

# DIRECTIONS NEWSLETTER



SPRUCE  
STREET  
SCHOOL

SUMMER  
2019



NEWS from School to Community





**URBAN LEARNING**



**DIVERSITY**



**MULTI-AGE**

## **FOCUS ON ONGOING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

**Briel Schmitz, Head of School**



This year marks the tenth year with the same core teaching staff working together at Spruce Street School. In ten years, it is possible to build trust, depth and a deep connection to the mission of the school. In ten years, a program can become robust and remarkable. In ten years, it is also possible to become rigid and stagnant. Through intentional decisions, such as supporting new teachers through the intern teacher position (in these same ten years 18 new teachers have worked with us!), and teachers teaching at new levels, we have furthered the mission and values of the school through change and growth, resisting the comfort of the familiar.

Another way to continuously improve the work of the school is through the accreditation process outlined by the Northwest Association of Independent Schools (NWAIS). In 2015 a team of peers from other NWAIS schools spent four days on site, getting to know our program and focusing on the NWAIS accreditation standards. In 2016 we received a Visiting Team Report, which provided commendations and outlined recommendations for us to work on moving forward. This school year, three years into this process, we stopped and responded to all of the recommendations provided in the 2016 report.

As part of the accreditation process, we submitted an official Response Report to NWAIS this winter. It documented our progress on different goals and recommendations, and provided details on our ongoing work as a reflective and analytical school community.

I am pleased to share that the NWAIS Accreditation Committee approved our Response Report, stating that "It was clear that substantial steps had been taken to address the major recommendations and that Spruce Street [School] is well situated to continue on a successful path."

Over the past ten years, we have utilized the stability within the staff to build creatively on a strong foundation. We know that next year will bring inevitable change as we say goodbye to moving on families (and to Guy Fineout) and simultaneously welcome new staff, families and students into the community. We are determined to continue to improve, continue to reflect, and continue to imagine possibilities for the future in order to take advantage of every opportunity, internal or external, to improve Spruce Street School.



**SPRUCE  
STREET  
SCHOOL**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Spruce Street School is a nurturing educational community that instills in a broad range of children the social, emotional, and intellectual skills for lifelong participation in a diverse society.

# SEEDING OUR FUTURE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN, A HUGE SUCCESS

By Alexa Carver, Campaign Co-Chair



Our team is honored to announce that we have finished the Seeding our Future Capital Campaign. We want to take this opportunity to thank all of you in the broader community for your generosity. All of us at Spruce Street School are so grateful for the many ways you have supported the school over the years, and we are most grateful in this moment that you allowed us to achieve our goal.

Many members of our community came together in this effort to help take the next step toward making our North Star Goal—to *become the most financially accessible school of our kind in the area*—a reality. For a school of our size to accomplish this goal—raising a significant sum for a concept—was a tremendous feat, not unnoticed in the Seattle education community. As we almost double the national average for the number of students to whom we offer financial aid, we are setting a stake in the ground around our value of socio-economic diversity in our community.

Our community is thriving because of your generosity; funds from the Seeding Our Future Capital Campaign have already benefitted families in our community and will continue to do so for the future of our school. Our deepest thanks to everyone who met with us, shared their stories, and joined us in this campaign.

If you are still hoping to Seed Our Future it is not too late! We would love to recognize all of our donors to the campaign with an installation in the entryway of the school. A pledge before August 15, 2019, will ensure that you can be recognized as a supporter of this important effort. It is with gratitude that we close this campaign and continue to celebrate our amazing community that has made this dream a reality.

## STAFF

Briel Schmitz  
Head of School

Guy Fineout  
Assistant Head of School and  
Admissions Director

Jane Davis-Ward  
Business Manager

Megan Schmidt  
Development Director

Shannon Orton  
Communications Director

Capri Arias  
Administrative Manager and  
Diversity Recruitment Director

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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# GUY FINEOUT MOVES ON

By Megan Schmidt, Development Director



In late May, Spruce Street School was honored to host Assistant Head of School Guy Fineout's retirement party. Guy has been a pillar in the independent educational community of Seattle for the past 40 years. We have had the pleasure of having him at our school for his final ten. Here is a snapshot of his career:

