

# RUTH WASHBURN COOPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL

*Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School (RWCNS) is a nonprofit preschool dedicated to educating and nurturing children in an enriching play-based environment and engaging families in a supportive community.*



**RUTH WASHBURN  
• COOPERATIVE •  
NURSERY SCHOOL**

**2013-2014  
ANNUAL REPORT**



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# 2013-2014 ANNUAL REPORT

## LETTER FROM THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The 2013-2014 year at Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School (RWCNS) was filled with successes, challenges, play, work, laughter, and only a few a tears (primarily from parents as their children said goodbye for a final time to our wonderful school). This is a year in which we have laid the foundation for an exciting future.

The Board of Governors accomplished a number of important items this year:

- Updated the mission statement that guides our school
- Created a list of core values that helps to articulate our philosophy of educating young children
- Developed a strategic plan and objectives for the near future
- Approved a fund development plan with established funding priorities
- Successful hire of a new Executive Director

We are ending the fiscal year with a surplus that will be put aside for needed facility improvements and maintenance, debt reduction and other essential spending. As it has been in the more than 50-year history of RWCNS, our successes should not only be measured by organizational and fiscal health, but rather by the impact our organization has on the young children and families we serve. RWCNS continues to be a place where children thrive, learn, explore and grow. Families continue to come together and form life-long friendships. As always, our wonderful and loving staff dedicate themselves to the children they teach. We are truly a community sustained by countless volunteer hours from families as well as numerous in-kind donations. Every member of our cooperative serves in an important way, adding to our rich history and preparing for our great futures!

**Deb Walker**

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

President, 2013-2014



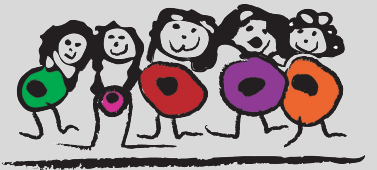


**RWCNS CORE VALUES**  
*at Ruth Washburn we believe...*

- That by calling ourselves a “nursery” school we strive to honor the child at the developmental stage where he or she is now, rather than focusing on “preparation” for future schooling.
- Deeply in the value of play and the learning attained when children are invited to explore with a variety of materials including music, art, movement, and dramatic play.
- In providing an atmosphere focused on the “whole child;” where a child’s emotional, physical, social and cognitive needs are carefully nurtured.
- In helping children develop and sustain a positive self-image by learning to engage in caring interactions with others.
- In class sizes that are small and where teachers guide and facilitate activities, allowing children to make their own choices and direct their own work.
- In the blending of school and family life to create a cooperative community which provides the richest, most caring environment possible for children.



# OPERATIONAL PHILOSOPHY



**RUTH WASHBURN  
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**At Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School  
we operate...**

- As a parent cooperative because we feel strongly that educating young children is best accomplished with the active presence of parents within the school.
- Where parents assist in the classroom and take responsibility for the maintenance and financial well-being of the school.
- So that in turn, RWCNS provides its families with opportunities for parent education and support.
- With a more than 50-year history of excellence in play-based education, we strive to make the school and its teachers a community resource and to act as a model for local and national preschools and educators.



## 2013-2014 Board of Governors

Deborah Walker, President

Alison Christofferson, Vice President

Aaron Briggs, Treasurer

Mallory Sharp, Secretary

Trudi Jackson, Cooperative Liaison

Sindhu Bankapur

Carrie Browen

Sarah Chase

Aubrey Fennewald

Kimber Janney

Michele Maccagnan

Jennifer McAdams

### 2013-2014 Staff

Sukie Jackson, Director

Jen Filonowich, Assistant Director

Brenda Holmes-Stanciu, Education Director

Lois Arndt

Karen Brown

Mary Jean Coyne

Lisa Cumby

Victoria Devoe

Stacy Holmes

Karen Jones

Cecelia Lingle

Chris Rosas

Page Salsbury

Kristin Schoonveld

Linette Sheridan

Tyler Stuart

Jordan Womochil



In September 2013 Sukie Jackson, our beloved Executive Director for the past three years, decided to make the 2013-2014 school year the last in her current role.

