



ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020



Neighborhood School.
City Resources.
Global Reach.



Our Mission

Animated by the values of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Boston, the mission of Jackson Walnut Park is to inspire children to love learning, love God, and love one another. An inclusive Catholic school community committed to the flourishing of the whole child, we pursue academic excellence, promote service to others, and foster peace.

Core Values:

- Intellectual growth
- Community-building
- Love and service of neighbor
- Peaceful resolution of conflict
- Care for all God's creation





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Stephanie Marcucci
*Head of Walnut Park
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LETTER FROM THE HEADS OF SCHOOL

Dear JWP Community,

The 2019-20 school year was a year unlike any that we've seen in our lifetimes. The year began with several new faces joining the school community, exploring exciting ways to utilize our new Student Center (remember Pasta Night?), and with the promise of the future firmly in our sights.

Somewhere in January, we began to hear about this new virus and by mid-March, it was declared a pandemic and we suspended campus operations and transitioned to distance learning. Our amazing faculty adapted to remote teaching in a very short period of time, and by the end of the school year, we were creating innovative ways to maintain important traditions like our Spring Musical—The Wizard of Oz, our Growth and Learning assembly, an in-person Sixth Grade Graduation Ceremony, and an end-of-year car parade on our last day of school.

Despite our resilience, we had to cancel a number of Spring events that build community and play a central role in school fundraising, most notably our Annual Gala and Auction. The disappointment was felt most deeply by those who had worked so hard to plan the Gala, from securing the site, to soliciting donations for the auction, to organizing and cataloging all the donated items, and more! We are truly grateful for all of our volunteers—the Gala Committee, the PSA, Class Parents, and many others—and are awed by their indomitable spirit.

Families and friends of JWP dug deep to help direct more donations to the Annual Fund, many of them contributing for a second or even third time! The bottom line was that JWP transitioned to distance learning and finished the school year without having to furlough any full-time employees, so in caring for our students we also cared for our faculty and staff, ensuring consistency of student experience as we looked ahead to the next school year.

2019-20 was truly a community effort, and we are so grateful for all of the ways that every member of the JWP family contributed to making the challenging year a success.

Thank you!

Stephen Duffy
Head of Jackson School



Stephanie Marcucci
Head of Walnut Park Montessori



"FREE THE CHILD'S POTENTIAL,
AND YOU WILL TRANSFORM
HIM INTO THE WORLD."

- Maria Montessori



HONORING OUR TEACHERS



Both the 2019-20 and the 2020-21 school years promise to be years that we look back upon and remember how difficult and challenging they were and marvel at our teachers' accomplishments. The Spring of 2020 was a critical point of inflection because those first few weeks and months of educating during the pandemic would set the bar for teaching and learning at JWP for the following year. Our teachers took on this challenge and went above and beyond to create a learning and supportive classroom for the JWP students.



Psychologist and independent school consultant Dr. Michael Thompson (the same Dr. Thompson who spoke at our PSA event in February 2020) refers to the experience of educating in Spring of 2020 as a “grand experiment in distance learning.” He accentuates the word “experiment” because, before that time, few schools had ever needed to go fully remote for an extended period. However, despite the abrupt change in environment due to the pandemic, our teachers showcased a resilience and dedication that cannot be understated—adjusting both quickly and efficiently to accommodate and meet children's needs and those of their families.

At Walnut Park Montessori, our teachers prepare daily for a hands-on, in-person curriculum and then, in a blink of an eye, adjusted to an educational landscape that would be taught entirely at a distance and under the supervision of parents and family members. Despite the uncertainty of the time, Walnut Park teachers rallied together to quickly re-write their curriculum, include more technology, re-create classroom materials for at-home use, and connect with colleagues in the Montessori field to discuss best practices for the future.



Similarly, Jackson teachers promptly pivoted to an exclusively virtual environment by educating themselves on which platforms were user-friendly and effective for their K-6th grade level and learning to adjust expectations for this new educational landscape. While the early days of teaching in the pandemic were challenging, the Jackson faculty worked around the clock to ensure that the learning environment was as seamless and streamlined as possible, ensuring that no child or family would feel left behind or forgotten during a time of uncertainty.

