



# *Impact Report*

**2021-2022**

# Volunteers

## 2021-2022

Members of our community who give their time, energy and enthusiasm are the heart of River. We would not be able to accomplish all that we do without the dedication of so many helping hands.

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Katie Pirzadeh

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Katie Lenss  
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Katie Pirzadeh  
Nicolle Rippeon  
Randi Rosenberg  
Alison Silvers  
Jessica & Neil Sitron

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of The River School's 2021-2022 Impact Report for gifts received September 1, 2021-August 31, 2022. Contact the Development Office at 202-337-3554 or [development@riverschool.net](mailto:development@riverschool.net) with any questions about this report or for information about giving to The River School.

Non-discrimination Policy: The River School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious affiliation, gender, ethnic or national origin in the administration of its admission, financial aid and other school-administered programs.

# Welcome

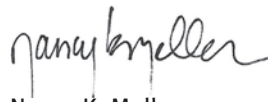
Dear River Community,

**WE ARE EXCITED** to present this Impact Report celebrating key achievements of the 2021-2022 school year. It was a busy and productive year, and we are proud to have realized many of our goals from the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. We set our bar high, and because of this we were able to announce the launch of our Upper Elementary Program and add faculty in disciplines new to the School, cement our plans for a new campus, and present and moderate at the International Conference on Cochlear Implants.

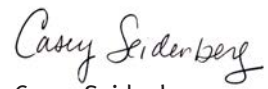
This year, we entered into a new era for River, where we can broaden our passion for innovative teaching and learning, inclusion and belonging, and collaboration and growth. In October, we confirmed our first Grade 4 Upper Elementary class for the 2022-2023 school year. We are thrilled to be creating an exemplary project-based curricular approach to Grades 4-6! And, after several years of searching, The River School put plans in motion for the new campus at 4220 Nebraska Avenue, NW. In November, we received unanimous approval from the Board of Zoning Adjustment for a special exception to build the new campus in a residential zone. This was no small feat. Dedicated River supporters testified at ANC meetings, wrote letters, joined us on the new property to speak with concerned neighbors in person, and testified persuasively at the zoning hearing. Special thanks go to our Board of Trustees and especially Rachel Moore Weller and Nicolle Rippeon; parents Katrina Kosec and Dana Bash; alumni grandparent, Congressman Steve Barlett, and alumna, Grace Kowal, who testified at the BZA hearing from her dorm room at Tufts University. This kind of affirmation epitomizes the strength of the River Community.

A highlight of the year was being selected to discuss our most recent research findings regarding language, social and academic outcomes for children with cochlear implants and their hearing peers at *CI2022: Emerging Issues in Cochlear Implants* conference held in May in Washington, DC. We have been conducting and publishing longitudinal outcomes research for twenty years, and as we enter into our third decade, River continues to serve as a national model for inclusive education. We often host visitors and professional meetings for both national and international groups who work with children with and without hearing loss. With these interactions, and through our graduate student training program, we hope to assist children, teachers and clinicians in other communities nationally and internationally.

We couldn't accomplish such important work without you, our community. We are grateful for your contributions of time, talents and financial resources. Every gift makes a difference. Together we can continue to fulfill our mission and provide more children an opportunity to benefit from our unique, inclusive program. We see a bright future ahead and look forward to sharing our progress with you. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and The River School, thank you.



Nancy K. Mellon  
Head of School



Casey Seidenberg  
President, Board of Trustees



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Andre Cheng, MD	Dippen Zinzuvadia

## MISSION

The River School's inclusive program challenges each child to work collaboratively, to think critically, and to develop the confidence to take risks, embrace their curiosity, and find their voice.

# River's Expansion

## The New Campus: “Under Oak”



During the last 22 years, River's program and service offerings have broadened to include: a full range of clinical services; parent education and support programs; teacher and graduate student training; auxiliary programs for children; and outreach and advocacy efforts. Our current campus serves us well, but it's time for more space to be able to continue growing. Expanding the School will help strengthen our mission and fulfill a promise of our strategic plan: to serve more students from diverse backgrounds in our surrounding community and region.



