

Beyond All Expectations





The JOSEPH SAMs SCHOOL

The Joseph Sams School is dedicated to the education and life skills development of children who are intellectually, physically or developmentally challenged.

2018 ANNUAL REPORT & WISH LIST

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STUDENT PHOTOS FEATURED IN THIS REPORT WERE BEAUTIFULLY
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Beyond All Expectations

Last year's Annual Report, Our Roots, highlighted the evolution of The Joseph Sams School from its modest beginning in 1984 to present day. It detailed the school's transformation from a small preschool serving a handful of children with Down syndrome into the premier special educational facility of today. Without a doubt, the school has exceeded the expectations of its founders in ways which were unimaginable 35 years ago. From the many students served through the years to the amazing achievements of the children to the unfailing support from the community, the school has soared past what was envisioned by anyone involved with the school at its inception.

The original need was immediate, and the vision was limited; the desire to secure quality early intervention services for our own children was the driving force. The school would most likely exist for a few years – at least until our children reached public school age. Things would be simple, and the life of the school short-term. As news of the school spread, desperate parents emerged from all corners. Things began to change quickly, and the need was no longer immediate. Enrollment rose, staffing increased, and the diagnoses and abilities of our students became more diverse. New programs were created to meet the growing and changing needs of our students. The MOVE Program; the Autism Program; Music Therapy; Art Instruction; Community-Based /Vocational Instruction; an expanded Speech and Language Program, and extra-curricular activities were all implemented or enhanced. These programs, coupled with advances in technology and teaching techniques, led to students progressing far beyond the expectations of physicians and parents, and, at times, even surpassing those of their teachers and therapists.

Children with physical challenges participating in the MOVE Program gained physical skills many thought impossible. A student currently enrolled in our Upper School program is only one of the many success stories of our MOVE participants. With concerns that she would never sit or stand without assistance, this young lady now walks independently throughout the building using only a walker. Other

students have acquired communication skills unthinkable 10 to 15 years ago. Another young lady in Upper School uses eye gaze to activate a device which speaks for her. Numerous non-verbal students now have a voice; they are able communicate at school, at home, and on job sites in the community using their iPads or other high-tech voice-output devices. Other children who were non-verbal throughout their preschool and primary years have progressed from communicating with picture symbols to verbal communication; they now speak in complete and coherent sentences and paragraphs. Students participating in Chime Choir and musical productions or having their artwork displayed at the High Museum of Art and other prominent venues are all accomplishments no one could have envisioned.

*For all who have witnessed these accomplishments,
the lessons learned are significant:*

- ★ Always be open and willing to change.
- ★ Listen to and hear the needs and desires of parents.
- ★ Never place limitations on a child's determination or ability to learn. Without limitations, children clearly can and will achieve beyond all expectations.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our community—a community who has always supported our mission. No one could have predicted the breadth of support and community involvement enjoyed by JSS today. We stand awed and overwhelmed with gratitude each year as we witness new and greater levels of engagement—levels which truly go beyond all expectation! From our students, their families, our staff and our Board of Directors, we thank you for your part in making it all possible!



FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Mr. Allen Harp | **DECEMBER 2018**

Beyond All Expectations

Most of my earliest memories in life revolve around being outdoors and wandering the creeks, backroads, fields and forests around my family’s home in Inman. Entire days were spent exploring from Highway 92 to the Flint River on what I felt like was a true wilderness appropriate for both Daniel Boone and myself. During these explorations I found old liquor stills, rusting piles of farm implements pulled by mules, old beech trees with initials carved by previous explorers (mainly my cousins), and overgrown terraces built by hand and full of wild quail.

There were so many trees to climb, blackberries to pick, and undiscovered treasures to find I could hardly sleep each night. Bedtime brought visions filled with the next day’s journey to find some unbelievable experience or amazing treasure. Each day was filled with the promise of a new discovery and the expectation of witnessing something truly unique firsthand.

Flash forward forty years and that’s how I feel about The Joseph Sams School. With each visit to the school I find hallways full of excitement and laughter, classrooms of warmth and determination, and I always depart the grounds with a feeling of joy and happiness. Our school is a place where amazing discoveries are made every day and treasures can be found in every student. A day spent at The Joseph Sams School is truly an experience “Beyond Expectations.”

