

PRESCHOOL OF THE ARTS 2023-2024 YEAR END SUMMARY

DEAR *PSA* COMMUNITY,

Dynamic organizations do not fear self-examination. They look carefully and with intensity at all of the working pieces, determining what needs to be retooled or rebooted. Preschool of the Arts is a dynamic organization, willing to look at foundational and functional standards and structures, ready to move the organization forward. This year has been one of forward-thinking, dreaming, hoping, and planning.

Our administration has prioritized the values and mission of Preschool of the Arts, examining and reworking our mission and values. Through this renewal, we have also created a vision forward, embracing the training and development of our teachers, renovating our hiring practices, and defining staff positions. We have our eyes set on remodeling our

kitchen and creating a teaching component to our food program, investing in the preparation of our staff to be leaders in Reggio-inspired education, and collaborating and advocating with our community and partners to secure the future and quality of early childhood educational funding.

Preschool of the Arts has an incredibly long history of providing exceptional education and care and doing so in innovative and child-centered ways. We will continue to hold that responsibility close to our hearts, embracing our tradition while always preparing for the future.

IN PEACE, Dr. Penny Robbins

HIGHLIGHTS and GOALS

Accomplishments of the year, and visions of the future



BELONGING

All are welcome here.

RELATIONSHIPS

Together, our community thrives.

LISTENING

We have the courage to listen.

AESTHETICS

We design environments with intention.

EXPRESSION

We celebrate the joy of creativity.

NEW MISSION + VALUES

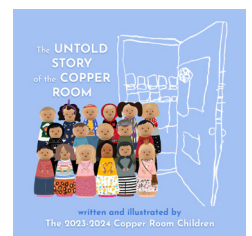
Over the summer, our Pedagogical Specialists led our whole community in a thoughtful process to revisit and rewrite our mission statement and update our guiding principles. Preschool of the Arts remains a Reggio Emilia-inspired school, and a place of joy and learning for young children and the adults who love them. We are also continually learning and growing, and this reflection led us to our new mission statement:

At Preschool of the Arts, our mission is to nurture open-minded and open-hearted individuals who learn alongside one another and embrace the world with compassion, creativity, wonder, and joy.

As part of this process, we identified our core values as a school. Our new values - belonging, relationships, listening, aesthetics, and expression - are at the heart of who we are here at PSA. All of us, children and adults, are part of this learning journey. We believe that children are powerful and competent learners and that they learn best in thoughtfully prepared and engaging environments by educators who are loving, enthusiastic, joyful, and careful listeners.

PROJECT WORK

As a Reggio Emilia-inspired school, our teachers are always looking for ways to follow the children's lead when developing their curriculum. Two projects that stood out this year were the Cloud Room's tiger exploration and the Copper Room's book. Ask any of the Kindergarteners in the Cloud Room about tigers, and you will hear all about how they rescued a tiger - and you might be lucky enough to hear their tiger fact rap song! In the Copper Room, the children wrote and illustrated a book featuring the Copper Room itself as a main character. In our totally unbiased opinion, the book is a smashing success!

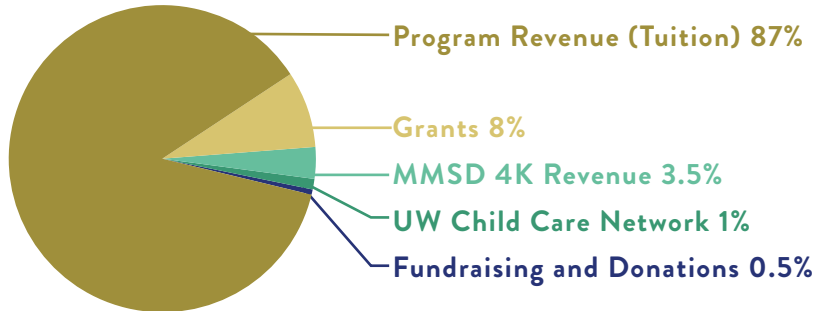


INVESTING IN TEACHERS

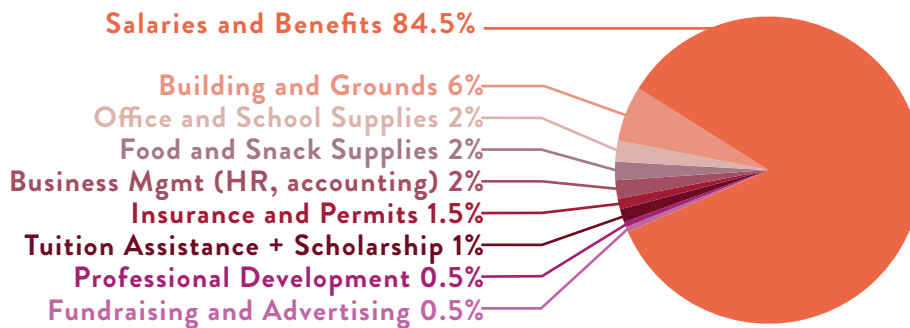
We anticipate the 24-25 school year will be the last with regular grant funding through the Child Care Counts program. While these funds last, we are committed to our staff. We have earmarked \$20,000 for professional development which is more than double our historical budget. We want to send staff to NAREA (North American Reggio Emilia Alliance) conferences and other early childhood conferences, invite speakers to our school, and all around invest in our staff. We believe that spending on professional development is one of the best ways we can energize and inspire our staff to deepen their practice.

BY THE NUMBERS

income - \$4,528,339



expenses - \$4,077,976



Looking back at the 2023-24 school year, we are pleased and more than a little bit surprised with our financial picture. When we created our budget for the year, we were preparing for the Child Care Counts funding to end in January 2024, and our focus was on ways to carefully manage without this monthly grant income. However, in late fall, Governor Evers extended the Child Care Counts funding through June 2025, giving the school a much bigger cushion than anticipated.

With this unexpected windfall, we overspent our budget in ways aligned with our mission and values, particularly the relationships we have with staff and families. Once we determined that we were indeed facing a surplus, we very intentionally spent nearly double what we had budgeted for tuition assistance. Between the Debbie Hemb Tuition Assistance fund and our scholarship program, we spent a record \$41,000 - our highest amount to date.

Teachers are the heart of what we do. Even with our conservative initial budget, we did plan

on bonuses for staff, but with the continued Child Care Counts funding, we were able to increase the amount each teacher received. We also doubled our planned spending on DEI focused professional development, including inviting Dr. Erica Buchanan-Rivera to lead us in a number of workshops, including one for our families. We are proud despite a challenging field, our retention rates for staff remain high.

Our careful approach to financial management has also allowed us to build a strong reserve fund to ensure long-term stability. This investment will allow us to continue to improve our infrastructure and program without compromising our financial health. Many schools in our area have not been so fortunate, and Madison continues to face a child care shortage. The success of PSA is a reflection of the hard work and dedication of our staff, the support of our families, and the vision of the Board of Directors. We look forward to remaining an advocate of early child education for years to come!

