

# 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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RWCNS

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# BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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We are so very grateful to be back in school this fall! What a joy it is to be able to provide opportunities to learn through play during these challenging times. We are so thankful to our families and we want you to know we are here to support you.

As you know, the 2019-2020 school year was different from any other in Ruth Washburn's history. After a very successful year from July-February, we had to unexpectedly close the school in March due to the emergence of the current global pandemic. Our board consists of current and former co-op families: closing the school was devastating for us as we know it was for all of our families, students, teachers and staff.

We are in this together. We are so glad you are here and part of this community as we move forward. Our community is changed by this pandemic, but it is not weakened. As a board, we have a renewed focus on how to connect with and support families through virtual modes of communication.

We are more acutely aware of how to support our phenomenal teachers and staff. We are intensely focused on the longevity and financial sustainability of Ruth Washburn. Despite the difficulties Ruth Washburn faced at the end of the 2019-2020 year, we have many highlights to report! You can find more details about each of these projects in the pages ahead:

- Nearly all of our current strategic plan goals are complete; most notably, as of early 2020, Ruth Washburn is mortgage-free. The completion of this prioritized strategic goal enables so much optimism about the long-term sustainability of the school.
- Our Equity Committee embarked on several major projects that ensure we are responding appropriately to the needs of our co-op community, especially during this time.
- The second year of our new 5-day per week class was successful and we are so happy to be able to continue that class in order to meet the needs of our families.
- Our school has responded to the unprecedented events of the year by forging new connections within the school and larger community – our veteran teachers created over 1,500 Be Creative Kits to support kids and families during this time.

As we move forward, Ruth Washburn's mission remains the same: educating children through play and engaging families in a supportive community. We are so grateful for each day our teachers and students can safely be in school. We recognize not being able to have parent-helpers in the class this year is a loss for teachers, students and parents. We are so grateful for all the other ways our families are supporting one another and the school. We look forward to gathering again in-person as a co-op community.

# BOARD OF GOVERNORS

We invite you to reach out to the board with your questions and concerns. Additionally, you are always welcome to join us for a board meeting, held (virtually for now) on the third Tuesday of each month. Thank you for all you do to continue to support this community. We are so thankful for you and so very thankful for the joy Ruth Washburn brings to all of us.

