

# Joy Relationships Creativity Exploration

*Our Vision for the Future:*

*St. John's Episcopal Preschool will continue to lead by expanding the impact of our unique, Reggio-inspired, early childhood program that develops confident, joyful learners. We will strengthen engagement among children, families, and teachers and create opportunities to promote and grow our program and the value of early childhood education.*

Dear St. John's families,

This fall we kicked off a year-long celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. John's Episcopal Preschool. As we look ahead to our actual birthday on March 4, 2017, we took the time to reflect on the past and celebrate the growth of our small school over the last two decades. While we may not have increased in size during these years, we have achieved significant milestones and program expansion.

At our core lies the continuous study of the educational philosophy, which comes from the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. This inspires us to grow in our work with children and adults every day. In keeping with these values, we are proud of our expansion since our founding in 1997 in a number of significant areas.

- Program Expansion:
  - Kids' Workshop – after school program through 3:00 p.m.
  - St. John's Summer Program – open to children 2.5 – 9 years of age
  - Early Childhood Educator Series (ECES) – outreach and promotion of our program to other educators
- Continuing Professional Development:
  - Hosting five conferences to further the study of the Reggio Emilia Philosophy
  - Teacher participation in study tours in Reggio Emilia, Italy, and at North American Reggio Emilia Alliance (NAREA) Summer Conferences
  - Collaboration with Amelia Gambetti, Liaison for Consultancy to Schools and Co-Chair of the International Network, Reggio Children, for nine years
  - Weekly collaboration with Jen Azzariti, Studio Consultant and Pedagogista
- Development of Internal Systems:
  - Adoption of Policies and Procedures - Admissions, Tuition, Maternity Leave, Speaking Honoraria, Whistleblower, Pension Program, Investment, Conflict of Interest, Grievances
  - Incorporation as a Washington, D.C. nonprofit in 2012

And now, as we celebrate our past, we are also poised to look ahead to the future through the finalization of a Strategic Plan recently adopted by our Board of Directors. The Strategic Plan includes an articulation of our core values, a statement of vision, and an identification of the priorities we will study and implement over the next five years. The Strategic Plan is meant to be a guide, and we expect that specific goals and actions may evolve as we look more closely at the issues under consideration and engage with our community. It is our goal to build on and protect the things that make St. John's great, while encouraging the same growth and evolution we've achieved these first 20 years.

We developed this plan in partnership with the Board, the teachers and staff, and our wonderful parent and alumni communities. We are enormously grateful for your part in the strategic planning process and excited to begin our examination of these priorities. We are eager to learn together and to set forth a plan for the future of the preschool. The Strategic Plan can be found at our website at (<http://www.stjohnsdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/SJEP-Strategic-Plan-June-7-2016-for-publication.pdf> )

Thanks to you, our dedicated families, teachers, and board of directors, both past and present, we find our school to be vibrant and strong as we enter our 20<sup>th</sup> year.

Last year we asked a small group of children to study the photos on the wall that were taken during our 15<sup>th</sup> birthday year. One child said, "This is everything the kids loved and enjoyed. The school is made for people who really like to have fun and have friends in a place of wonder." He went on to say, "You have to be honest. School is about learning new things. People who have this school are lucky. People who have this school should be grateful. Be honest."

And so for now, we plan to live out our core values in the years ahead...to have fun and friends and learn new things! We will be lucky and grateful and honest! Here's to St. John's – and all of you who made us who we are today. A happy 20<sup>th</sup> birthday to all of us!

With appreciation and in friendship,

Marley Joyce; Rich Dyer and Adrian Piets, Co-Chairs  
Strategic Planning Committee: Austen Holderness, Laura Scanlon,  
Martha Webb, Bruce Weindruch, Dorothy Williams



**St. John's Episcopal Preschool  
Strategic Plan  
June 7, 2016**

## **ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL PRESCHOOL CORE VALUES**

St. John's Preschool is inspired by the Municipal Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centers of Reggio Emilia, Italy, which provide the philosophical foundation for our values and actions.