Spruce Street School 2009 - 2019

The Little School 1978-1987, 2001-2009

The Valley School 1999-2001

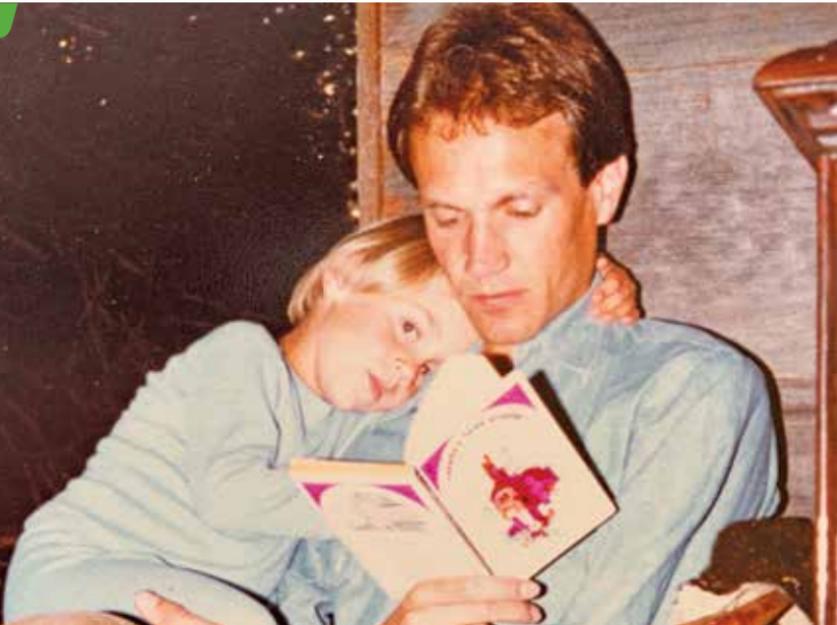
Puget Sound Primary School 1987-1999

The party was a wonderful afternoon filled with memories, Spruce Street School families, teachers and staff, and friends and former colleagues of Guy. We heard from three speakers from different points in Guy's career: Sharon Wagner, now retired from the Puget Sound Primary School; Alice Hauschka from The Little School; and Daron Henry from Spruce Street School. All three charmed the crowd with tales of Guy biking to work, dazzling students, and of course fixing anything and everything. Daron's tribute to our friend, which rounded out the afternoon, had us all reaching for the Kleenex. Guy, we will miss your advice, dedication, handiwork and band-aid application.

We will always leave a ladder with your name on it!

Bon Voyage!

Guy with his son, Ethan



# SPRUCED UP ALLEY

Felipe Perez, Teacher



It all began with a trip to Pittsburgh.

In June of 2018, a group of Spruce Street School teachers traveled to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to attend the co-Learn Conference and present about our Community Connector writing project.

While there, many of us were struck by the amount of public art in Pittsburgh, especially the vibrant murals that line many of the city's alleys and side streets. We began to imagine creating our own mural near Spruce Street School; we knew it could be an amazing experience for our students, and that it would be a tangible, meaningful way to connect with our community. But how to make it happen?

In September 2018 we reached out to Kathleen Warren at Urban ArtWorks, a Seattle non-profit that provides opportunities for local youth and contemporary artists to work together to create public art. With her advice we began to form a plan: during our annual Arts Week in April, the students would paint a mural on the west side of our building and bring the alley to life.

Our plan was ambitious: we wanted to have the students start painting on a Monday, and complete the mural on Friday of the same week. This required a great deal of planning and preparation: we needed to get approval from our building's owners, prepare the surface and order supplies, and come up with design.

When thinking about the design, we wanted to include elements that were specific to Spruce Street School and would give our neighbors a glimpse into who we are and what we do. We also wanted to encourage passersby to stop and interact with the mural and connect with the school. The result is a 120-foot-long collection of images, starting with a group of trees on the left and ending with a sheaf of papers on the right.

Each student participated in painting the mural, and for many it was a highlight of the school year. They were delighted to be making art outside and making our city more beautiful. We all became more aware of how many people actually used the alley; many would stop and appreciate the art and ask questions. We also began to grasp how many people live and work in our neighborhood, and are able to see our little school from the towering office and apartment buildings above.