With humility and gratitude,

**Alison Friedow,  
President**

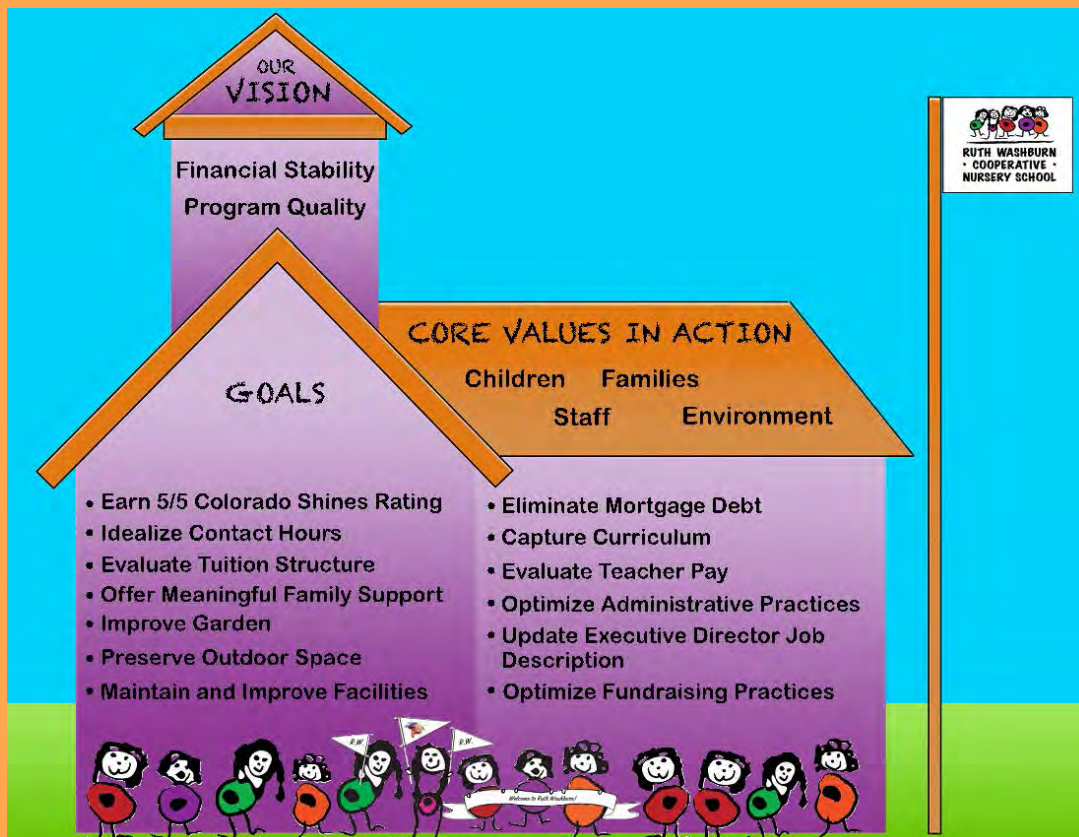
Board of Governors

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# CORE VALUES & MISSION

At RWCNS 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.
- Profoundly in providing equitable learning opportunities that are responsive to each child’s needs in a school environment that embraces diversity and strives for inclusivity.
- 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 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 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 supporting the blending of school and family life to create a cooperative community which provides the richest, most caring environment possible for children.





# COVID-CLOSURE AND REOPENING

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In early 2020, a global pandemic caused by the spread of a novel coronavirus, later named COVID-19, began to reach the United States. On March, 5th, 2020, Colorado reported its first positive case of this infectious disease. On March 10th, 2020, the governor of Colorado declared a state of emergency. Ruth Washburn, like all other local and national school districts, paused in-person classes. Soon after, we sadly had to close our doors as we awaited further guidance from government and health officials.

We can happily report that in April 2020, our director, Jen Filonowich, successfully secured emergency federal funding from two programs – the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) – both offered through the Small Business Association. Jen's quick action in applying for and obtaining these federal dollars allowed the school to bring back our staff and teachers! Additionally, the vast majority of this money we do not have to pay back! We are so thankful for her expertise and diligence in leading the school through this huge challenge.

Teachers were able to finish the year connecting virtually with students! What a wonderful day it was when teachers and students reunited, even if it was through Zoom! Our teachers and staff did an amazing job learning new technology and how to engage students via Zoom calls. We are so very thankful for our teachers – they are the heart and soul of Ruth Washburn.

During this difficult time our co-op community came together to take care of one another. Many of our families donated tuition dollars to the school to support other families and meet school needs. Several of our veteran teachers put together nearly 1,000 Be-Creative Kits to inspire children and families during this challenging time.

We are thrilled to report that Ruth Washburn successfully reopened in September 2020 for in-person classes. The staff and teachers are implementing all of the many safety protocols required by county, state and national health officials, including mask-wearing, social distancing, health checks, and enhanced cleaning procedures.

We are so thankful for the ability to PLAY in-person this year and to do so in a way that keeps all of our teachers, staff and students and families safe. Thank you so much to our community for your support!

# SERVING CHILDREN & FAMILIES

## Equity Committee Highlights

Ruth Washburn's Equity committee is dedicated to advancing equity in our school. The committee is currently working on several exciting projects that support the RWCNS mission of providing each child equitable learning opportunities.

Updating our Library: Ruth Washburn has an amazing library and the Equity Committee is working to further support it! The committee researched and carefully selected 100 books to add to the library that feature diverse main characters – Black, Indigenous, People of Color, LGBTQ families, children with varying abilities, and children with unique family dynamics. We are so close to meeting the goal of adding 100 new books! So far families have donated more than 60% of the books toward this goal! Additionally, families have donated \$680 toward the purchase of more books! This takes the total book donations to nearly \$1500! Thank you so much to our families for this generous support!

