

**BUILDING AN**

**ENDOWMENT FOR**

**CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL**



## A WORD FROM THE

## HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear CCS Community,

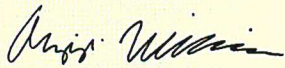
Joining the CCS Community has been a joy! At this momentous time in the history of the school, I am honored to be caretaking the mission of education for democracy.

Despite recent attacks on a school's ability to teach accurate and affirming pedagogy, at Children's Community School, we believe that for education to be effective and relevant, the makeup of the school must reflect the society we live in. Having students and families at our school representing a multitude of perspectives and backgrounds allows for the use of the framework "windows and mirrors". Windows are the insights into the life experiences of people different from us, and mirrors are positive reflections of the identities we each hold. To be meaningful contributors to society, our students need to be able to have empathy for those who are different from them and compassion for themselves as fallible humans. It's simply crucial for our school to offer both of these insights to all of our students.

In order for Children's Community School to offer that opportunity, tuition assistance must be robust. The work CCS has been doing for 40 years to make sure students are well prepared to participate in the diverse democracy of our society must continue. This endowment, unusual for an independent elementary school, will be devoted to ensuring that financial aid is institutionalized to ensure access to education for democracy for future CCS students.

Thank you for your support of Children's Community School.

Warmly,



Azizi Williams, Head of School



## A WORD FROM

## OUR FOUNDER

Dear CCS Community,

Though I have retired from CCS, it is always in my heart, every moment of every day. I am grateful, and it is such a pleasure to be part of this endowment campaign as an Honorary Co-Chair.

40 years ago, Leni Jackson and I didn't think about the distant future. We thought about teachers, curriculum, students, and whose turn it was to sweep up! Today, I'm proud that CCS stands as a beacon in Los Angeles ensuring that education for democracy is alive and well. Our mission is more relevant than ever, and this work only happens if the student body reflects the diversity of the world. Having an economically diverse school community will be central to our success in educating students in the future to be active, responsible citizens of a democracy.

I want students from all backgrounds to have the opportunity to mature and thrive in this very special school, and I want those CCS students to enter the world as adults ready to ensure that our democracy is strong and flourishing. This campaign can further the dream Leni and I along with those first parents had in 1981 - a school for all kinds of kids and every kind of family, that values each as an individual who will make important and creative contributions to their communities and the survival of the planet.

Thank you for your support of Children's Community School.

Love,



Neal Wrightson, Founding Head of School  
Honorary Co-Chair, 40th Anniversary Endowment Campaign







## OUR MISSION



Children’s Community School prepares children to be active citizens in a democracy. You’ve experienced it, as a student, as a parent, or as a friend of the school. You know that at every step we relate study to life. You believe, and we believe that education ought to prepare each and every student to take part in shaping their own future—and the future of our society.

Education is about challenge—in thought and in action. Our school values awareness, individuality, and independent thought over standardized curriculum and testing. We took the model from John Dewey, a pioneer in the philosophy of progressive education and applied it as a way of being. The ability of our students to internalize and actualize this method of holistic inquiry is what sets us apart. Our emphasis on these core principles is what drives our students to become active and engaged members of a democratic society. We champion our community, and in turn, our community champions this way of engaging in the world. We believe the world is – and will be – better for it.





**AT THE CENTER OF IT ALL**

**ARE OUR TEACHERS...**



For over forty years, CCS teachers have observed and honored each student as individuals within the school community by supporting perseverance and independent growth. They continue to foster the energetic passion that drives children by modeling joy, love, and patience. They promote democracy and equity within the classroom, the school, and the community.

As you know from your time here, our teachers also strive for a communicative and collaborative relationship with families in order to best support students. They demonstrate a compassionate, open-minded, and brave approach in relating to children and adults. They remain flexible when working with families, celebrating the diverse backgrounds and perspectives that are represented within our community. They are always ready to share their expertise in child development in support of children and families.







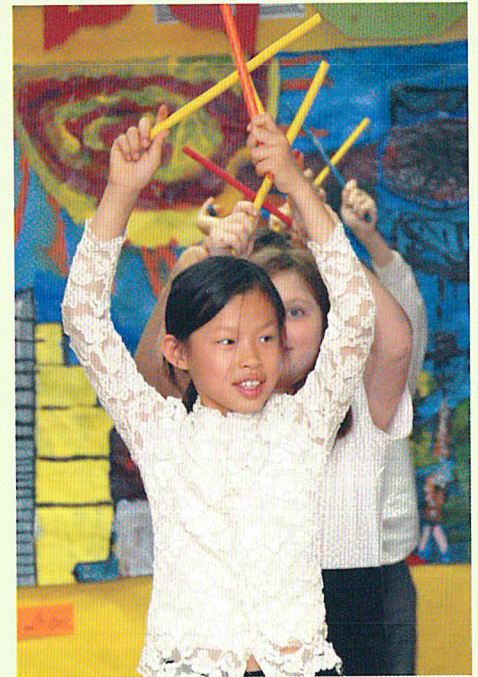
# WALKING THE WALK

Our school's reputation is well-earned (and hard-earned). We're not graduating children who all fit a particular mold and attend a specific middle school. We cherish our reputation for persistent adherence to principles – principles like fairness, justice, and open-minded inquiry.