After an extensive search process, the Board of Governors hired our own Assistant Director, Jen Filonowich, to succeed Sukie. Jen brings strong organizational skills to this position, has great ideas for the future of the school, and most importantly, loves being a part of the Ruth Washburn community.

We would all like to extend a big THANK YOU to Sukie for her dedication to Ruth Washburn in the role of Executive Director. She brought kindness, fairness, and love to the position in the past three years and brought the school to a place of financial health and stability. Sukie will continue her tenure at Ruth Washburn in the place she loves most...as a lead teacher in the classroom...surrounded by children.



**Sukie Jackson with students at the Annual Harvest Festival**



## **This year RWCNS received two very special financial gifts.**

An anonymous donor gave a one-time \$25,000 gift, the largest in the school's history, to help meet the needs and goals articulated by the board. The Board designated this money to purchase and update our computers and software, increase marketing efforts, make needed facility and playground improvements (including the new shade structures on our playground), school accreditation, and help leverage fundraising efforts for Playing Into the Future. Additionally, teachers received "mini-grants" to purchase materials for their classrooms.

We also received a gift of \$1900 to update our website. This new capacity will help increase search engine optimization and extend our reach and marketing efforts. We are grateful for those in our community who are so generous and committed to making Ruth Washburn the best Colorado Springs has to offer in early childhood education.



## Ruth Washburn by the Numbers

**93** students & families in **9** classes

90 students attending  
**SUMMER CAMPS**

**25 FAMILIES AWARDED FINANCIAL AID**

**17** staff including...

**9** lead teachers with

**3** Master's degrees

**4** Bachelor's degrees

**2** Associate's degrees

**1:5 teacher/student ratio**

# OUTCOMES

## Parent Outcome

Parent Carrie Brownen received the “Volunteer of the Year” award in 2013 from the El Paso County PTA for her work at Trailblazer Elementary where she led the charge to organize a new fundraiser. Carrie organized the event, a once a year walk-a-thon, modeled on the sponsorship structure of the RWCNS Auction.

## Child Outcome

Amari Lu, recent RWCNS graduate, helped his Kindergarten teacher with a problem. When doing an art project, the teacher ran out of purple paint. Amari suggested they mix colors to make purple and he knew just how to do it! Amari’s mother, Chen-Yi credits RWCNS with helping her son with creative thinking.



## Teacher/Community Outcomes

Director Sukie Jackson gave a talk on “Process Art” to all the children’s librarians in the Pikes Peak Library District last year. She brought along samples of RWCNS artwork, talked about process art vs. crafts, and gave participants lots of specific ideas for art/literature connections.

Brenda Holmes-Stanciu, Young 3s teacher and Education Director, completed the multi-year process to become a Nationally Board Certified Teacher. This is the highest certification available to teachers and only a small percentage choose to take on this process.

## Alumni Success Outcomes

RWCNS graduate from ‘92-’95 David Siegel graduated from NYC’s Manhattan School of Music and returned to Colorado Springs to become a young leader in the non-profit arts community. After completing a fellowship at the El Pomar Foundation, he was named the Executive Director of the Bee Vradenburg Foundation. David is an accomplished musician and now a community leader!

The two Cheyenne Mountain High School co-valedictorians and the Palmer High School valedictorian in the 2014 graduating class are all RWCNS Alumni! We are proud to have been a vital part of their early childhood education.





## RWCNS SUCCESSIONS

- Our facility was affected by the flooding that hit our community in the fall of 2013. We were able to successfully repair the property damage and mitigate future flood damage. Another byproduct of the flooding was erosion of the rock retaining wall that borders the parking lot. By taking advantage of expertise within the cooperative, partnering with community members, and negotiating reduced fees, we were able to keep costs to a minimum and repair the facility.
- In April we partnered with Rocky Mountain Field Institute and received volunteer labor from the Air Academy HS lacrosse team to do erosion mitigation on our hillside. With a donation of timbers, community partnerships, and cooperative member volunteer hours, the paths on the hillside were reworked and the hillside was seeded.
- The latest addition to our backyard area is a large covered wagon (pictured above) on our prairie. This addition is part of the Playing Into the Future plan, which has articulated a long-term strategy for improving our outside play area.





