leaders. It is a caring community that values the importance of our work - children are at the center of all that we do. Every one of us at Wonders also recognizes our role in the broader community – how our work enables our regional community to live and work, and how we are helping to care for and educate our community's future. **These 34 years have flown by in part because of the many ways community members show up for one another and Wonders. This newsletter illustrates just a few of those ways. I continue to consider myself very lucky to be a part of this wonderful community!**



Sincerely,

Joanne Hurt  
Executive Director

### Board Recruitment

*Join Wonders' Board!*



**Did you know that Wonders, as a non-profit organization, is overseen by a Board of Directors?** Wonders is currently seeking board candidates from a wide variety of backgrounds to serve three-year terms on its Board of Directors. One of our aims is to ensure that the Wonders board reflects diverse perspectives representing the range of families, staff and communities we serve. We welcome interest from folks who have a wide range of lived experiences, a commitment to equitable practices in governance, and a passion for the Wonders mission. All those interested are strongly encouraged to apply. Board members have found board service to be a very engaging and rewarding experience, and a wonderful opportunity to give back to the Wonders community. Board service includes participating in monthly board meetings (~1.5 hours, held in the evening, and with both virtual and in person options) and serving on a committee (an additional 1-2 hour commitment per month, also with virtual options). Additionally, we welcome non-Board member volunteers to serve on either the Advancement or Finance Committees or our Task Force that is strategically leading efforts focused on program quality, staff recruitment and retention, sustainability, and advocacy. **If you have an interest in finding out more about board service, click here or please contact the Wonders Governance Committee member, Kara Stein, [karahstein@gmail.com](mailto:karahstein@gmail.com).**

## A Closer Look, Community Impact

*Making a Difference with Tuition Assistance Initiatives*

### Wonders Circle Fund

*2022 - 2023 Snapshot*



**The cost of quality child care continues to be unattainable for many families.** A recent report from the US Treasury states that 60% of American families cannot afford the cost of quality care. The US Department of Health and Human Services recommends that child care should cost no more than 7% of a family’s household income. A recent Child Care Aware report shows that in 2021, the cost of child care represented:

- 7-14% of the household income of married families
- 20-31% of the household income for divorced families
- 31-49% of household income for someone who has never married

These numbers illustrate the affordability crisis that families face across the country. Recently, local municipalities have increased the amount of child care subsidy payments granted to families and increased the eligibility of household incomes. But many families just miss the income qualifications and still can’t afford the disproportionate household expense of child care tuition. The subsidy payment system has been built on market rate and does not address the true costs of care, which is higher.

Wonders’ founding mission continues to guide our commitment to meeting the needs of qualified families who would not otherwise be able to enroll their children at Wonders. **The Circle Fund is currently meeting the needs of 35 families across our programs. We anticipate distributing approximately \$137,000 in tuition assistance by the end of this fiscal year.** The need for financial assistance has grown since the start of this fiscal year. It is our mission to be accessible and affordable to as many families as possible.

**Community involvement through meaningful donations helps strengthen Wonders' initiatives and work that support children and their families.**

[Contribute to The Circle Fund](#)

**Child Care Tuition Discounts**  
*Supporting Wonders Workforce*

Wonders knows that our educators are the reason our programs are high quality. We invest in our staff because we believe in the value of their work. **Wonders provides a 35 - 50% child care tuition discount for its employees whose children are enrolled at Wonders.**

A recent Child Care Aware (CCAoA) report noted, “Child care is particularly unaffordable for those in the child care workforce. As in prior years, CCAoA found that child care for two children in a center exceeds the average annual income for child care professionals. The price of care for two children in a center exceeded annual income for this sector of the workforce from 56% to over 100%.” **Our tuition discount for our staff is vital to sustaining a workforce of educators who create classroom environments that teach children the foundations of life-long learning.**

**Community Spotlight**  
*Thank You, Maya Weil!*

This January, we received a donation of art supplies, games, and books for Wonders' extended day programs. **On behalf of our teachers and students, thank you Maya Weil for your thoughtfulness and generosity - we are grateful!**

**Come Out, Be Involved**  
*Politics and Prose Book Fair!*



Wonders is having a Book Fair! **Come out and support Wonders when you shop in-store at any of the [Politics and Prose locations](#) on Saturday, March 18th from 9:00 am - 7:00pm.** Our team will be present on the floor at [5015 Connecticut Avenue](#). We hope to see you there! Purchases must be made in-store with a mobile or physical flyer for 20% of your purchase to be donated back to Wonders! Please save this event date and share it with your family, friends, and neighbors.

Download the flier here: <https://wonderslearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Wonders-Book-Fair-Flyer.png>

**Family-Friendly Events in the DMV**  
*Celebrate Black History Month*



Join Alexandria Public Library and the Alexandria Black History Museum on Saturday, February 12 from 10:00 - 10:30



Visit Woodlawn for a family-friendly self-guided nature walk and enjoy take-home activities for children 5-12 to explore the



Visit Josiah Henson Museum & Park and explore the crucial role of the night sky in guiding and empowering freedom seekers

am for a Virtual Storytime event for  
children 4-8. Learn more [HERE.](#)

Underground Railroad Experience. Learn  
more [HERE.](#)

on their journeys north along the  
Underground Railroad. Learn more  
[HERE.](#)

Join us with a contribution today!

Teaching children through play and a nurturing and diverse community.  
[Make a donation today to ensure access to quality care and education.](#)

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