



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

December 2025

A recent substack article caught my attention and has been in my thoughts since I read it. The Zero to Eight substack highlighted the value and benefits of caregivers reading to children, even as a recent study showed that fewer than 50% of parents read to their children. The findings of the study have me thinking about the opportunities for tapping into this powerful learning tool. The act of reading aloud to children isn't the sole responsibility of parents. [Studies](#) have shown that 15 minutes a day makes a difference in the development of literacy skills and the love of learning. Creating those 15 minutes of read-a-loud time can be performed by a variety of caregivers and educators.

Last Friday, I joined Leland's Butterfly class for the First Friday reading by the Town of Chevy Chase Mayor, Barney Rush. After the book was read, the children asked questions and shared observations that linked what they learned in the book to their own experiences. In our after school programs, Wonders educators often will use daily reading of a chapter book to provide a re-set after the school day, build community among the students, and strengthen listening skills and imagination. Being in attendance for these storytimes reminds me of how special these moments are.

As we prepare for the holidays and winter break, I have a short stack of books that I look forward to reading. I hope everyone has a restful and joyful holiday season.

Warm Wishes,

Joanne Hurt
Executive Director

Wishing everyone in the community
a safe and joyous holiday season and
a bright start to the new year!

Program Highlights

Winter Wonderland



Many of the Wonders Extended Day programs keep an annual tradition called Winter Wonderland. What originated as a talent show, has grown into a variety of center-based activities designed by the students. Wonders at Murch will host a Holiday Bazaar featuring handmade items created by the students. All proceeds will support a student-chosen community celebration. Wonders at Bethesda is hosting a variety show, Wonders at Horace Mann is holding a talent show and art show, and Wonders at John Francis is hosting an art show. In January, Wonders at Chevy Chase will be performing a student-written and produced play, a talent showcase, and hosting an art expo.

Wonders at Milton December Highlights

This month, Wonders at Milton students are exploring science and engineering while creating snowstorm jars, engineering Menorahs, learning how arctic animals stay warm, and launching mini marshmallow catapults. They are also focusing on SEL skills, encouraging kindness, gratitude, and community as we wrap up the year together.

Kindness Countdown Calendar: Each day offers a simple challenge like “Compliment a classmate” or “Help clean up without being asked.”

Gratitude Snowflakes: Students write notes of appreciation and hang them on our “Gratitude Tree.”

Teamwork Igloo Challenge: Students practice communication and cooperation as they build a group igloo using recycled materials.

Cozy Conversation Circles: End-of-day chats to share feelings, highlights, and goals.

Wonders at Bethesda Highlights

Community & STEM



The Wonders at Bethesda student leaders launched a food drive for the National Center for Children and Families. The Wonders student officers, staff, and parents delivered the donations just before Thanksgiving!

The B-CC High School Stemsters have joined our Wonders at Bethesda program to introduce STEM learning through fun and engaging activities. Our kindergarten and first graders also kicked off their first meeting with BCC student volunteers and they had a blast designing rockets and creating their own playdough in hands-on science experiments.

Annual Giving

October - December 31, 2025

"Our daughter started at Wonders this year and has had an extraordinary experience. This gift is in honor of her teachers - Tigist Adulala, Fatma Eksi-Goodlace, and the other fantastic staff at the Edgemoor early learning location. We look forward to many more years as part of the Wonders family!" - Early Learning Parent 2025

We're thrilled to share that we've already raised **\$39,824** toward our **\$105,000** goal! Thanks to individual gifts, employer matches, corporate partnerships, and grants, every contribution is making a real difference. The campaign runs through **December 31, 2025**, so there's still time to help us reach the finish line.

Your support can change lives. Every gift—big or small—ensures that every child at Wonders has access to high-quality, affordable child care and early education. Join us today and be part of shaping brighter futures for the children and families who need us most. **Give now and make an immediate impact!**

[Download our 2025 Annual Giving Brochure](#)

wonders 2025 ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

nonprofit since 1976

Annual giving plays a vital role in sustaining high-quality programs beyond what tuition alone covers. Tuition provides 90% of the operating budget. The remaining 10% is raised through a combination of contributions, corporate sponsorships and grants from foundations.



