



## COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

April 2026

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It is a most fitting recognition of our 50th anniversary to be launching the Wonders 2026-2031 Strategic Plan. This plan is a framework for building the next five years and beyond. The process of creating this strategic plan reflects some of the very important ways that we do our work: reflective practice and collaboration, thoughtful leadership, and inclusive principles. While the organization has changed over the past 50 years, our core values and mission have guided decision making and created a strong and connected community. I would like to thank the Board of Directors, and in particular, the Strategy and Innovation Task Force, for leading our strategic planning process and synthesizing many big ideas and feedback from Wonders current and former families, staff, and Board.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this smart and forward thinking plan. We hope you all will join us as we grow into the future!

Joanne Hurt  
Executive Director

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### A Message From The Wonders Board of Directors

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The Wonders Board of Directors is proud to release our latest five-year Strategic Plan as we celebrate our 50th anniversary. We want to thank the Wonders staff and community for their contributions to the development of this plan. While a lot has changed in the last five decades for Wonders, the core of our mission remains the same: to teach children through play in a nurturing and inclusive community. This Strategic Plan builds upon the heart of what makes Wonders a special part of the DC-area community and highlights key actions for Wonders, both staff and board, that will lead Wonders toward another 50 years of serving children and families. Thank you for supporting Wonders now and in the future!

The Wonders Board is currently recruiting candidates to serve three year terms, beginning September 2026.

Wonders has always been fortunate to have continuous strong Board leadership which is critical to our sustainability and high quality. We aim to ensure that the Wonders board reflects the diverse perspectives of the 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. If you are interested in learning more about Wonders Board service, please contact Shana Bartley, [sbartley@gmail.com](mailto:sbartley@gmail.com) or Colin Jones, [jones.colin.m@gmail.com](mailto:jones.colin.m@gmail.com)

## **Wonders Mission**

To cultivate curiosity, resilience, and social responsibility in children by fostering high-quality, nurturing, and inclusive educational communities led by skilled professionals

## **Wonders Vision**

Wonders will be a local leader in early childhood and school age education by developing, providing, and advocating for exemplary, accessible, and responsive programming for children, families, and educators

## **Child-Centered and High-Quality Programs and Services**

Sustain our strong commitment to high-quality child-centered standards, innovative and equity-focused teaching and learning, and partnering with community resources to help families thrive.

## **Well-Prepared and Professional Workforce**

Invest in initiatives and activities that cultivate, promote, and maintain a dynamic community of diverse, high-performing, and respected educators and staff.

## **Sustainable Funding**

Diversify and solidify our revenue sources to ensure the sustainability of Wonders and enhance existing programs by streamlining our fundraising processes and elevating our ability to fundraise through better technology, merchandizing, and professional services.

## **Community of Belonging**

Ensure that everyone connected with Wonders—children, families, educators, and community partners—feels valued, included, and meaningfully connected.

## **Culture of Innovation**

Promote and embrace innovation within Wonders' programs and services, reflecting insights in the fields of early childhood education and out-of-school time to improve teaching and learning outcomes, help children and families flourish, and prepare them for a rapidly changing world.

## **Strategic Communications and Marketing**

Amplify knowledge of Wonders' programs and services through marketing and outreach to achieve enrollment goals in early care and education and out-of-school time programs.

## **Advocacy for the ECE/OST Sectors**

Build and sustain capacity so that Wonders is recognized as a trusted and credible advocate for the early childhood education and out-of-school time sectors.

## **Strategic Board Oversight**

Manage board infrastructure and establish processes to support strategic goals and initiatives and promote Wonders' long-term sustainability and program quality.

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## A Special Milestone Evening

Generations united to celebrate our past and inspire what's next

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Thank you to everyone who joined us last month to celebrate [Wonders' 50th Anniversary](#) at our Garden Party. With more than 180 guests in attendance, the evening was filled with music, connection, laughter, and dancing—a true reflection of the vibrant community that has shaped Wonders over the past five decades.

It was especially meaningful to gather not only with current families and supporters, but also with past families, alumni, former staff, and longtime friends of Wonders. Seeing generations of our community come together—sharing stories, reconnecting, and celebrating the impact Wonders has had on their lives—was incredibly powerful. These moments reminded us that Wonders is more than a program; it is a lasting community rooted in relationships, care, and shared experiences that span across years and generations.

We were also honored to welcome leaders from the communities we serve, whose commitment to education and advocacy for children and families helps create the conditions for Wonders to deliver high-quality care. Sierra Gray, Chief of Staff to Councilmember Sayles presented a citation from the Montgomery County Council signed by Laurie-Anne Sayles and Andrew Friedson.

We are deeply grateful to our neighbors, sponsors, and community partners who continue to stand alongside us and invest in our mission. Because of you, this milestone year is not only a celebration of our past—it is a powerful step toward our future. Together, we are honoring 50 years of impact while building a strong foundation for the next 50 years of supporting children, families, and educators in our community.

We've raised an incredible **\$66,000 toward our \$150,000 goal** for the Wonders 50th Anniversary Campaign!

We are now just **\$10,000 away from unlocking a \$25,000 matching gift**. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Sharon and Robert Buchanan, every dollar you give will be doubled—making twice the impact for children, families, and educators.