The new location's close proximity to the Tenleytown metro will help broaden our reach, and the larger footprint will allow us to bolster our enrollment of students with and without hearing loss through Grade 6. Our new home will feature our signature welcoming, light-filled classrooms, with the addition of a theater, ample open and green spaces, and new Arts & Sciences labs for exploration, creation and learning.

Located at 4220 Nebraska Avenue, NW, the proposed new campus is a 2.27-acre estate known as “Under Oak,” and includes the historic Buchanan mansion built in the 1920s. Our team has designed a plan for the campus that ensures the renovation of the historic house and development of new academic facilities are compatible with the character of the estate and complement the neighborhood. The mansion and several structures (e.g., the pool house, gate house, main garage) on the Buchanan Estate will be retained, renovated and integrated into the new campus. We have also developed landscape design concepts to enhance the natural features of the site and to address neighbors' feedback, particularly regarding streetscape and screening elements.

Upon completion, the new campus will comprise 66,691 square feet, providing more than enough room to increase River's enrollment to 350 students and faculty and staff to 90. Our relocation presents a unique opportunity for River to be part of an existing institutional corridor that is Metro accessible while respecting the surrounding residential community.

## A Big Step Forward

On November 3, 2021 we reached a major milestone: The Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) voted unanimously to approve our application for special exception. While we encountered neighborhood opposition, our talented and dedicated team presented a clear and compelling case to the BZA during a seven-hour hearing on October 27. With their vote, the BZA approved our plans for a special exception to build a new school campus in a residential zone, allowing us to expand our school and our speech and hearing clinic, Potomac River Clinic. The approved plans include measures to reduce River's impact on neighborhood traffic with a robust transportation mitigation plan.

We engaged in significant community outreach regarding the new campus during the process leading up to the BZA hearing. Many dedicated members of our community have helped to lay the groundwork for our success. Trustee and alumni parent Rachel Moore Weller has been involved from the beginning of our property search, providing invaluable advice, as well as financial and moral support. Chair of the board's New Campus Committee, Nicolle Rippeon, has worked tirelessly with neighbors and current and alumni parents to garner their written submissions and testimony to ANC3E and the BZA.

We look forward to a positive outcome regarding this opportunity and to meeting The River School's goal of providing greater access to our programs and services for more children in the DC area. We are proud of our demonstrated commitment to the neighborhoods of which we are a part, and we look forward to becoming active and engaged members of the Tenleytown community for years to come.

“As a current River School parent of two children, I am thrilled about the plans for The River School to expand and be closer to where we live. We have been at River for five years, and our children and family have been able to thrive during that time. It is an amazing community of excellent teachers and families who are engaged and kind. Giving more children the opportunity to attend River for a longer period of time will help families but also the new neighboring community. River will be an exceptional addition.”

– Richa Batra  
River School Parent





# Congratulations to the **FALCON CLASS OF 2022**

We are proud of the Grade 3 Falcons on their graduation from our Elementary Program. Their third grade year featured many creative and immersive themes, adventures, projects and field trips, including the memorable overnight camping trip.

We celebrated the students' achievements and marked this milestone during our traditional graduation ceremony. The students were sent off with fanfare knowing they are well-prepared for the next stage of their educational journey.

## **Grade 4 Placements**

We are thrilled that 11 of the 2022 Falcons will remain at River as members of our inaugural Grade 4 class. The independent schools other will attend include:

Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart  
The Lab School  
Washington International School  
The Siena School  
The Langley School  
Landon School

Sidwell Friends School  
Georgetown Day School  
Bullis School  
Washington Episcopal School  
Francis Scott Key School  
Norwood School

We look forward to seeing the students who have moved on to other schools at our alumni events!

## Grade 3 Highlights

At River, Grade 3 is the culmination of our Elementary curriculum. Third grade themes and projects become increasingly complex and students engage deeply in research, writing, critical thinking and inquiry-based learning—often in teams. As part of their robust academic work, the Falcons took on in-depth projects, visual and verbal presentations and even a self-produced play.

For the Falcon Science Fair, students created hands-on experiments to test their hypotheses, using data collection techniques and statistical analysis skills. Students presented their conclusions at in-class presentations, as well as recorded Prezis.