Co-op Needs Survey: In an effort to support our families during this challenging time, the Equity Committee developed and sent out a survey to identify co-op community needs such as support with childcare, food, clothing and opportunities for safe, social interaction. Many members of our community donated clothing, grocery cards and other gift cards to be given out as needed to families throughout the year. Our co-op is committed to taking care of one another – again thank you to all of our families for this support!

Please reach out to the board if you want more information about the Equity Committee or are interested in joining!

For more information on equity issues in early childhood education visit: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/equity>



# Be Creative Kits

A team of retired Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School educators working in collaboration with current school administrators have made, as of October 2020, over 1500 “Be Creative Kits”!

Packaged in a large lunch bag, these kits contain materials and ideas for 10-open ended activities designed to spark creativity and imagination of children ages 3-8.

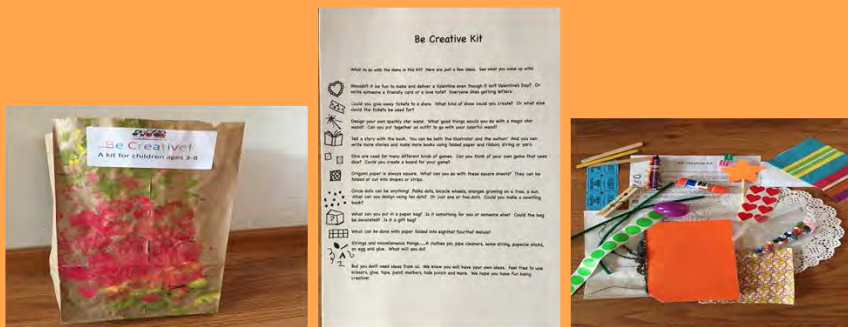
Many members of our Ruth Washburn community support this project, including Jen Filonowich and Stacy Holmes, retired teachers Sukie Jackson, Karen Brown, Cecilia Lingle, former Ruth Washburn director Linda Crissey, as well as other community members, staff and even family of our staff! Sukie Jackson says she never imagined the group would make more than the first batch of 150 kits they made back in March for Ruth Washburn children and parents. However, new opportunities to share the kits, more donations and new requests for kits continue to come in.

Currently, the group is fulfilling a 400-kit request from a teacher at a local elementary school who would like to send a kit home with each child over the holiday break. Sukie says the team is dedicated to making as many kits as they can find homes for with the idea that the Be Creative Kits offer possibilities for fun, open-ended activities that offer a child many ways to express him/herself and to enjoy and experience success.

Outside of Ruth Washburn, the kits have been distributed free of charge to Court Care, Peak Vista's First Visitor program, CASA, Early Connections, Salvation Army Youth programs, Pikes Peak Community College Childcare Center, The Westside Community Center, TESSA, the Westside Community Center YMCA program, Care and Share, Bethel Lutheran Preschool, several D11 Elementary School kindergarten students and to families attending the 2020 Young People's March and Juneteenth celebrations.

Materials for each batch of 150 kits cost roughly \$350. A number of donors (including RWCNS) have contributed to the purchase of materials for these kits. The assembly and delivery of the kits is done on a volunteer basis by this team. Spanish translation for the Idea Sheet was done by a RW alumna.

Please feel free to contact Sukie Jackson in care of the Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School, 636-3084 with questions, requests for kits or to make a donation. Thank you!



# 5 Day Honeybees

September 2019 marked the inception of the 5-Day Honeybees class. Our class was a mixed-age group of 3 to 5-year olds. The question I hear most often is, "Does that work?", and my answer is always a resounding, "Yes!"

Consider your family or even your neighborhood...are all of the children the same age? Probably not. But the majority of those children live and play together, and ultimately learn from one another.

Here's what we've discovered with the Honeybees class:

- \* The Honeybees class provides continuity of care. The children in our program have the opportunity to attend for up to 3 years. They will be in the same room with the same teachers for those 3 years. This allows us to build deeper relationships with children and their families.
- \* Children are familiar with teachers, roles, and expectations they learned the previous year. Returning students arrive confident in knowing what to expect and serve as mentors for those who are new to the program.
- \* Older children take on leadership roles. 5-year olds absolutely beam with pride when they are asked to help a younger student learn to zip a jacket or offer solutions to a problem.
- \* Younger children typically engage in parallel, or side by side play. When 3-year olds join in play with 4 & 5-year olds, play tends to become more complex and interactive.
- \* A strong sense of community develops among the children. They care for one another and show genuine concern when a friend is sad, hurt, or absent from school.