We are unwavering in our mission. You know from your time here that our attention is on the individual needs of students and the abiding belief in a diverse school community. The school treats everyone with dignity and respect without regard to income, zip code, or professional achievement. At CCS, compassion and integrity are the overriding goals that guide the staff and the community.

**"CCS TAUGHT US HOW TO DO CONFLICT RESOLUTION AT A VERY EARLY AGE, AND THIS IS SOMETHING THAT I DO EVERY DAY IN MY JOB."**

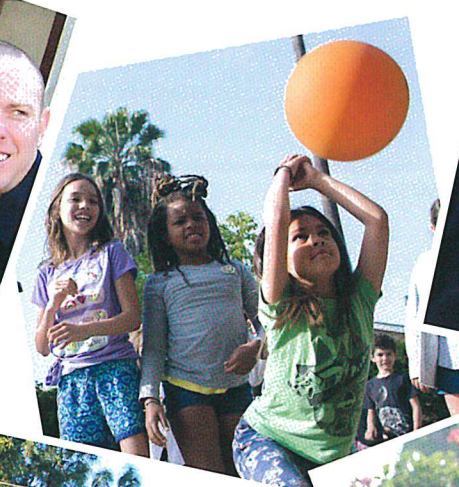
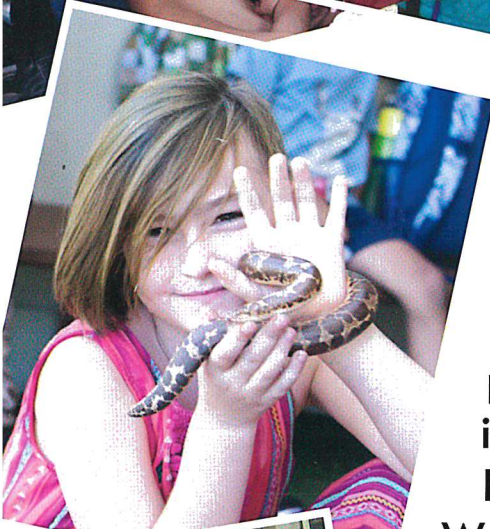
– Ross Erlich (CCS '94), Criminal Defense Attorney