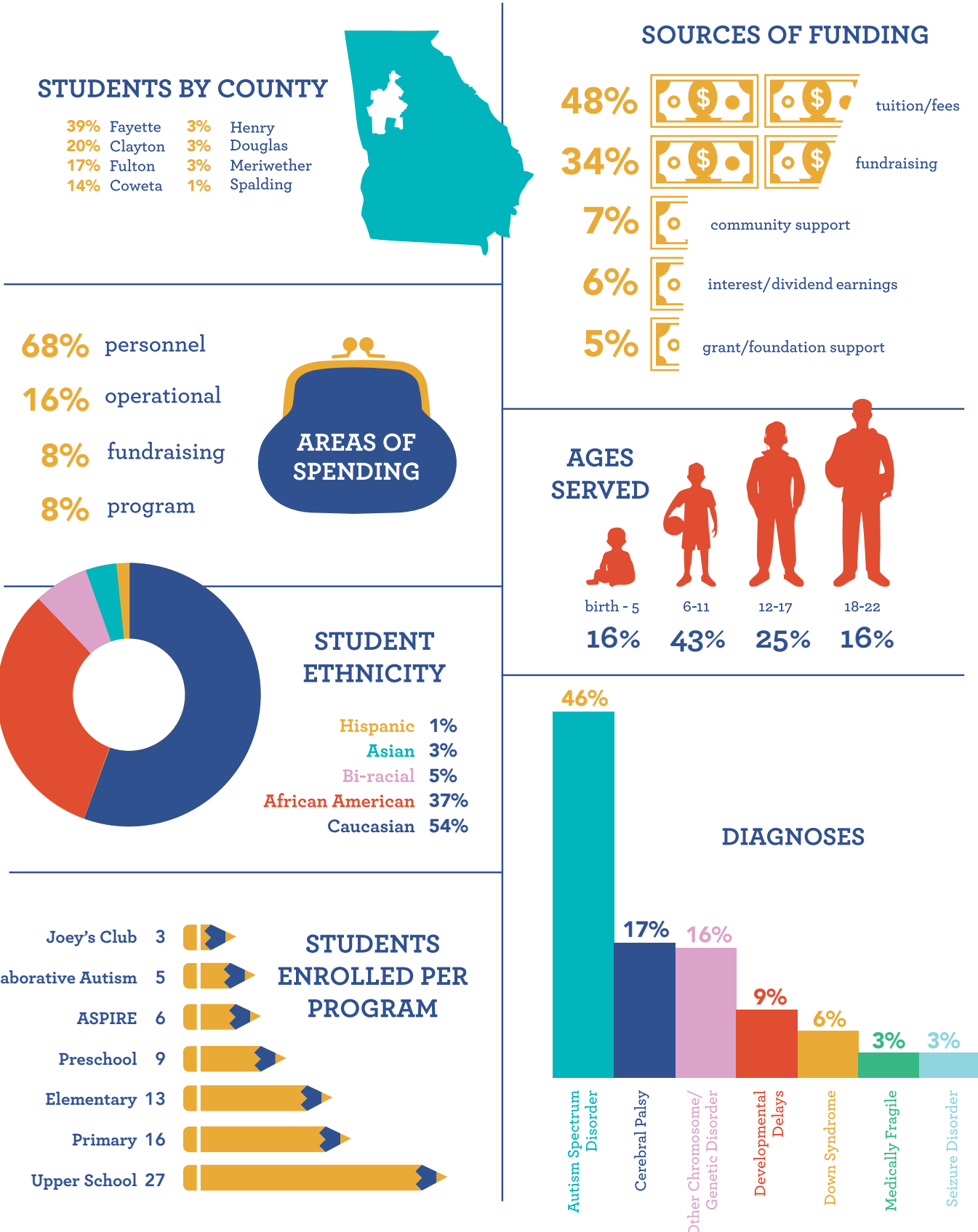
I am truly grateful for all the families, teachers and students that work hard every day with our extended community to provide for our school. Of course, none of this is possible without your continued support and dedication. I look forward to next year and the amazing treasures waiting to be discovered in our future.

I hope you have a joyous holiday season filled with love and laughter.



AT A GLANCE

The Joseph Sams School by the Numbers



SCHOOL STAFF

2018 - 2019



ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Amy Murray, Executive Director
Danielle Clements, Principal
Melissa Patterson, Assistant Principal
Kenna Little, Business Manager
Janell Jenkins, Administrative Assistant

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE TEAM

Brooke Barnes,
Speech/Language Pathologist
Ellen Jeffers, Speech/Language Pathologist
Rita Horton, Speech/Language Pathologist
Celia Blome, SLP Assistant
Alison Schmidt, SLP Assistant

