Children’s Winter Garden with White Wing School - Annual Report 2018-2019

**Members**: Barbara Halevi (Co-Chair), Tiffany Holmes (Co-Chair), Mike Brown (Treasurer), Caitlin Allen (Secretary), Marcie Shoneman, Ellen Fisher, Victoria Agnew, Chris Clanin (Director), Allison Palm (UUCN, Executive Director/Minister)

**Overview**: 2018-2019 brought with it continued stability and growth in part due to the strong foundation that has been built over the last few years.

The current board continues to function in more of an advisory capacity than as a working board. This year we have updated and approved both the board’s Bylaws and Conflict of Interest policies, thanks in major part to our co-chair Barbara who is a lawyer by day. We have also worked to standardize staff evaluations and timelines for annual salary increases. We have utilized the Google Drive repository to ensure that we are meeting the milestones planned for each monthly meeting.

The school has seen enrollment continue to grow. The school had 77 students enrolled in 2018-2019. For 2019-2020, we currently have 65 students registered (up 5% from this time last year) and registration is still open. Each year the board (with the director’s advice) examines the programs being offered and adjusts as needed to keep enrollment high and meet the changing needs of parents. Examples include offering an early drop-off option, and offering an additional class for 3 year olds this year to accommodate a large demand for that age group.

We ended the fiscal year of 2018 with a $23K surplus. We are currently on track to end our 2019 fiscal year with a surplus as well. The surplus in funds provides much needed stability and a financial cushion for the school, which is particularly important when anticipating a future downturn year. The additional funds have also allowed additional programming to be available to the school (such as a music program and other enrichment projects), the director to attend the NAEYC Annual conference, and the school to contribute to the improvements to the outdoor spaces. For the 2020 fiscal year, the school has increased its annual contribution (in lieu of rent) to UUCN for the upcoming year to assist in the Church’s budget gap. It was only a few years ago, when the school did not have adequate enrollment and was unable to properly budget for the next year, including difficulty offering contracts to the staff. With a surplus, we are now better positioned if we have a downturn year.

The school year started out on a high note, as the front playground surface was updated with playground safe mulch. Adequate drainage work was also completed to resolve the areas of dirt and mud which plagued the kid’s shoes (and the classroom floors). The playground safe mulch is a great improvement to the space and the dirt/mud is no longer an issue. This was a joint effort with the property management team with strong leadership provided by our own landscaping expert, Ellen Fisher. The children and teachers love utilizing this area even more now.

The CWG-WWS staff continue to grow and add programming for the students. Examples include: Adding in a regular music teacher this spring (which will be expanded for the entire year next year); Hosting the Harmonica Saints, the Audubon Society and Animal Adventures.

While this year was one of many highs there were some issues along the way. The beginning of the school year saw many plumbing issues. Multiple sinks leaked, resulting in rusty cabinets and moldy surfaces. After several tries, the leaks have been addressed for now; however, the sinks in the classroom are on the school’s wish list of items to be replaced.

In another joint effort with the property team, the upstairs playground pea stones were replaced with playground safe mulch this winter. This addressed a longstanding request by the school to remove the pea stones, which were a safety issue (causing multiple falls) and a nuisance for the school and church members using that parking lot. With the new mulch installed, this playground is now utilized more often.

The relationship between the school staff, the board, and UUCN continues to strengthen its bonds. A clear example of this is when the heat went out in the school wing during the cold month of February. The parties involved did a wonderful job identifying what needed to be done and to ensure that the school remained operating within regulations. While it took some reorganizing to move school supplies to the auditorium and a lot of UUCN volunteers it all worked out. The teachers made the best of it and created a wonderful area for the children who loved this adventure in a new space.

There is one major staff change for this upcoming year. We have to say goodbye to Bonnie Murphy as she is moving to sunny Florida. Chris Clanin is rearranging staff to best fit the needs of the incoming classes. There will be a need to hire a part time teacher to fill the gaps and that is currently in progress.

One board member, Marcie Shoneman, is stepping down at the start of this year, and one new board member is being added, Amanda Murray (CWG-WWS parent).

A special note as this year we Celebrate 25 years of Chris Clanin working at the school (including CWG prior to the merger). If you see her, please be sure to congratulate her and thank her for her dedicated service!