Despite the change in the educational climate, JWP never stopped looking towards the future. We understood that the experiment in distance learning from the Spring would inform our planning for the summer and help us create and implement protocols for the highly anticipated school re-opening in September. As such, task forces of highly motivated Walnut Park and Jackson teachers were created. The groups focused on creating comprehensive distance learning plans, structuring better daily schedules, selecting educational apps specifically tailored to children's developmental needs and aptitudes, and establishing baseline expectations for improved distance learning experiences. After months of planning, teachers were confident that their plans served their students' best interests regardless of the classroom environment.

When faculty commit to working here at JWP, they commit not only to be educators but also to the mission and spirit of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, which call us to "...work for unity and reconciliation where there is brokenness, to help people become whole and holy, individually and together." Never was this commitment to our mission more evident than what we witnessed with our teachers last Spring. While the pandemic has changed the way we think about school and learning, we appreciate even more the value of a JWP education. Moreover, we affirmed that our teachers are at the heart of what we do and are an irreplaceable component of what makes JWP a special community!



JANE BURGOYNE

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER
35 YEARS AT JWP



Are great teachers always optimists? Yes, they must have the ability to look at a child's potential and bring forward their best possible future by embracing their skills and enhancing their knowledge in the classroom.

Jackson Walnut Park teacher, Jessie Friel, says of her colleague, Ms. Jane Burgoyne, "She always sees the bright side of problems and always knows how to solve any issue. I was lucky to be able to intern in her classroom. The most important lesson I learned was how to reach each individual learner in the classroom. Not every child learns the same, and Jane always recognized this in her classroom." Mrs. Friel noted that Ms. Burgoyne's kindergarten class enjoyed "movement during lessons, learning centers for children to select from, and fun activities." Those elements were part of the students' learning, which also featured the basics of reading, writing, and math.

Alumna Meghan Russell remembers her first-grade year as Ms. Burgoyne's student. When, by chance, years later, Meghan met Ms. Burgoyne in town, she decided that her own children must attend JWP "to experience the love of the teachers and the excellent educational foundation I had received. As a parent, it was comforting that my children would spend hours of their day with someone who genuinely cared for them as if they were her own child."

Teachers learn to use their own style to shape their students' classroom experiences. Ms. Russell remembers, "She never raised her voice, yet was able to control her classroom of the youngest students through her calm demeanor. Ms. Burgoyne was and always has been the sweetest, nicest person I've ever met. She loves the little kids. She doesn't mind being hugged or having them sit in her lap during story time."

Those adults who remember learning to print in school, before cursive, will enjoy this detail from Mrs. Russell: "This sounds like an odd thing to say, but I will always remember her perfect printing. It was as if created on a typewriter. She put care and love into everything she did, simply making everyone around her happy."

Ms. Burgoyne has loved being part of the JWP family and certainly enjoyed the traditional events. Pasta night, very likely her favorite event, found Ms. Friel and Ms. Burgoyne volunteering at the art table. "The children had so much fun doing crafts with pasta, and we loved watching them!"



DOLORES RUFO

EDUCATIONAL SPECIALIST

28 YEARS AT JWP



Dolores Rufo grew up in Brighton, Massachusetts. She attended Boston public schools before choosing Boston University and a biology major for undergraduate work, later earning a BU master's degree in education and certification in Reading and Special Needs. She had considered becoming a medical doctor but then realized while working at a pediatric hospital that she could work more closely with children as a teacher. Her work as a research associate in behavioral neurology, working in the areas of dyslexia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, gave her additional knowledge and expertise to work with children.

Remembering the first “eureka” moment in her own school days, when Dolores knew that she had connected the sounds and meaning that created words and was beginning to read, Dolores is able to connect that joy and excitement to teaching her own students to read. Her immigrant parents highly valued education and Dolores recalls that her father was not able to continue his education. She and her eleven siblings were taught by their parents the value of education and to persevere in learning.

The first moment Dolores walked into Jackson Walnut Park School, she felt warmly welcomed: “I knew immediately I wanted to stay.” Dolores began at JWP as a substitute teacher, having recently earned a master's degree in education specializing in reading. When Sister Helen O'Donnell retired, Dolores became the school's Educational Specialist, serving in this role for twenty-eight years. She worked in JWP's Learning Center, a specialized breakout program, with individual and small student groups, mostly in the subject of reading. Dolores also assessed applicants to Jackson and organized the standardized testing program.

Dolores built a student's confidence by assessing needs and then offering a lesson with an easy task so that the student could start by succeeding. Building from that satisfying beginning, the student could learn and practice more advanced skills.