CULTIVATING PROFESSIONALISM + EXPERTISE

At Wonders, we invest in our teachers through ongoing training, workshops, coaching, and mentoring. Competitive compensation and benefits ensure that our team and our programs thrive. We believe that when teachers succeed, children succeed. Our commitment to staff development strengthens both our workforce and the learning experiences we provide every day.

ENSURING ACCESS FOR FAMILIES

In order to ensure access to our programs, Wonders participates in subsidy and employer assistance tuition programs. Additionally, Wonders offers faculty, staff, and sibling discounts; and the Circle Fund - Wonders' tuition assistance program. We need to close the gap created by subsidy reimbursement rates that do not cover the full cost of high quality care and provide needed resources to expand affordability to many families.

SUSTAINING HIGH-QUALITY CHILD CARE

Wonders thrives on strong leadership and dedicated support to serve our community effectively. By investing in strategic planning, staff development, curriculum innovation, and family engagement, we advance our mission and ensure that Wonders' programs remain vibrant and sustainable for generations to come.



DONATE TODAY

Community Spotlights

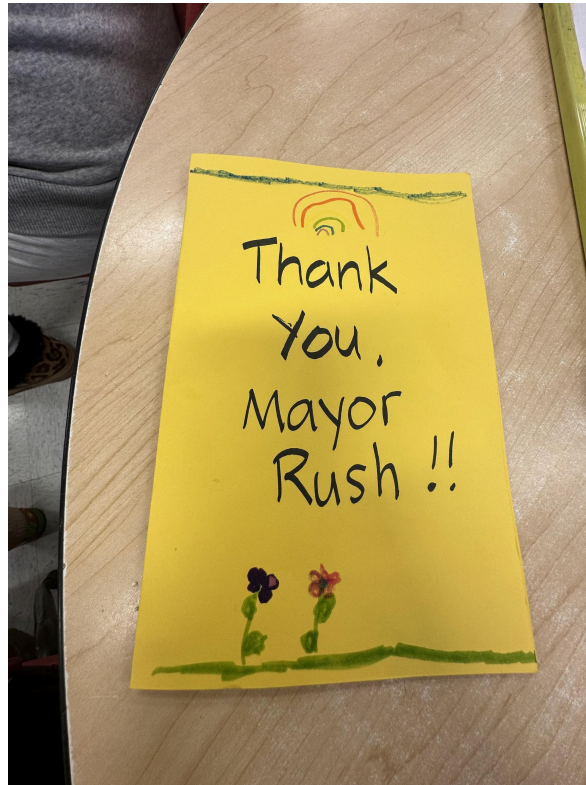
First Friday Reader



Our Leland community was delighted to welcome Mayor Barney Rush, Town of Chevy Chase this month as our First Friday Reader. He read *Otis* by Loren Long to our Butterflies class, sparking a lively conversation about farm

animals and tractors.

Following the story, the children presented Mayor Rush with a handmade thank you card to express their appreciation for the Town's generous grant, which helped fund much-needed upgrades including a new sandbox cover, shade sail installation, playground wood chips, and updated furniture for the lobby and teachers' lounge.



50th Anniversary Highlights

The Celebration Continues: Honoring 50 Years This Holiday Season



What began as a single center in the basement of All Saints' Church in Chevy Chase, Maryland has grown into a thriving community of accredited early learning, extended day, and summer camp programs across Montgomery County, MD, and Washington, DC—impacting thousands of lives along the way. Your support has made every step of this journey possible.

As the year comes to a close, we're reflecting with gratitude on **five decades of nurturing curiosity, supporting families, and building brighter futures** at Wonders. Our 50th Anniversary Celebration is just beginning—and we're excited to celebrate with you!