Help us cross the finish line and unlock this transformative gift. **Make your contribution today and be part of shaping the next 50 years of Wonders.**

Your gift to the 50th Anniversary Campaign will help Wonders:

Protect continuity of care during times of uncertainty

Invest in innovative programs that strengthen early learning and extended day experiences

Support and retain exceptional educators who are at the heart of our mission

Expand access to high-quality programs for more children and families in our community

Make your gift today!





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## A Special Recognition from the Comptroller of Maryland

### Honoring 50 Years of Wonders

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We are deeply honored to receive a celebratory citation from Brooke Lierman, Comptroller of Maryland, recognizing Wonders' 50th anniversary. This meaningful recognition highlights five decades of impact and affirms our commitment to fostering inclusive educational communities that support continuous learning, responsible citizenship, and the well-being of children, families, and educators across our region.

As noted in the citation: *"In celebration of the 50th anniversary of Wonders Early Learning + Extended Day. This phenomenal organization is dedicated to fostering inclusive educational communities that promote continuous learning and responsible citizenship. Its programs strengthen today's workforce while developing the talent pool of the future and care for our children and community members."*

For 50 years, Wonders has been a reflection of the power of community, where children thrive, families are supported, and educators are uplifted every day. This recognition is not only a celebration of our history, but also a testament to what we have built together. As we look ahead, we remain inspired and committed to strengthening our community and expanding our impact for the next 50 years.



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## Celebrating Week Of The Young Child

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We are excited to celebrate the Week of the Young Child from April 13–17! This annual event, hosted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), highlights the importance of early learning and honors the incredible young children, educators, families, and communities who support them. This special week celebrates the boundless energy, curiosity, and potential of our youngest learners while recognizing the vital role early education plays in building strong, connected communities.

Throughout the week, our classrooms will come alive with themed days—Music Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Work Together Wednesday, Artsy Thursday, and Family Friday—each designed to inspire creativity, collaboration, and joyful learning. Our learners eagerly engage in hands-on experiences that foster self-expression, problem-solving, and a sense of belonging. It's a meaningful and fun-filled week that truly captures the spirit of learning through play and community.

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## The Celebration Continues

We invite the whole community to join us next month!

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**Wonderspalooza** is more than a carnival—it's a vibrant celebration of community, connection, and fun! Families, friends, and neighbors of all ages are invited to come together for a day filled with laughter, creativity, and unforgettable memories. Guests will enjoy delicious food trucks, live music, interactive mural painting, and live theater performances, along with moon bounces for all age groups. There will also be plenty of exciting activities including a Gaga Pit, Soccer Fever, airbrush tattoos, face painting, beanbag toss, balloon darts, and more!

# WondersPalooza



**Community Family Fun Carnival!**

— all ages welcome —

**Join us for...**  
carnival games  
food trucks  
popcorn  
music  
**...and more!**



**Saturday, May 2, 2026**

**10:30am - 2:00pm**

**Child Wristbands: \$10**  
*wristbands sold at the door*

**Adults: Free!**

# Chevy Chase Elementary School, 4015 Rosemary Street, Chevy Chase, MD

## Parent + Caregiver Workshops

Join us for our in person and virtual Parent/Workshop Series! We continue to partner with the Child Development Consultants and Parent Encouragement Program for informative sessions for parents, guardians, and caregivers. Each workshop in the series highlights a different topic.



**April Workshop Topic:** Bullying & Friendship: Tools for Raising Kind & Resilient Kids Presented by Parent Encouragement Program

**Date:** Tuesday April 21, 2026

**Time:** 7:00pm- 8:30pm

**Location:** Bethesda Elementary School  
7600 Arlington Rd. Bethesda, MD

[Register Here](#)

**May Workshop Topic:** Developing Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills in Young Children Presented by Child Development Consultants

**Date:** Wednesday May 13, 2026

**Time:** 1:00pm- 2:00pm

**Location:** ZOOM (Virtual)

[Register Here](#)

## Wonders Summer Camp 2026- Hurry Spaces Are Filling Up Fast!

Get ready for a summer full of adventure! Join us for exciting field trips to Rollingcrest Pool & Waterpark, bowling, KID Museum, LEGO Discovery Center, Regal Cinemas, and so much more. There's something for everyone—come explore, play, and make unforgettable memories with us!

Calling all campers,  
ages 5 - 12 years old!

# wonders summer camp

June 22 - Aug 7

Weekly Sessions

Swimming + Water Play

S.T.E.A.M.

Arts & Crafts

Field Trips

Cooperative Games + Sports



# wonders summer camp

Calling all campers,  
rising k - 6th grade!

June 22 - August 7

**REGISTER  
NOW!**

## What's Included:

- weekly pool visits
- weekly field trips
- daily snacks
- arts + crafts
- age-appropriate groups + activities
- S.T.E.A.M.
- sports
- cooperative games
- camp special events

\*pool visits and outdoor activities can be canceled due to weather advisories.

[wonderslearning.org/summercamp](http://wonderslearning.org/summercamp)

## Donate to Wonders

Teaching children through play and a nurturing and diverse community.

[Make a donation today to ensure access to quality care and education.](#)

### Follow Us On Social Media



### Contact Us

#### Our Contact Information

\*{{Organization Name}}\*

\*{{Organization Address}}\*

\*{{Organization Phone}}\*

\*{{Organization Website}}\*

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