She describes her best teaching moments as “when a nonreader begins taking baby steps and learns to read” and when her “students realize that they can make progress if they keep trying.” Her satisfaction extends past her own experience with students to when she hears that they are doing well in school. One student, whom Dolores had taught from grades one through six (and who struggled with reading and spelling), came back to JWP to thank her, proudly announcing that she had enrolled in New York University to study journalism.



Teachers, as well as their students, learn every day. Dolores characterizes her own best learning moments as “when a carefully-planned lesson does not go the way it is supposed to” so that she can learn a more effective way to teach. She also notes the benefit of learning from other teachers at workshops and spiritual retreats. She says, “I think that JWP is all about teamwork. I enjoyed the many times that staff and faculty worked and relaxed together – in the lunchroom and at faculty meetings and workshops.”

Dolores remembers with appreciation the many events at JWP, especially the holiday concert when parents attend the evening event, and everyone enjoys the traditional and new music selections. One special concert evening, there were loud cheers when the principal announced, “It’s snowing, and just to let you know, tomorrow will be a snow day!”

Her advice to colleagues and JWP parents is: “Always remember that you are both on the same side and work together. I have seen miracles happen when parents, teachers, and students work together as a team.” She remembers JWP teachers as having “a strong desire to bring out the best in their students. They are able to do this through small class size, individualized attention, a challenging and creative curriculum, and high expectations.”

If Dolores has a “mission statement” to teach, it is: “I get to know my students, find out what motivates them, and make a plan to help them. I teach students to learn that being present and making an effort makes a difference.”

DIANE KELLY

SECOND GRADE TEACHER

41 YEARS AT JWP



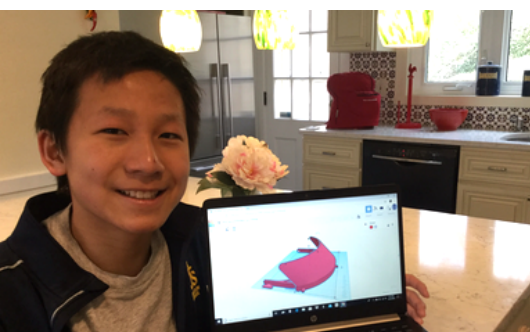
Mrs. Kelly taught second grade and was alumna Meghan Russell's teacher exactly thirty-four years ago. Mrs. Kelly's second grade classroom, Mrs. Russell recalls, was extremely well behaved, with the children knowing the rules and what Mrs. Kelly expected of them. "Mrs. Kelly prepared you for the upper grades with a rock-solid foundation in language arts," making sure that her students achieved to the best of their abilities that she knew each one possessed. "She loved her job and gave it her all, expecting the same of her students." Mrs. Russell says, as a student, "I was a little intimidated by her, and perhaps even as a parent! However, my son thrived in her classroom because it gave him the discipline and framework he needed to excel. I still remember sitting in her classroom studying for a one-on-one grammar quiz."

Mrs. Russell remembers that Mrs. Kelly was the last teacher of her generation at Jackson Walnut Park. "She taught cursive, prepared the kids for First Communion, sang patriotic songs, made them learn their math facts. It's wonderful to have traditions and be able to have that shared experience with your child. I was devastated when Mrs. Kelly retired the year before my daughter Molly was to have her."

For the holidays, Mrs. Kelly organized an annual Christmas pageant, teaching the students to act and participate in a musical and dance production of popular Christmas carols. Mrs. Russell says that "The kids were so proud, and Mrs. Kelly loved every minute of it. We were so delighted to see the kids' final show and to see Kieran (my son) make a surprise appearance as Santa!"

Art teacher Dorothy Simone knows from personal experience what Mrs. Kelly's students thought of her teaching style. One day she overheard a group of third grade boys and girls chatting with each other. "One student exclaimed, 'I really like Mrs. Kelly.' Another one shouted, 'She is strict!' Someone spoke up to say, 'Only if you are BAD.' They all laughed. Finally, the last student exclaimed, 'Mrs. Kelly was my favorite teacher,' and they all nodded in agreement."