During a spring Research Fair in the Gym, Falcon ‘experts’ created displays and shared their findings with parents, faculty and other students. In preparation, the Falcons dedicated weeks to research, note taking, outlining, summarizing, and writing their reports.

Also in the spring, the Falcons were the stars of an original video production, *Spy School*. They developed the concept, wrote the script, designed the set, blocked the choreography, and recorded their production for our community to enjoy.

A much anticipated highlight of the Falcon year is the overnight trip at Camp Horizons. The Falcon Class and faculty chaperones spent two days camping, canoeing, climbing, hiking, and bonding. For many students this can be the first overnight trip they take away from their families. This year, like in previous years, the Falcons returned tired, but full of laughter and newfound confidence.



# Our River Community

## Embracing Diversity

The River School continues to pursue its anti-bias and anti-racist (ABAR) goals in classrooms, professional development and through the work of the interdisciplinary Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Belonging (DEIJB) Committee. Ensuring an inclusive learning and professional environment remains a core pillar of River's mission. One of our ongoing goals and commitments is to address race, bias, social justice, and community engagement with our students in developmentally appropriate ways.



The DEIJB Committee spearheaded activities in the classroom and with faculty and staff to increase awareness of implicit bias, microaggression and social justice.

In 2020, the school launched a multi-year partnership with consultant Dr. Sharon Michaels, an expert in helping schools normalize ABAR within their communities. Dr. Michaels has guided River School faculty, staff and leadership in strengthening its ABAR environment through a series of workshops around implicit bias, microaggressions, race and racism in schools, and designing and implementing an ABAR curriculum. This work set the stage for the summer of 2022 when a group of faculty began work on River's ABAR Playbook to document how to bring anti-bias education into every age group, and all facets of curriculum and instruction at River. Ensuring that ABAR work is central to our curriculum is an ongoing goal. Faculty continue to examine best practices related to ABAR education and culturally responsive practices, with the framework of the social justice standards of Diversity, Equity, Justice, and Action. Additionally, our Playbook will document how the goals are infused in the curriculum through lessons and activities and will provide a progression of ABAR learning from Preschool through Upper Elementary.

## Graduate Student Training at River

### *Enriching Classrooms and Sharing Our Model*

The River School provides supervised clinical training to graduate students in Speech Language Pathology, Audiology, Education, Special Education, and Clinical Psychology. As part of their university's program for earning a masters degree, these graduate students work at River alongside our educators and clinicians. During the 2021-2022 school year, we supervised 15 speech language pathology masters students, two education masters students and three doctoral candidates in Audiology.



River has Affiliation Agreements with many universities including American University, Gallaudet University, George Mason University, George Washington University, Georgetown University, Loyola University, Shenandoah University, University of Florida, University of Maryland, University of South Carolina, and Vanderbilt University.

## Connecting with Alumni

Our alumni families are a big reason why River has grown to where it is today. Hundreds of families have entrusted us to educate their children and prepare them for the next steps. We are proud of all our alumni who move on to excellent schools and embark on exploring their interests as students, athletes and engaged members of society. We consistently hear from representatives at other schools that our former students excel at problem solving and teamwork, are curious and display compassion.

We conduct events and programs to stay connected to our alumni and to provide the opportunity for them to connect with each other.



### Alumni Family Reunion Events

In spring of 2022, we were pleased to resume our in-person Alumni Family events, starting with the 2013 Falcons Dinner for Grade 3 Alumni and their parents. This event was established in 2015 for the 2007 Falcons and has become an annual tradition. In May 2022, we celebrated the 2013 class' accomplishments, and they enjoyed reminiscing about their shared experiences at River. It was like no time had passed as they toured the school, visited their old classrooms and had "Circle Time" with Mrs. Wright. Reuniting as a class before heading off to their next chapters reinforced their ties to River and each other.



Also in May, we were able to hold RiverWalk at Carderock Park. It was our first community-wide event in two years. Hundreds of members of our community enjoyed outdoor activities, games and lunch. At the start of the day, we hosted an Alumni Family Reunion during which past students of all ages visited with each other, teachers and parents.