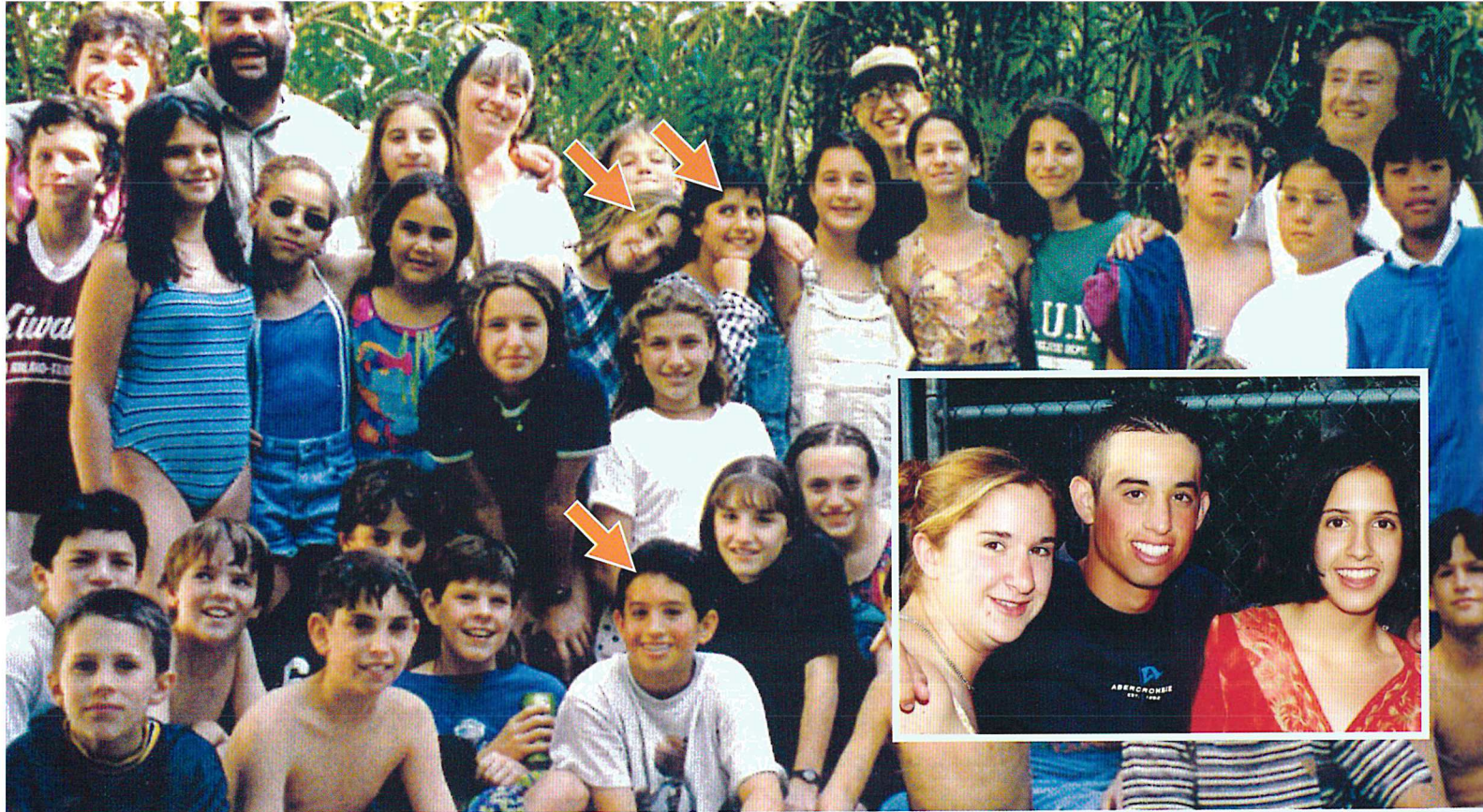




As an urban elementary school, we define diversity broadly to include race, religion, family makeup, learning style, and personality. But economic diversity in particular makes CCS unique and has been valued since its founding. We provide education for democracy to all the kinds of families that make Los Angeles the vibrant metropolis it is.













# THE CCS ALUM

As students evolve and mature during their time here, CCS nourishes the heart as well as the mind. We measure our students' successes by how well they thrive once they have gone out into the world. Our alumni serve as a source of great pride and profound inspiration.

**"CCS TEACHES YOU HOW TO LEARN. YOU LEARN HOW TO ASK QUESTIONS AND HOW TO TALK TO TEACHERS. IT FOSTERS AN INTEREST IN JUST KNOWING THINGS BECAUSE IT'S GOOD TO KNOW THINGS - NOT TO DO WELL ON A TEST OR TO WRITE A REPORT BUT BECAUSE IT'S GOOD TO HAVE WELL-ROUNDED KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD."**

– Olivia Wood (CCS '09),  
Pomona College ('19)

### CCS GRADUATES WILL...

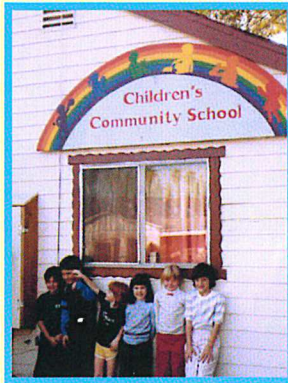
-  Seek intellectual challenge and growth
-  Possess a deep and complex understanding of the world
-  Know how to be a good friend
-  Be active and informed participants in our democracy
-  Advocate for themselves and others
-  Make and appreciate art