“ JWP IN THE NEWS ”

A group of JWP students including organizer and Fifth Grader Eric Zhang, his brothers Alan and Alex, and sister Evelyn along with Alessia Shelley, Antonio Carrillo, Ignacio Carrillo, Catherine Curran, Grace Curran, Andy Liu, Anran Liu, Claire Liu, Philip Mikhailov, Jayden Montesino, Eleanor Park, Ethan Qian-Tsuchida, William Raymond, Catherine Stockton, Marcus Woo, Roger Zhang, and Gavin Zhao was hard at work during the COVID 19 shut down.

The group made sure health care workers on the front lines had easy access to PPE, Personal Protective Equipment. These volunteer students created their own group called the KPP Team, which stands for Kids Print to Protect. Eric and some of the other students contributed by applying their knowledge of 3D printers to make reusable face shields for healthcare workers. Others focused on similarly important tasks like fundraising, public relations, and distribution. The child-led group donated over 2,000 face shields to several hospitals across the Boston area.

While the Spring of 2020 was unique and will be etched in all of our memories, JWP realized how important it was to celebrate their Sixth Grade students with a graduation to represent the culmination of years of preparation for this occasion. It was in that spirit that the JWP graduation was unlike any that Jackson Walnut Park has ever seen! Our "Tailgate Graduation" was the result of conversations between the sixth-grade students, teachers, and administration. Each family had a designated parking space to spread out chairs, blankets, and snacks to watch the outdoor graduation ceremony in a socially distanced way. Even the local news showed up to film the event and interview some of our students from the wonderful JWP Class of 2020!



ENGINEERING
FOR THE FUTURE

6TH GRADE GRADUATION



Where to next...



Bigelow Middle School

Boston College High School

Buckingham Browne & Nichols School

Curtis Middle School

Milton Academy

Mount Alvernia High School

Newman School

Newton Country Day School

Noble and Greenough School

Ursuline Academy

Weston Public Middle School







PSA Family Picnic

Our annual PSA Family Picnic was held on a sunny Friday in early October. Students and their families gathered on the JWP athletic field for an afternoon of fun, games, and socializing. Children attempted the “obstacle course,” danced to energetic DJ’d music, and tossed the frisbee. Parents mingled and chatted, spread out blankets and basked in the warm sun, and partook of the food truck set up on campus for the event. The highlight of the afternoon was the sponsored make-your-own-sundae station, an entrepreneurial endeavor run entirely by our sixth grade students.

Pasta Night

A winter tradition at JWP, we held Pasta Night for the first time in the new Student Center and it was great to be on campus in a fresh new facility! Over 200 parents, students and siblings enjoyed a delicious pasta dinner provided by Fiorella’s Cucina and served by our wonderful PSA volunteers. And when dinner was over students gathered in front of the stage for a magic and juggling show while parents had the opportunity to visit and chat with each other. It was a magical evening in every sense of the word!



Song and Light / Winter Concert

JWP students of all ages marked the approach of Winter Vacation with our annual concerts in the Student Center. Parents and other family members and friends joined us for Walnut Park’s Song & Light Concert and Jackson’s Winter Concert where we celebrated not only the coming Christmas holiday but also holidays and cultural festivals from around the world: Hanukkah, Kwaanza, Diwali, and others! The musical selections taught by Music Teacher, Mr. Linder reflected the diversity and cultural richness of the JWP community.

Wizard of Oz

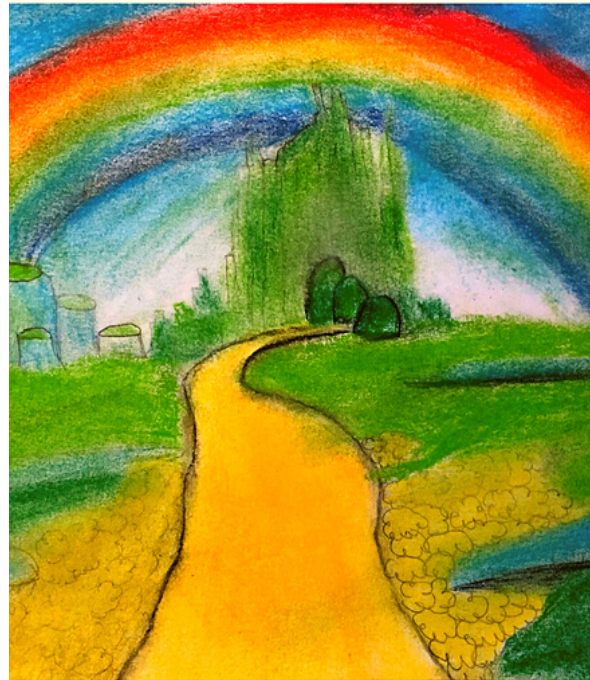
Grades 4, 5, and 6 participated in JWP's first-ever virtual production of *The Wizard of Oz*. Each student with speaking and singing roles sent their portion of the play to our music teacher who edited the production for parents and family members to watch from the comfort of their own homes. Both students and teachers, Mr. Linder and Ms. Simone did an exceptional job pulling it all together for the JWP community to enjoy!