### Alumni Opportunities

We are continually looking for ways to support and stay connected to our River Alumni—we love seeing the amazing things they accomplish! In addition to publishing *Alumni Connections*\* and hosting reunion events, we have several opportunities for alums to earn community service hours, intern or participate in our Leadership Development Program as part of Camp River. Each summer, alumni can learn leadership skills by enrolling as a Camp Technician, moving on to become a Counselor-in-Training, which then can lead to summer jobs as Camp Counselors or Instructors.

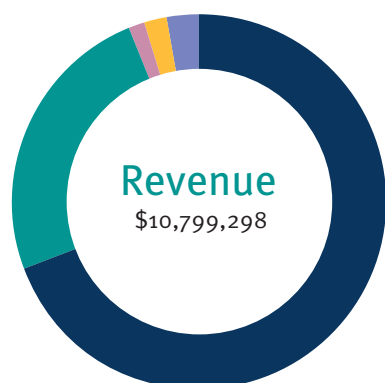
*\*Alumni news can be submitted to [development@riverschool.net](mailto:development@riverschool.net)*



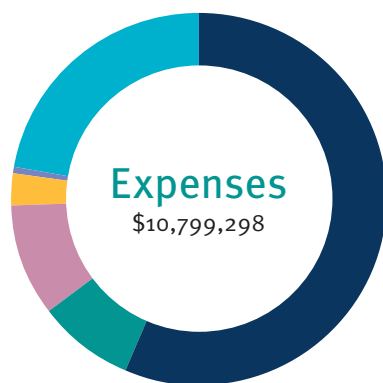
# Financials

## 2021-2022

River's financial position remains strong and the commitment and generosity of our community is laying the groundwork for future expansion. These graphs show The River School's revenue and expenses over the last fiscal year, September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022.



• Tuition & Fees	\$7,849,966
• Contributions	\$2,770,196
• Clinical Services	\$164,875
• Investment Income	\$273,674
• Other	\$287,935



• Salaries & Benefits	\$6,115,918
• Financial Aid	\$889,430
• Program Expenses	\$1,064,062
• Facilities	\$282,880
• Interest	\$70,855
• Reserve	\$2,376,153

### Endowed Funds

\$3,305,558

• John K. Niparko Endowment Fund	\$2,952,103
• Jill Bailey Chenet Scholarship Fund	\$353,455

### Contributions

\$1,145,008

• Scholarship Auction	\$324,954
• Annual Giving	\$505,489
• Future Fund	\$1,026,352
• New Campus Campaign	\$837,700
• Grants	\$35,000
• Other	\$7,531
• RiverWalk/Jill Bailey Chenet Scholarship Fund	\$27,530
• Endowment	\$6,000



# Recognition OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS

## Centennial Donors

The Centennial Club recognizes donors whose cumulative contributions to The River School over the years exceed \$100,000. These generous donors have provided a strong foundation upon which River has been built and will continue to grow for years to come.

Ellen & Ware Adams	Katharine Pollard Maddux
Mary & Alexander Barth	Memorial Mental
Judy & Leland Bishop	Health Foundation
Katherine & David Bradley	Britlan & Frederic Malek
Aimee & William Burck	Suzanne & John King
Mary W. Carpenter	Patricia & John Klick
Deafness Research Foundation	Kathryne Love & Jason Licht
Susan & Steve Engel	Dr. John K. Niparko
Stephanie & Mehdi Fateh	Elisabeth Hess Rice & Lacy Rice
Cedar Hill Foundation	Randi & Jason Rosenberg
CityBridge Foundation	Casey & Nicholas Seidenberg
Miranda & Eric Gaier	Rachel & Paul F. Sheridan, Jr.
Kellee & Sean Glass	Lisa & Laurence Siegel
Mae & Ande Grennan	Heather Tomlinson
Nancy Herman & Dawn Halfaker	Prentis Tomlinson
Heisen Family Foundation	Rachel Moore Weller



## Annual Fund

Thank you to the following individuals whose support makes a difference in what we are able to provide to the children each day at River. The Annual Fund is River's most important fundraising priority as it enables us to offer financial aid, retain talented faculty, provide an exceptional education, and much more. We are incredibly grateful for the generosity of our community which helped us raise \$505,489 for the 2021-2022 Annual Fund, enriching the lives of every child at River.



