



## COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

March 2026

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Over the past two months, the Extended Day teaching teams have participated in mini training sessions based on the book, “Bringing Yourself to Work”, by Michelle Seligson and Patricia Stahl. The book is a guide to teaching and learning about emotional intelligence and argues that the most significant characteristic of a before and after school workforce is the quality of the relationships between educators and the students in their programs. The training informs us of the work of Jean Baker Miller, whose research became known in the decade that Wonders was founded. Jean Baker Miller identified the importance of relationships in our lives and how, in many ways, they sustain us and keep us connected to one another. Relationships are integral to care giving and cultivating mutually respectful relationships has been central to our work from the beginning.

We celebrate relationships in this newsletter by highlighting staff members who have maintained connections with Wonders over the decades. As an organization that promotes lifelong learning for children and staff, the stories shared below illustrate some of the powerful ways that learning and connection come together.

We hope you will stay connected - we love to hear stories about what former Wonders children are up to!

Joanne Hurt  
Executive Director

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### WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



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### A Message From The Wonders Board of Directors

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As a nonprofit, Wonders has always been fortunate to have continuous strong Board leadership which is critical to our sustainability and high quality. Wonders is currently seeking board candidates from a wide variety of backgrounds to serve three-year terms on its Board of Directors (beginning fall 2026). 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 of creating and advancing high quality, diverse educational communities that teach children the foundations of life-long learning and social responsibility.

If you are interested in learning more about Wonders Board service, please contact Shana Bartley [shana.bartley@gmail.com](mailto:shana.bartley@gmail.com) or Colin Jones [jones.colin.m@gmail.com](mailto:jones.colin.m@gmail.com).

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## Celebrating Wonders Staff

### Part of our Past, Present, and Future

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For the past 50 years, Wonders has cultivated and sustained a dedicated, professional, knowledgeable, and caring workforce of educators and directors. This organizational commitment is integral to the quality of Wonders' programs. This year, we are especially excited to welcome back several staff members whose journeys with Wonders have come full circle.

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We are delighted to welcome **Rose Wasserman** back to Wonders as our new **Deputy Executive Director**.

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“They say you never truly leave the places that shaped you. For 13 years, I grew at Wonders, from the energy of Pre-K and Transitional Kindergarten classrooms into the roles of Director and Early Childhood Coordinator.

Back then, I was surrounded by a team of professionals who believed that children only truly learn when they feel safe, valued, and free to explore. Today, 33 years since I first walked through those doors, I'm struck by a true rarity: the mission hasn't wavered. The organization is stronger than ever, with many familiar faces still here and many new ones added to our diverse educational community. I am thrilled to be rejoining Wonders to continue building on our legacy of social responsibility, hands-on learning, where children develop the tools for life-long learning.”

- Rose Wasserman, Wonders Deputy Executive Director



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We are thrilled to welcome **alumni staff member Jules Strauss (he/him)** as a **Floater Teacher at our Leland location**.

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“Wonders is where, as a child, I was shaped into the person I am today— someone with progressive values and a fierce passion for learning that I would carry with me well into adulthood. It is where I made meaningful friendships that I still maintain and hold dear to this day. It is where I learned how to dance the Macarena (it was the early/mid 90's, after all). Considering these fond memories, returning to Wonders as an educator felt only natural.

Since joining the team in early February, I've seen my colleagues embrace our students with the same warmth, kindness, and respect that was extended to me when I, too, was a student— over 30 years later, I still haven't forgotten what that looks like. It is a sense of familiarity that I believe attests to the quality of Wonders and its programs, and I am so proud to be returning to this absolutely stellar community.”

—Jules Strauss (he/him) (Leland '94-'96)



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We are thrilled to welcome back **John Martinez**, who has returned to Wonders as the **Assistant Director at Murch Extended Day**.

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“I spent ten wonderful years at Wonders, and the experience played a huge role in shaping my passion for working with children and families. After graduating from the University of Maryland, I began working at Horace Mann as the Assistant Director. During that time, it was incredibly rewarding to watch our students grow and interact in such a fun and supportive environment. From art projects and games to dramatic play, every day brought new opportunities for creativity, learning, and connection.