## RWCNS CHALLENGES

- **FACILITY COST:** Unlike many preschools that operate out of a church or other low-cost facility, RWCNS has a mortgage of approximately \$300,000.
- **STAFF PAY:** We want early childhood education to be a viable career. Median lead teacher pay at RWCNS is \$14 per hour, which is slightly below average for our state. We think our staff is worth a whole lot more!
- **VOLUNTEER/FUNDRAISING BURDEN TO OUR FAMILIES:** As many alumni families probably remember, being a member of a cooperative can feel like a lot of work! We recognize that this burden on families, who are already in a challenging time in life, can be overwhelming.
- **VOLUNTEER RUN:** We depend on cooperative volunteers to lead our communities. Because many families are here for a few short years, continuity of expertise and leadership is a challenge.

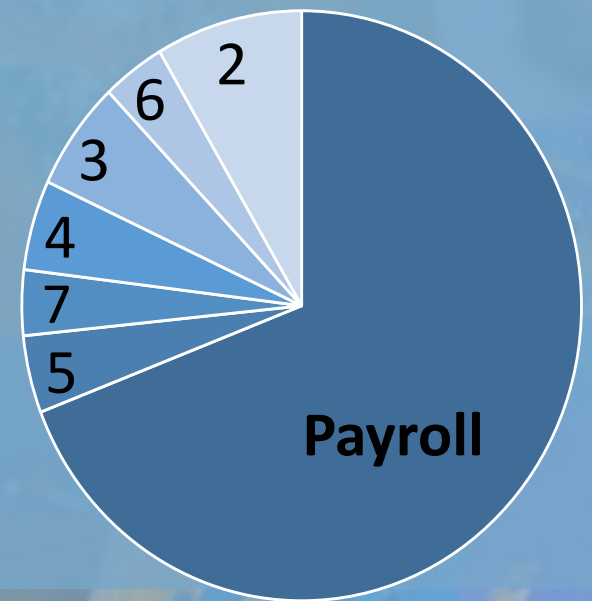


# FINANCIALS

## EXPENSES

**TOTAL EXPENSES** \$385,856.08

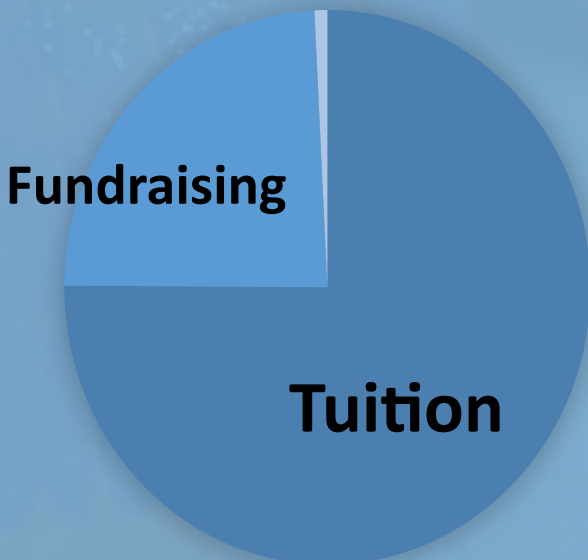
- 1) Payroll 69.25%
- 2) Misc. Expenses 8.5%
- 3) Profess/Bank Fees 6.0%
- 4) Maint/Utilities 5.0%
- 5) Mortgage Interest 4.25%
- 6) Supplies 3.5%
- 7) Depreciation 3.5%



## INCOME

**TOTAL INCOME** \$444,943.46

- 1) Tuition 75%
- 2) Fundraising 24%
- 3) Misc. Income 1%



**TUITION ASSISTANCE =**

**\$30,876.70**

## Net Fundraising Performance

Auction	\$39,603
One-Time Gift	\$25,000
Fundraising Letter	\$14,111
Grocery Cards	\$7,295
Other Support	\$4,562
In-School Misc.	\$4,989
<b>NET FUNDRAISING</b>	<b>\$95,560</b>

\*Unaudited year-end financials



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719-636-3084 [www.rwcns.org](http://www.rwcns.org)