## Leadership Circles

### VISIONARY

\$100,000+

Nancy Herman & Dawn Halfaker  
Rachel Moore Weller

### FOUNDER

\$35,000 - 99,999

Cedar Hill Foundation  
Cameo & Andy Salembier

### GREAT FALLS

\$10,000 - 34,999

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Carpenter Family  
Miranda & Eric Gaier  
Hillary & Jonathan Epstein  
Beverly & Stuart Halpert  
Kathryne Love & Jason Licht  
Jackie & Armani Mahoozi  
Britlan & Frederic Malek  
Casey & Nicholas Seidenberg

### POTOMAC

\$5,000 - 9,999

Anonymous  
Ashley & Matthew Bronczek  
Sally & Mark Ein  
Erin & Ali Fardshisheh  
Hallie & Erich Fischer  
Julianna Goldman  
& Michael Gottlieb  
Johanna & Ryan Greene  
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Jennifer & David Lilley  
Lloyd A. Fry Foundation  
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Nancy K. Mellon  
Randi & Jason Rosenberg  
Nicolle & Benjamin Rippeon  
Padma Zinzuvadia



## ROCK CREEK \$2,500 - 4,999

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Manu Gayatrinath  
& Anthony Cruz  
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Sondra Fein & Gregory Epstein  
Dina & Ramsey Farouki  
Heather Bamford  
& Sam Gallimore  
Aileen Y. Chang & Harry D. Hsing  
Eddie Cohen  
& Nathan Imperiale  
Ritu & Ro Khanna  
Katie & Valdis Lenss  
Jaynie & Stephen Lilley  
Connie & Erik P. Lindenauer  
Anna & John Mason  
Nicole & Philip McGuiney  
Morris Sanint Family  
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Dixie & John K. Noonan  
Inna Dexter  
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Lauren Burgess  
& Rand Brothers  
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Kristin Beyard & David Capezza  
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& Chukwudi Chukwumah  
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& Chet Dussault  
Liz & Jack Edsall  
Daniel Ein  
Carol Falconer  
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Barbara & George Greer  
Mary & Wyman Herendeen  
Jennifer & David Lilley  
Rely & Robert Long  
Gwendolyn & Carl Oppenheim  
Vallie Rosner  
Elliot Rosner  
Donna & Tony Ryan  
Carol & Jim Sharp  
Carol & Jeff Twyman  
Padma Zinzuvadia

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Emily Waddington  
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Elizabeth & Dave Brooks  
Megan Campbell  
Carpenter Family  
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“We are forever grateful to The River School for what they have done for our family. Despite the fact that Dylan graduated several years ago (after

attending River since age 2!), our family still supports River. We wholeheartedly believe in its mission and vision and happily give back to a place that gave so much to us. We are excited to see River expand its footprint—and its reach—as it works to provide greater access to this one-of-a-kind program to more children in the DC area.”

— Julie Bedford and Doug Vanderbilt  
 Parents of Dylan, Falcon Class of 2019



## Tribute Gifts

Berta & Clarence Browder  
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*Thanks to the fine teachers and staff of The River School.*

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*In honor of Salam Saidi*

Cameo & Andy Salembier  
*Incredible thanks to the River members of “Team Charlie” and “Team William” for all that you have done for our family this year. We are truly grateful for your support and dedication. We are thankful to be part of the River community.*

Meredith & Jess Sharp  
*In honor of Will Sharp*

Jeremiah Wolsk  
*In honor of Claire Wolsk*

Padma Zinzuvadia  
*In honor of Khalin & Ronan Zinzuvadia*

# Special Gifts

We are grateful for gifts dedicated to specific purposes that support the mission of The River School.

## Early Intervention and Outreach

The Cedar Hill Foundation provides a \$35,000 grant to fund early intervention for children with hearing loss, as well to support our efforts at outreach to children in marginalized and underserved areas of the region.