Honeybee's parent Dana Wolfe shared their family's experience in the class, and explained the additional time students and parents spent at the school as a unique aspect of the class. Dana shared some of the positive takeaways for their family:

- Kids had more time to get to know other kids: "I feel like our son really got to know the other kids in the class, which helped him to develop his social-emotional skills."
- Teachers had more time to get to know kids: "I feel like the teachers were able to understand how to help our son thrive, and were able to understand (and remove) roadblocks that were difficult for him."
- Parents and staff had more time to form close bonds: "Spending so much time in the classroom (as parent-helpers), and dropping off/picking up the other days of the week allowed us to feel like we really knew the teachers, the administrators, and the school. This led to a much deeper sense of community."
- Kids had more time to play: "The kiddos were able to explore so many different facets of learning - from art, to science, to hiking on the hill, to playing post office, to making concoctions with extra food."

The 5-Day Honeybees are heading into their second year and look forward to another successful experience! This year there are 12 total students, 6 returning from last year's class and 6 brand new to the class. The Honeybees' year is off to a great start!







# SUPPORTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

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One of the best parts of Ruth Washburn is our expansive outdoor space! At Ruth Washburn, the outdoor space is central to our play-based education curriculum and is one of many things that makes Ruth Washburn truly unique.

We remain committed to maintaining and improving the outdoor space each year. One of Ruth Washburn's strategic goals is to ensure the outdoor space at RWCNS "continues to balance wildness with safety and function." We look for opportunities to support our outdoor space that prioritize natural elements and ensure safety requirements are met.

This year, we:

- Completed the garden project- our garden space is now fully updated! It is a space that is beautiful, creative, and accessible to the entire co-op. The gardens attract insects and wildlife for children to view and learn about during school. There are flowers and herbs and vegetables growing. Classes incorporate the gardens into lessons, exposing our children to various aspects of plant care and harvest!
- Updated our compost; in connection with the garden project, children are learning what and how to compost! Ask your child what parts of snack go in the trash, and which go in the compost!
- Tore down several old shade structures to make room for a new pavilion – a permanent shade structure- that will go up this fall/winter! The pavilion will provide much needed shade for outdoor play in a form that is safe and sustainable. The process of putting up this new structure began this month with volunteers from our co-op. We are so very excited to provide this important element to our outdoor space!



# RECOGNIZING STAFF

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Our staff is the heart of Ruth Washburn. We all know Ruth Washburn would not be Ruth Washburn without our teachers and administrative staff. The Ruth Washburn Board of Governors was devastated to close the school in March 2020. We are forever thankful for our teachers and staff for navigating the challenges of the spring of 2020 along with us.

We are so happy to report that shortly after the school's closure, in April 2020, we were able to obtain federal funds through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) that allowed us to bring all staff and teachers back on payroll through the end of the school year. Equally as wonderful, because of our director's expertise in managing these funds, the school does not have to repay this money! We wholeheartedly thank our director for her leadership and management capability during these times. Thank you Jen!

To our Teachers and Administrative Staff: thank you for all of your work during these first couple months of the new school year – a school year that is different from any other in the past! Thank you for taking on these new challenges. We know you are amazing. You have the full support of the Ruth Washburn community.

## ***Staff highlights***

Thank you for 20+ years of service!

Stacy Holmes (21)

Mary Jean Coyne (21)

Cecelia Lingle (22)



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## **Congratulations to Cecelia Lingle on her retirement!**

This year we were sad to say “see you later” to Cecelia Lingle, who retired after 22 years of service! Lucky for us, Cecelia has continued her service to Ruth Washburn and the greater Colorado Springs community by joining a team of other Ruth Washburn teachers to put together and distribute Be Creative Kits. Cecelia is a beloved member of the Ruth Washburn community and we hope to continue to see her smiling face very often!