Fast forward to today, and it has been truly amazing to return to Wonders. The culture here continues to inspire me. At Wonders, we strive to create classroom communities that are welcoming, respectful, and equitable. Children do not need to leave any part of themselves at the door, and we work intentionally to ensure that every child feels seen, valued, and supported.”

- John Martinez, Wonders Assistant Director at Horace Mann

Stories like these remind us that the impact of Wonders extends far beyond a single school year. For many in our community, Wonders becomes a place that feels like home—a place they are proud to return to and continue supporting for the next generation of children.

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## Celebrating Staff Milestones

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Each program year, Wonders staff are honored for their milestone anniversaries with a monetary bonus—a small token of appreciation for their dedication to Wonders’ children and families. We are grateful for the passion, care, and commitment these team members bring to our community every day.

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### 20 Years Of Service

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Ndara Miles, Assistant Director & EELI Specialist, Early Learning at Edgemoor



Ebony Ellis, Extended Day Program Manager



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15 Years Of Service

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Cindi Dixon, Program Assistant, Wonders Early Learning

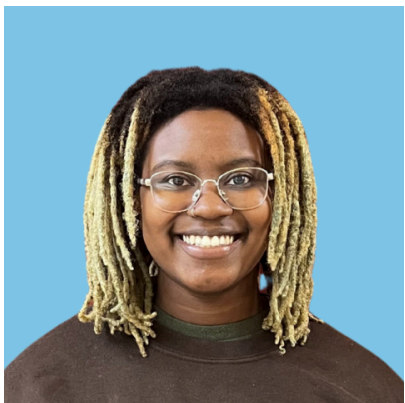


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5 Years Of Service

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Eryn Mitchell, Program Director, Wonders Extended Day at Chevy Chase





We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each of these staff members for the dedication, kindness, and enthusiasm they bring to the Wonders community every day. Their commitment helps ensure that Wonders continues to be a place where children thrive, families feel supported, and educators feel proud to serve.

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## **Wonders 50th Anniversary Campaign**

### **An Amazing Opportunity to Double Your Impact**

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We are excited to share a special opportunity to double your impact. Thanks to the generosity of Sharon and Robert Buchanan, every gift made to the [Wonders 50th Anniversary Campaign](#) will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$25,000—helping us go even further in supporting children and families. Since the Buchanan's generous matching gift, we have raised \$11,085 towards this challenge goal.

Your gift will have twice the impact in supporting the future of Wonders.

As we celebrate 50 years of Wonders, we are not only reflecting on our history—we are also looking ahead to ensure a strong and stable future for the children and families we serve.

The 50th Campaign will help Wonders:

- Protect continuity of care during unexpected challenges and times of uncertainty
- Invest in innovative programs that strengthen early learning and extended day experiences
- Support and retain exceptional educators who are the heart of our mission
- Expand access to high-quality programs for more children and families in our community

Strengthening our reserve also positions Wonders to confidently launch a new strategic plan in the coming months—moving from thoughtful planning to meaningful action and ensuring our mission remains strong for decades to come..

We hope you will consider making a gift to the [Wonders 50th Anniversary Campaign today—and take advantage of this special opportunity to have your donation matched.](#)

**We look forward to seeing many of you at the Garden Party on March 28. Thank you to our generous sponsors!**

◆ Thank You ◆



CPAs & ADVISORS



**Melanie Folstad**

**Sharon Strauss**

**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.

The poster features a pink background with yellow stars and white line-art illustrations of three cats. The top section contains the event title and subtitle. The middle section lists activities. The bottom section, separated by a red and white bunting border, provides the date, time, ticket prices, and location.

**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**

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**Celebrating Read Across America Week**

Thank You Councilmember Shebra Evans

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We were thrilled to welcome Councilmember Shebra Evans to our Edgemoor location, where she shared her love of reading with our Pre-K class.

Together, they enjoyed the beloved book *I Like Myself!* A joyful celebration of self- acceptance and confidence, brought to life through playful rhymes and vibrant illustrations.

Thank you, Councilmember Evans for spending time with us- our students and teachers absolutely loved having you!



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## Parent + Caregiver Workshops

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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.



**April Workshop Topic:** Bullying & Friendship: Tools for Raising Kind & Resilient Kids

**Date:** Tuesday April 21, 2026

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

**Location:** Bethesda, MD

[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](#)

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## 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](https://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.](#)

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