# OUR STORY

1981

CCS Founded by  
Neal Wrightson & Leni Jacksen



1987

1st Graduating  
Class

1996

Leni Retires

1999

Acquisition of  
Erwin Street  
property



2002

Inaugural Children's Arts  
Institute summer program



2013

Co-Host National  
Progressive Education  
Network Conference  
in Los Angeles

2018

CAIS & NAIS Accredited



2022

Endowment  
Campaign Begins

1986

Acquisition  
of Sylvan  
Street property



1991

Major Classroom  
Remodel



1997

Inaugural Van Nuys  
Health Fair & Family Festival

2000

Office Remodel



2007

New Building &  
Library Remodel

2017

Playground  
Installation



2021

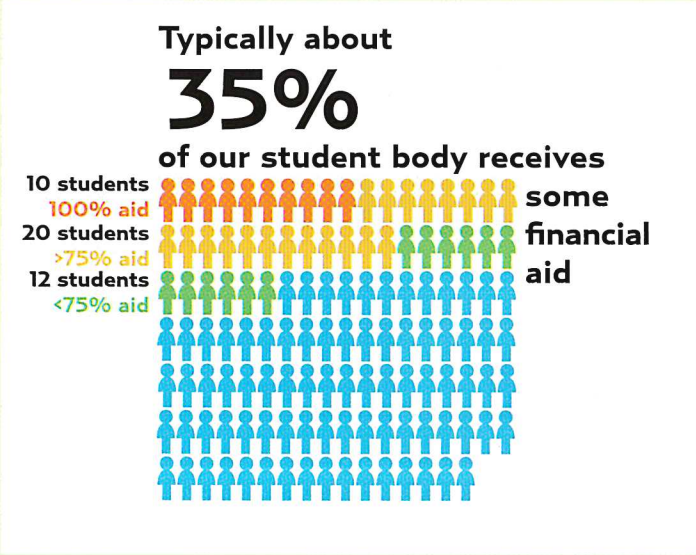
Neal Retires and  
Azizi Williams  
appointed HOS



# TUITION ASSISTANCE:

## ALWAYS A PART OF CCS

Over the last 40 years, Children’s Community School has educated almost 800 students. In that time, **over 30%** have received financial aid.



### WHAT ARE OUR FINANCIAL AID PRIORITIES?

Families from our community, single parent families, and families that increase the diversity of the CCS community.

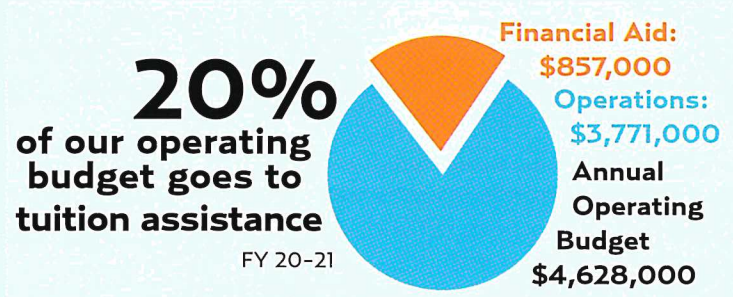






# HOW DOES THE ENDOWMENT SUPPORT

# FINANCIAL AID?







**PROVIDING FOR**

**TOMORROW'S STUDENTS**



Until this moment, our school has never had an endowment – a situation that has left CCS vulnerable to unexpected economic changes which can impact admissions goals and financial aid capacity.

While elementary school endowments vary from the low five- to seven-figure range, endowments intended specifically for financial aid are virtually nonexistent at this level.

Your gift to the Endowment Campaign is an investment in the future—an investment that makes a profound difference in the lives of both our current community and the eager students who would not otherwise be able to attend the school. Diversity and accessibility were woven into the fabric of our school from day one; this is our opportunity to build upon the mission we first articulated four decades ago.

A robust endowment will ensure that the financial aid program remains strong enough to withstand a volatile economy. This stability strengthens the enduring culture of the school and allows us to say together: **We will give our students the tools and financial support they require to excel, no matter the need that may arise.**



**SCHOOL ISN'T**

**JUST A COMMUNITY,**

**IT'S AN OPPORTUNITY**





# ENSURE ACCESS NURTURE DEMOCRACY ENDOW CCS



As we celebrate our 40th anniversary, this is the right time for the CCS community to come together to secure resources for the future. To that end, we have launched a campaign to build a 5 million dollar endowment. Our initial focus is to provide sustainable resources for our current financial aid needs. When the endowment reaches five million dollars, these funds will generate enough support for seven CCS students to attend school at no cost. As the endowment grows through new gifts and returns on investment, more funds will become available for tuition assistance.

The CCS endowment will guarantee the school's ability to serve the community for generations to come. It ensures that our alumni have a touchstone to look back on – an educational experience that taught them to be responsible





citizens, and an educational experience that will continue to be available for the students of the next forty years.

The strength of our school includes a new, energetic Head of School, a dedicated Board of Directors, a well-conceived plan for growth and sustainability, and a supportive community. It rests on a forty-year track record of providing quality progressive education in a nurturing environment. These assets position us well for this endowment campaign. The achievement of our long-range vision is only possible through significant investment from new and longtime members of the CCS community. Your generosity has always defined the values we seek to nurture in our students. Whether you are an incoming kindergarten family, an outgoing sixth grade family, a past parent, grandparent, alumnus(a), or a friend who values CCS and our mission, we ask you to invest in strengthening the Children's Community School today and for generations to come.



## HELP US OPEN THE SCHOOL DOORS WIDER.







Enrich  
Nurture  
Endow

**CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

14702 Sylvan Street,  
Van Nuys, California 91411

818.780.6226  
ccsteaches.org