Cecelia was a parent at Ruth Washburn for 6 years before joining the teaching staff. During her time at the school, Cecelia taught a variety of classes, beginning with the Older 2s (now Seeds), and eventually transitioned to the Young 5s class (now the Owls). Cecelia also assisted in the Owls, Young 3s, Mixed Age, and Older 4s classes. Cecelia attended Adams State College and PPCC. Thank you so much for your service to Ruth Washburn Cecelia!



## **Congratulations to Mary Jean Coyne on her retirement!**

This year we also said “farewell” to Mary Jean Coyne, who retired after 22 years of service! Mary Jean has graciously returned to the school recently to help as a substitute teacher (thank you so much!). Mary Jean is also a truly beloved member of the Ruth Washburn community, and we also hope to continue to see her smiling face at the school very often!

Over the years, Mary Jean taught many classes at Ruth Washburn, including Young 3s, Middle 3s, Older 3s, Mixed Age, Older 2s, and Hummingbirds. She also supported Early Morning Care, served as the Afternoon Explorers Supervisor, and taught Wee Explorers. Mary Jean attended Kansas State University and PPCC.

Thank you so much Mary Jean and we are so glad to continue to see you at the school!





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## STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

Our staff members are doing amazing things in the Ruth Washburn and broader communities! Here are a couple highlights for this year.

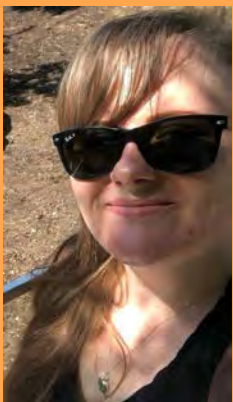
-Leighann – achieved her certification as a Forest and Nature Preschool teacher. She will use this new knowledge to support her position as Lead Teacher of the Crickets and Chickadees this year.

-Tyler – is completing his second year of an apprenticeship program and is the lead teacher for the Sprouts class. Tyler continues to enhance his knowledge and expertise in early childhood education. We are so lucky to have Tyler as part of our teaching team!

-Sheli – in addition to her role at Ruth Washburn as the lead teacher of the Hummingbirds class, Sheli continues to support her local community by working with the Social Emotional Wellness Coalition (S.E.W.) in the greater Monument, CO area. The group works to support the social and emotional health of youth in the region.

-Christina – began her second year as the Lead Teacher of the Owls class and also completed her yoga teacher training course! She hopes to utilize her new skills this year with her students!

Thank you to ALL of our staff for making Ruth Washburn amazing!



# FINANCIALS

	\$ Dollars	% of Total
Total Income	\$ 576,204.08	
Tuition	\$ 398,448.40	69%
Fundraising	\$ 80,426.51	14%
PPP loan (forgiveable)	\$ 80,600.00	14%
Misc Income	\$ 16,729.17	3%



	\$ Dollars	% of Total
Total Expenses	\$ 525,045.40	
Payroll w/ Taxes	\$ 401,676.78	77%
Profes/Bank Fees	\$ 26,310.31	5%
Maint/Utilities	\$ 21,451.78	4%
Mortgage Interest	\$ 4,041.15	1%
Supplies	\$ 14,385.07	3%
Depreciation	\$ 21,404.28	4%
Misc exp/insurance	\$ 35,776.03	7%



Fundraising	Income	Expense	Net
Auction	\$ 32,495.00	\$ 11,600.58	\$ 20,894.42
One-time Gift	\$ 27,839.00	\$ -	\$ 27,839.00
Annual Appeal	\$ 16,001.97	\$ 561.02	\$ 15,440.95
Grocery Cards	\$ 2,268.48		\$ 2,268.48
Other	\$ 6,837.57	\$ 1,002.95	\$ 5,834.62
	\$ 85,442.02	\$ 13,164.55	\$ 72,277.47



\*\*\*These numbers include a PPP loan (forgivable) in the amount of \$80,600. This along with families donating back tuition for last school year, kept us afloat during the shut down.



RWCNS