

## Children's Winter Garden with White Wing School - Annual Report 2020-2021

**Members:** Amanda Bonnette (Co-Chair), Tiffany Holmes (Co-Chair), Amanda Banner (Treasurer), Caitlin Allen (Secretary), Allison Annand, Kate Foster, Mallory Imlach, Ellen McCahon, Chris Clanin (School Director), Allison Palm (UUCN, Executive Director/Minister)

### **Overview:**

Preparations for the 2020-2021 school year began early. Much effort was put in over the summer by Chris Clanin and the Board to prepare for possible scenarios and uncertainties that could come in the new school year due to COVID. Chris met with other local preschool administrators to help each other plan. The church was awarded a PPP loan at the end of the 2019-2020 school year allowing us to keep on staff for the remainder last year and offer contracts for the next year. Enrollment dropped to 50 children, down from 78 the previous year, as many families elected to keep their children home. This ended up being just as well, as classroom capacity sizes needed to be reduced to allow for extra distancing and adherence to guidelines.

Chris stayed in constant contact with state and federal agencies as they issued their guidelines. She also worked with the board to update the parent handbook and create new COVID policies for travel restrictions, COVID testing, home quarantining, daily temperature taking, and mask wearing policies for adults and students. Families had to sign agreements to these new measures at the beginning of the year. All school COVID policies aligned with UUCN's policies. New procedures were created for curbside pick up and drop off to minimize contact between classes and prevent parents/visitors from coming into the building.

When in doubt, students and staff were always encouraged to stay home. However, the school did close three times to reduce the chances of COVID exposure. Once in October for two weeks, two days in early January (to extend quarantine for a possible exposure that happened just before holiday break), and then 5 days at the end of March and into early April. During each of these periods virtual lessons and school supplies were given to families to continue learning from home.

Chris pursued and was awarded a number of state and federal grants earning a total of \$72,000 in order to cover lost tuition monies and investments in new equipment such as cleaning supplies, touchless faucets, outdoor sinks, storage bins, and individual cubbies for all children to be able to keep their belonging separate. Investments were made to ensure that each child had their own sets of school supplies to minimize cross-contamination. Teachers were given additional salary to cover hours spent cleaning and sanitizing every item at the end of each day. The grant money along with the PPP loan resulted in us being able to have a balanced budget through this year even with the reduced enrollment.

Throughout these difficult times, the school remained committed to supporting our families. Three families were awarded a total of \$4,184 in scholarships. In March, UUCN members gave generously in support of the Donna Purkhiser and Gregory McDevitt Memorial Scholarship Fund providing \$3,596 for next year's scholarships. Chris and the board decided to hire UUCN's book keeper, Lori Bonnette, to handle the school's financials in order to streamline processes and align with the church accounting.

In keeping with the goal of providing a top-quality education that prepares students for school, a new math curriculum has been purchased to align with curriculum used in Nashua Public Schools. NAEYC certification meant to be renewed in 2019, postponed due to COVID, will be scheduled for the 2021-2022 school year. This rigorous and voluntary accreditation is earned by only 6% of early childhood programs in the US and takes much effort from all staff to achieve. Portfolios are ready and Chris attended their annual conference virtually this past fall.

Despite the challenges that came this year, the teachers, students, families, and staff found amazing and creative ways to have fun, connect, learn and grow together. Our students spent a lot of time playing outside when the weather was nice. They loved having their own trays of art supplies and playdough for activities. Families donated 50 bags of food to the Nashua Soup Kitchen and \$900 worth of gift cards to Nashua Children's Home around the holidays. Teachers adapted many traditions like the Open House and Holiday Concert into videos that were sent to the parents. New traditions were begun like a virtual field trip to the Aquarium. Right now, the students are working on learning songs including "Teach the World to Sing" to film as part of their virtual graduation.

Looking ahead to the coming year, registrations are surging with waiting lists now populating. We currently have 75 students signed up for next year. The board agreed to raises for all staff and to hiring another part time teacher assistant for the growing student body. \$18,000 of the NH CCRSP (Child Care Recovery and Stabilization Program) grant has been deferred to next year's budget to pay for additional time for teachers to clean.

This year the board welcomed new members Ellen McCahon (UUCN) and Mallory Imlach (parent). Tiffany Holmes (UUCN) has completed her term as co-chair and Amanda Banner (UUCN) will be taking on the co-chair role in the new year alongside Amanda Bonnette (parent). Parents Amanda Murray and Caitlin Allen completed their terms this year.