## John K. Niparko Endowment

The John K. Niparko Endowment was named in memory of founding board member and world-class surgeon, researcher and scientist, John K. Niparko, MD, who died in 2016. It was through his leadership and generosity in 2011 that our Endowment Fund was established to strengthen our ability to ensure extraordinary teaching and learning, and the capacity to pursue the school's strategic goals. As of August 31, 2021, the Niparko Endowment totaled \$2,952,103.

Andre & Priscilla Cheng  
Angela Niparko



## Jill Bailey Chenet Scholarship Fund

Named in memory of our beloved teacher and friend, Jill Bailey Chenet, who passed away in 2012, this fund recognizes the dedication Jill had to her students, instilling them with a sense of joy and wonder that was palpable in her classroom. We are grateful to the many friends and family who contribute to the Jill Bailey Chenet Scholarship Fund each year. The fund total as of August 31, 2021 was \$353,455.

Will Caldwell  
*In honor of Katherine Culp*  
Alycia Bartley-Heinsen & Franz Heinsen



## RIVER'S FUTURE

Thanks to more than \$2 million in generous donations to the Harry R. Weller Future Fund, The River School has sought and found a new campus site at 4220 Nebraska Ave. NW. The property, located in the Tenleytown neighborhood of Washington, DC is known as "Under Oak" and includes the historic Buchanan mansion built in the 1920s. A new campus will allow River to expand its reach, educate and serve more children, and have a campus that better serves our curriculum and mission.

## Securing River's Future

In 2016, River parent and Board Trustee Rachel Moore Weller established the Future Fund in remembrance of Harry Weller. Harry held River's mission and vision close to his heart and believed it would revolutionize deaf education and shift the paradigm on how we teach language and literacy to all children. We are grateful for the gifts to the Future Fund which have exceeded \$2 million, enabling River to pursue a new campus.

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# Yacht Rock for Scholarship

The River School's 20th Annual Auction raised \$324,594 in support of the Scholarship Fund. This fund provides tuition assistance to families who depend on and would otherwise be unable to attend River and benefit from its innovative model. Thanks to enthusiastic and generous support from parents, alumni parents, grandparents, and area businesses for making our largest fundraising event a huge success.



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# Jill Bailey Chenet's RiverWalk

Jill Bailey Chenet's RiverWalk raised \$26,680 in support of The Jill Bailey Chenet Scholarship Fund. This fund was established in 2012 in memory of beloved second grade teacher and friend Jill Bailey Chenet. Jill, known to her friends and family as "Tootie," spent many hours tutoring children in reading after school.

Her passion was to work with young children, teaching them to be strong readers. RiverWalk proceeds are dedicated to Tootie Time Tutoring for River Schoolers and the Jill Bailey Chenet Endowed Scholarship Fund which is part of the Endowment Fund.

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**Inside front cover photo:** Evan Goldberg, Kathyryne Love and Dippen Zinzuvadia

**Page 6, top photo:** DEIJB Committee members (back row) Travis Sigler, Ginger Brooker, Sanjana Jayaram, Marcia Balkin; (middle row) Capitola Anderson, Tarah Leroy, Caryn Heskey, Sharlene Ottley, Tracy Armstrong, Meredith Ouellette, Oluwatosin Fashola; (bottom row) Dorothy White, Babette Hofacre, Kristen Carlson. Not pictured: Katherine Clute, Tristan Powell.

**Page 9:** Photo 1 - Fabricio Valencia, Yoni Alemu\* and Terrance Green; Photo 2 - Nancy Herman\*, Head of School Nancy Mellon and Erin Fardshisheh; Photo 3 - Dixie Noonan, Board President Casey Seidenberg\* and Admission Director Megan Campbell

**Page 11:** Photo 1 - Alumni Parents Dana Berliner, Susan Engel\*, Nicolle Rippeon\*, Katie Atkinson, Shannon Graham, Anita Zinzuvadia; Photo 2 - Alumni Family The Meck-Schnitgers

**Page 13 photo:** Rachel Moore Weller\* and Nancy Mellon

**Page 14 photo:** 2022 Auction Co-chairs Jaynie Lilley, Gretchen Randolph, Shannon Green and Dana Rocks

**Inside back cover, bottom right photo:** Alumni Parent Bob Stang and Bob Jones

\*River School Trustee