50th Anniversary Community Conversation

To kick off our 50th celebration, Wonders is hosting a community discussion to reflect on the past 50 years of child care locally and nationally. We will discuss trends, policy, and systems change from our various perspectives. We invite the community to join us in person for this discussion as we reflect on the past and envision a future for child care in our community.

Panel Discussion with Journalist Rebecca Gale

Panelists: Jennifer Arnaiz, Senior Administrator, DHHS Early Childhood Services, Fran Simon, founder of Engagement Strategies, LLC, and former Wonders administrator, and Joanne Hurt, Executive Director of Wonders Early Learning + Extended Day.

Date: Friday, January 30, 2026

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Location: Chevy Chase Town Hall
4301 Willow Lane, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

[Register Here](#)

Wonders 50th Anniversary Garden Party

Date: Saturday, March 28, 2026

Location: Imagination Stage, 4908 Auburn Ave. Bethesda, MD

Our **Spring Anniversary Garden Party** will be the perfect chance to gather with families, alumni, and friends for an evening of joy, connection, and community. Stay tuned for details on activities and how you can be part of this very special day. Tickets on sale soon!

Wonderspalooza Family Carnival

Date: Saturday, May 2, 2026

Location: Chevy Chase Elementary School, 4015 Rosemary St. Chevy Chase, MD

Wonderspalooza is more than just a carnival- it's a celebration of our community's spirit, values, and resilience. It's an inclusive gathering where families, friends, and neighbors of all ages can come together to connect, create, and celebrate what makes Wonders so special.

Wonders Merchandise

Wonders merch is available now!



Wonders Early Learning + Extended Day Merchandise

Pricing:



\$35

Adult Crewneck Sweatshirts
Sizes: XS-3XL



\$20

Youth Long-Sleeve Shirts
Sizes: XS-XL



\$15

Toddler T-Shirts
Sizes: 2T-5T



\$15

Bear Keychain



\$15

Penguin Plush



\$3

Crayon Set



\$5

Colored Pencil Set



wonderslearning.org/donate

Additional Ordering Instructions

- When purchasing online, please include in the comment section: Program site location, item purchased, and size needed.
- All purchased items can be picked up at your program site; please coordinate with the Program Director.
- If you need your item mailed to you please indicate in the comment section.

Wonders Is Looking

Our admin team is growing

Wonders is looking for a [Director of Operations](#). The Director of Operations is responsible for managing the daily operations of the organization and executing the implementation of Wonders' strategic plan. Reporting to the Executive Director and working closely with the Wonders administrative team, the Director of Operations will provide leadership, strong fiscal management, and active oversight in aligning the goals of the organization. The

Director of Operations is responsible for ensuring compliance with all regulatory agencies, risk management, compliance requirements, and facilities management for multiple locations. The Director of Operations will also be responsible for the management and oversight of the Wonders Professional Development Consortium.

Parent + Caregiver Workshops

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

We will no longer use Eventbrite for parent workshop registrations, but each session remains free and open to the public.



January Workshop Topic: Big Problem or Little Problem? Exploring the Mysteries of Sensory Processing and Strategies to Help Young Children Self-Regulate + Helping the Child with Speech and Language Challenges

Date: Wednesday January 14, 2026

Time: 1:00pm- 2:00pm

Location: ZOOM (Virtual)

[Register Here](#)

March Workshop Topic: Wondrous 2's Formerly Known as Terrible 2's

Date: Wednesday March 11, 2026

Time: 1:00pm- 2:00pm

Location: ZOOM (Virtual)

[Register Here](#)

May Workshop Topic: Developing Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills in Young Children

Date: Wednesday May 13, 2026

Time: 1:00pm- 2:00pm

Location: ZOOM (Virtual)

[Register Here](#)

Wonders Summer Camp 2026

Calling all campers,
ages 5 - 12 years old!

wonders summer camp

June 22 - Aug 7

Wonders Summer Camp will be here soon! Registration opens in December 2025. We look forward to an exciting, fun-filled, and memorable summer with campers at our Bethesda location!

LEARN MORE

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}}

{{Unsubscribe}}