### **Joy**

Our community lives out the words of Loris Malaguzzi, founder of the Reggio Emilia Approach, "Nothing Without Joy." We believe that joy is the foundation for living and learning.

### **Relationships**

At St. John's we value authentic, empathetic, and transparent relationships with people, materials, and our environment. We build and strengthen relationships with care and intentionality.

### **Creativity**

We value creativity as a process and a quality of thought, rooted in a mindset of growth and in openness. Creativity extends beyond the classroom into all aspects of our organization.

### **Exploration**

We value exploration as a dynamic extension of curiosity and inquiry that allows us to go beyond wonder to action. As we explore, we take risks, embrace complexity, and make meaning of the world around us, both within our school and in the greater community.

## ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL PRESCHOOL VISION

St. John's Preschool will continue to lead by expanding the impact of our unique, Reggio-inspired, early childhood program that develops confident, joyful learners. We will strengthen engagement among children, families, and teachers and create opportunities to promote and grow our program and the value of early childhood education.

## ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL PRESCHOOL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### Commit to Family and Community Engagement in Support of St. John's Preschool

**Rationale:** The strategic planning process revealed a deep love and support for St. John's Preschool and our connected community of children, families, and teachers—past and present. We will increase awareness of our educational program and offerings to strengthen our culture and to generate support for our strategic goals and financial needs for the future.

**Goals:**

- **Deepen Understanding of St. John's Preschool's Unique Reggio-Inspired Program**
- **Promote Transparency of and Support for Financial Realities and Needs**
- **Strengthen Governance in Support of Strategic Implementation**

### Examine Our Model and Practices for Long-Term Mission Sustainability

**Rationale:** As we plan for the future of St. John's Preschool, we will review our educational model, policies, and procedures for mission alignment and sustainability. Taking into consideration the ever-changing economic and educational landscape, we will focus on how to make our small institution more nimble and deepen non-tuition revenue sources to support ongoing stability, while ensuring commitment to our Core Values.

**Goals:**

- **Review the Academic Program and Structures to Increase Flexibility and Options**
- **Refine Admissions Goals and Practices to Support Stability**
- **Actively Manage and Steward St. John's Preschool's Financial Strength and Resources**
- **Seek New, Non-Tuition Revenue Sources, Leveraging Our Strengths as a Leader in Early Childhood Education**
- **Align Our Human Capital Talent Needs With Our Strategic Goals to Ensure Successful Implementation**

**Investigate Opportunities for St. John's Preschool Growth**

**Rationale:** St. John's Preschool has grown and changed over the past twenty years and we are committed to examining how to build on our strengths as a community while maintaining our Core Values. We will embark on a process to uncover what type of growth, if any, best supports our vision while maintaining our culture and the nurturing experience for the children, families, and teachers. Expansion will be considered as a way to build upon St. John's Preschool's success working with young children, increase opportunities to learn within the community, and support our financial and programmatic sustainability.

**Goals:**

- **Examine Possibilities for Future Growth of St. John's Preschool**
- **Consider Opportunities to Partner with Schools Seeking to Adopt or Advance Their Understanding of the Reggio Approach**

## **Increase the Outreach and Influence of the Early Childhood Educator Series**

**Rationale:** The Early Childhood Educator Series (ECES) is a powerful lever that St. John's Preschool can use to strengthen our educational practices and increase impact in the local community and beyond, with programming focused on sharing the Reggio philosophy and our Core Values. A larger ECES offering provides St. John's Preschool's teaching staff with valuable professional development embedded in practice that supports their work with the children inside the classroom and outside St. John's Preschool as they promote early childhood education research and practices to support all children.

### **Goals:**

- **Strengthen Our Educational Program and Staff Engagement through Professional Development Opportunities**
- **Expand Access to St. John's Preschool's Approach to the Reggio Philosophy in order to Promote Early Childhood Education**