For several of the images, the perspective is such that a person can pose for a photo and appear to be part of the art. Marimba mallets, toppling tea cups, and William Shakespeare are among the images that portray what makes Spruce Street School special. We hope you have a chance to visit our [#SprucedUpAlley](#) and connect with the mural, our school, and our community.

#SprucedUpAlley





Class of 2012 **L-R:** Eli Jamieson, Owen DeArmond-McLeod, Alex Smith, Sasha Poll, Ashton Hamilton, Emily Rinn, Josh Teicher, Talia Carter, Clara Madenwald

# ALUMNI NEWS

Shannon Orton, Communications Director



Congratulations to the Moving On class of 2019! Our graduating class consisted of 19 students this year, and in their Moving On speeches each one shared their challenges, successes, and favorite parts from their time at Spruce Street School. We are so very proud of them! They will be attending a range of middle schools this fall, including The Bush School, Hamilton Middle School, The Northwest School, Seattle Academy, and University Prep. We look forward to hearing all about their adventures at their new schools.

In May we held one of our favorite events, our annual Alumni Dinner. Students from the classes of 2016 and 2012, who are graduating from middle and high school this spring, enjoyed dinner with current faculty while reminiscing about the past and sharing plans for the future. Many even stayed to see the oldest level's play, *Twelfth Night* and had fun remembering their own experiences in Shakespeare productions during their final years at Spruce Street School. Like this year's fifth graders, alumni from the class of 2012 will be attending a variety of schools this fall, including Chapman University, Lewis and Clark, Portland State University, Santa Clara University, Scripps College, University of Oregon, University of San Francisco, University of Washington, and Western Washington University. Others are choosing gap years and world travel. We wish them all the best in their next journeys!

If you are an alumni student please visit us on our fan page on Facebook or contact us at [alum@sprucestreetschool.org](mailto:alum@sprucestreetschool.org). You may also update us with your current contact information by taking our Alumni Survey, found as a link on our website on our Alumni page under Our Community. We look forward to hearing from you!

Class of 2016 **Front Row L-R:** Eli Poll, Asher Porad, Jackson Forebaugh, Owen Tarrant, DaoMing Chau, Sadie Ward, Ursula Tarrant, Ava Kent  
**Back Row L-R:** Theo Murray, Roman Stromberg, Seth Cunningham, Louis Bartlett, Julia Cappio, Meg Carver, Marlena Sheldon, Katharina Stromberg, Bronwen Pritchard, Logan Pierce



# SPRUCE STREET SCHOOL MOVING ON CLASS OF 2019



**L-R front:** Finn Carver, Niko Moussavi-Bock, Nolan Gerard, Max Myrick-Teske, Leo Senstra, Charlie Montagner, Katja Langhout  
**L-R back:** Gavin Calder, Oliver Forebaugh, Kai Callaghan, August Pierce, Liam Koenig, Elinor Thorsen Eckern, Izzie Powell, Fiona Powell, Savannah Zellers, Amari Bianco, Poppy Neukom, Vivienne Runberg

## FROM THEIR MOVING ON SPEECHES:

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My favorite activity at Spruce Street School is the Shakespeare plays. I love the them because I like the characters and their problems, the teamwork, the challenge and the language. And you have to do a lot of different things at the same time, like projecting your voice, enunciating, lines and cues, working together, and most of all, having fun.

**Katja Langout**

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A success for me here at school has been art. I especially loved the alley mural we did in Arts Week this year. It was really fun to paint a gigantic piece of art on our school and work as a team to get it done.

**Niko Moussavi Bock**

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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

Camp Seymour, Camp Kirby, and Fort Worden • **The Fall Festival** • The Polynesia Research Conference • **Reading Buddies** • Electives • **Publishing Parties** • Singing songs at All School Meeting • **Visiting Mirabella** • Cascade Park • **All of the plays: *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* and *The True Story of the Big Bad Wolf, Maui and the Sun, and Twelfth Night*** • Painting the mural during Arts Week • **Safety Patrol** • The Winter Walk • **Performing on the marimbas and making conversation at Elders' Tea** • **Creating the Community Connector** • **The Moving On students performing on the marimbas at Denny Park** • Pool Day