Basketball

Our basketball teams were having highly successful seasons before COVID hit, with students on our Freshman team (grades 1-2), JV team (grades 3-4), and Varsity team (grades 5-6) developing their skills while playing fun and competitive games against teams from other schools. A total of 47 boys and girls started the season and played 9 games, and cannot wait to resume playing next winter!

Inspirational Hip Hop Dance

Walnut Park students were joined by some of their friends from Jackson for a lively musical Black History Month celebration. Through rhythmic dance and music, *Illstyle and Peace* modeled and then taught students a variety of dance moves like locking, breaking, popping, tap and house dancing. Empowering messages to speak out about peace, being kind, and respecting others ran through the program in a spirited call-and-response style, and the historical background of music and dance helped to provide a context for Hip Hop, today's popular genre!



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2020



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Dear Parents, Past Parents, Alumni, Friends, Faculty and Staff,

The compilation of our Annual Report each year provides us an opportunity to reflect on the year's accomplishments, and to look forward to expected and, as we have learned this year, unexpected challenges to come. At Jackson Walnut Park, we have demonstrated the veracity of the adage that survival requires not only strength and intelligence but especially adaptability.

We should recall first that for many the past year brought illness and sadness; those who lost health, loved ones, and jobs must remain in our prayers if we are to be faithful to the commitment of the Sisters of St. Joseph to love, in an active and inclusive way, "the dear neighbor without distinction."

Our academic year 2019-2020 began at JWP with optimism, teachers' plans for their students' classroom work through the year, and a calendar full of academic, athletic, and social events, culminating in the annual spring Gala. Then, in March 2020, everything changed, as we "pivoted," as we came to say, to distance learning.

In the next few months, the community of Jackson Walnut Park School was challenged, but we are grateful and proud to say that we survived and indeed flourished, thanks to the wisdom, planning, dedication, patience, and hard work of all, especially our leadership team of Steve Duffy and Stephanie Marcucci, and the teachers of Jackson Walnut Park School. It was hard work last spring for the teachers to leave the classroom and move to virtual teaching almost overnight.

It was wisdom, planning, and a welcome sense of humor that led to a virtual spring musical, a Mr.-Duffy-self-quarantine video, a virtual Field Day, and Tailgate Graduation and drive-through End of Year Parade. The year ended with the establishment of Task Forces comprised of a variety of staff, teachers, and parents, who worked over the summer to shape new behaviors, modify buildings and classrooms, revise student drop-offs and pick-ups, and design screening procedures that enabled our full opening of the academic year 2020-2021 on September 8, while at the same time preparing for distance learning if we needed to close for a short or long time. It was an extraordinary response to an extraordinary situation. We are grateful to our families, who with patience and dedication changed their behaviors as well for the safety of our entire community. None of this would have been possible without the continued generosity of our donors who remembered Jackson Walnut Park School in their philanthropy in this difficult year.

As we reflect on all that we've been through and anticipate a happy return to "normal times," the Board of Trustees would like to extend a special thank you to the Jackson Walnut Park teachers, who made our extraordinary success a reality. It was our teachers who made every day, despite its circumstances, a good school day for our children. We are blessed to have such teachers among us.

Sincerely,



Michael T. Callnan, Co-Chair



Patricia DeLeeuw, Co-Chair



Jackson Walnut Park

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Why Give?

*Give today to secure a bright future
for our school and our students.*



- Benefit every student by supporting academic programs and faculty enrichment.
- Build a strong foundation for our students.
- Ensure that all students and faculty have supplies and resources in the classroom.
- Support competitive salaries and benefits to attract and retain the best faculty.
- Provide essential funding to bridge the gap between tuition and the actual cost of educating our students.
- Provide educational tools and technology for each classroom.
- Support our campus and facilities.
- Provide philanthropic support which is vital to the success of JWP.



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