



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

March 2023

A Team United

In the coming days, it will be three years since the COVID-19 pandemic initially shut down the country. Reflecting on the past three years evokes a range of emotion, but it also highlights a strength that is core to our work at Wonders - teamwork. Our organizational culture of working together and supporting one another sustained us through many difficult months. The collective creative problem-solving along with the and deep care for one another and our community ensured that our decisions were child-focused, supportive of families, and respectful to our educators.



Joanne Hurt
Executive Director

Although the urgency has subsided, our team approach continues to strengthen Wonders. Our educators and leaders support one another to address the variety of challenges and opportunities that continue as a result of the pandemic. Sector-wide staffing shortages remains one of the biggest challenges and yet, our teams have demonstrated great flexibility and creativity in supporting one another to ensure that ratios are met and creative learning is experienced by all children.

It has been said that children learn by watching the adults in their lives. The teamwork on display every day is a powerful and long-lasting lesson for us all.

Summer Camp 2023

[Learn More About Wonders Summer Camp](#)

Wonders Summer Camp - Bethesda Elementary School

June 20 - August 4 (7 Weeks)

7600 Arlington Rd

Bethesda, MD 20814

Wonders Summer Camp - Horace Mann Elementary School

July 5 - August 4 (5 Weeks)

4430 Newark St NW

Washington, DC 20016

[Learn More and Register for Wonders Summer Camp Online](#)

open house
Join us to learn all about our summer camp and 2 locations at our in-person open house!

Saturday April 1, 2023
10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Horace Mann
Elementary School
4430 Newark St. NW
Washington, DC 20016

wonderslearning.org/summercamp

February Snapshot

Early Learning + Extended Day Highlights

Family Chili Night

Supporting the Carol E. Smith Lifelong Learning Fund



Thank you to all of our early learning families who bought chili, sweets, and treats to raise money for the Carol E. Smith Lifelong Learning Fund, which supports early learning teachers' professional development. **Together, we raised a total of \$1,497.83 between our centers at Leland and Edgemoor - thank you!**

[You Can Make a Contribution Today!](#)

Strengths Finder Workshop

Team Building Through Identifying Our Strengths

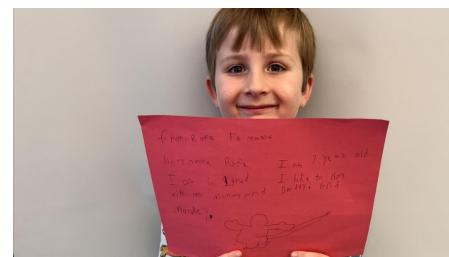
Our program directors and administrative team participated in a team building training using the Clifton Strengths, Strength Finder 2.0 Assessment. After our training, we each made specific commitments to use our strengths as we lead in our work. We are working in small teams to hold ourselves accountable and share ideas to lead with our strengths. We have mapped each leader's top five strengths across the four domains for high performing teams: executing, influencing, relationship building, and strategic thinking. It may not come as a surprise to learn that our collective leadership strengths are predominately in the relationship building domain!



Pen Pal Exchange

Inspiring Cross-Program Friendships!

A good pen pal will always be a friend. This is the motivation behind the Pen Pal Exchange, a new initiative to connect and inspire friendships between students across four of our extended day programs. The initiative is off to a great start with several students from each of the programs writing letters to and receiving letters from their special Wonders pen pal!



Consultants Corner

Top Tips for a Successful Playdate



Play with peers helps develop social and emotional skills in early childhood. Learning to communicate, play, and develop friendships is an important life skill. Some children learn to socialize with other children easily while others need more support and systematic practice to learn to make friends. One of the best ways parents can facilitate social skill development is to invite another on a playdate. [Read the full article HERE.](#)

Professional Development Consortium

Growing the Professional Portfolios of ECE and OST Educators

2023 OST Conference

Leading MSDE-Approved Workshops for Regional OST and School-aged Educators

With support from the Montgomery County Collaboration Council, Wonders Professional Development Consortium is hosting a conference for school-aged and OST educators later this March. Workshop presenters will include: Saba Ahmed, Wonders Talent + Professional Development Manager; Gerald Bolden, Wonders Extended Day Program Director at Chevy Chase; Lori Schantz, Wonders Extended Day Program Director at CESJDS; Joanne Hurt, Wonders Executive Director; and Dr. Samantha Hartley, National Center for School Mental Health. Presenters will lead MSDE-approved workshops on the topics of: Equity Focused Teaching and Learning Practices in Out of School Time Programs, Creating Literacy Rich Environments for School Age Children, and Trauma Informed Care for School Age Programs. We are excited to come together for a day of training dedicated to OST educators in Maryland! [Learn more here.](#)

ECE Teacher-Trainer Development Initiative

Increasing the Number of BIPOC ECE Trainers in our Field

The Teacher-Trainer Professional Development Initiative was developed to create career pathways for ECE teachers that expand upon their experience and knowledge and create opportunities for professional growth, without leaving teaching. This initiative creates opportunities specifically for BIPOC ECE teachers and supports the development of new equity-focused MSDE approved training. This model recognizes the learned and lived experiences of exceptional educators and creates opportunities for leadership while strengthening the ECE workforce.

Stay Involved With Wonders

Community Engagement Opportunities This Month!

Book Fair with Politics and Prose

Saturday, March 18th

9:00am - 7:00pm

[Download and save our book fair flyer. You will need to present it on the 18th!](#)

Baby Drive! Supporting A Wider Circle

March 10th - March 17th (Truck Day). Community members can drop-off donations on Truck Day at either location.

[Your donation will benefit a new family. Please fill out this form to help us plan for donations!](#)

Book Fair

SAT, MARCH 18, 2023

ALL POLITICS & PROSE LOCATIONS
9:00 AM-7:00 PM

20% of your in-store purchase will go towards Wonders' fundraiser!



Make a book donation by purchasing a book from one of our program wish lists!



WWW.POLITICS-PROSE.COM



Baby Supply Drive

As the needs in our community continue to grow, A Wider Circle has struggled to fully serve expectant and new mothers who reach out to them for assistance in welcoming home a new baby. We are hoping that your family will consider donating some of the most needed items that your children have outgrown including

- Changing tables
- Pack-n-plays
- Cribs/crib mattresses
- Bassinets
- High-chairs
- Strollers
- Infant car seats
- Diapers/Wipes



A Wider Circle simply ask that all items are in gently used condition and free from recalls or expiration. Ask your Program Director for more information.

March 10th - March 17th

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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