FUNDRAISING CONSULTANT

Ashley Sams

TEAM ASSISTANT

Michael Crofton

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT TEACHERS

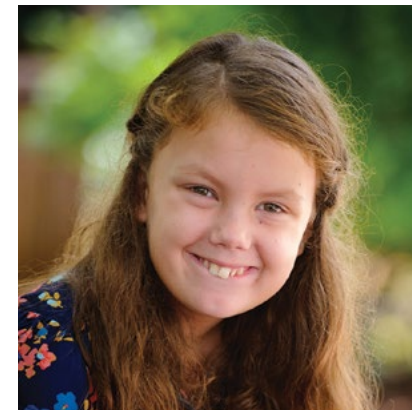
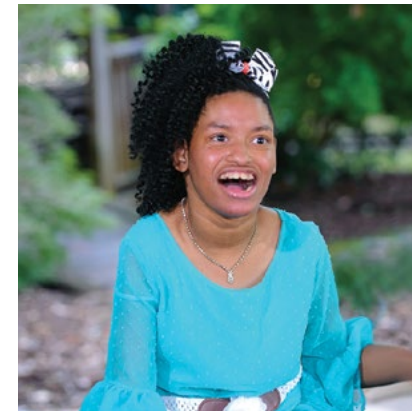
Vicki Allen, Preschool
Samantha Amtmann, Pre K
Lucy Barton, Primary
Leah Bear, Upper Collaborative
Joy Chapman, Upper School
Erin Downs-Fletcher, Lower Collaborative
Rhandi Finley, Primary
Carly Gates, Elementary
Lisa Johnson, Upper School
Sarah Martin, Primary
Carol McLain, Upper School
Amber Phillips, Upper School
Tekela Walker, Elementary

FINE ARTS

Caroline Beson, Music Therapist
Misty Lackey, Therapeutic Art Instructor

PARAPROFESSIONALS

Alisha Acree
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Marites Baker
Tevin Lewis
Rachel Carter
Virginia Cook
Barbara Duncan
Casie Gardner
Sara Giordano
Sami Hitechew
Tia Iverson
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Aundrea Thomas
Ali Winzeler



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PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

ARTS FOR ALL PROGRAM

Each day when I start work, I load up my cart with materials for the day and get rolling. I'm ready to connect my fingers to the guitar, my gaze with the smile of a student, and my feet to the floor in musical movement. I have a guitar slung across my back. A microphone cable makes a little ting-ting sound against the side of the cart like a far-away wind chime. I softly hum whichever tune I awoke thinking about: yesterday's goodbye song, a Raffi song about a dinosaur, or something that I am just creating for the first time.

I am a music therapist, and my job is all about building connections. I sing and play instruments, yes. But I also facilitate as students are playing together, communicating wants and needs, and regulating their internal environment as things change in their classroom environment. The therapeutic art instructor, Misty Lackey, and I connect with students in unique ways. We design music and art experiences to foster community within the classroom. Once our students connect through music and art, they learn that they can make meaningful contributions to their class. Their class is their first community outside their family.

Because we have students who are developing exceptionally, many have unusual skills, interests, and abilities. Some of our students can sing on key, complete a puzzle, or draw a cartoon character better than typical adults. I don't expect students to sing, but I know with encouragement many students will express themselves through song. Similarly, Misty encourages art expression while supporting student independence and removing barriers to success. We celebrate strengths while supporting needs.

We are so grateful for the support of parents, staff, and donors that ensures our fine arts program can grow and thrive. We started music therapy and therapeutic art instruction in 2007 and 2011, respectively. Thanks to generous donor and foundation support, both music therapist and art instructor positions moved to full-time. With continued support, we are able to maintain our tools and purchase new items to benefit our students. Having an appropriate paintbrush, instrument, movement prop, or adaptive tool makes the world of difference when we connect with a student. And those connections mean the world to the students and families we serve.

Quick facts | ARTS FOR ALL PROGRAM

All classes receive multiple weekly music therapy sessions and art instructed classes.

Our music therapist and art instructor work together to provide our students the opportunity to perform "on-stage" at holiday, Grandparents' Day, and end-of-the year musical and theatrical productions.

Our art instructor continues to be an advocate for community collaboration through art, and leads JSS students in art experiences in collaboration with community partners.

Our music therapist leads the JSS Chime Choir, a group that performs for school and community events.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Lindsey Lowen

When our son, Lindsey, was eight years old, we had a decision to make about schooling. He is severely autistic; he had been in public schools since age 3. We had been struggling, as most parents do, with the public school system and getting his needs addressed there. After long IEP meetings, goals not being addressed, and lack of progress, we were led to The Joseph Sams School by my mom. She lived behind JSS, and we decided to take a look. WOW! After our first visit, we thought, "He HAS to go here! This is special needs heaven!" He was accepted, and it IS special needs heaven! In the ten years that Lindsey has been a student at JSS, the school has gone beyond even our hopeful, small expectations for Lindsey.

First of all, he is loved beyond measure there, and EVERYONE wants him to progress and succeed. He has gained confidence and is proud of himself.

Secondly, he has learned to communicate with technology (he is non-verbal), although it's limited. But his teachers and speech therapists NEVER give up on him.

Thirdly, he was a "runner" when he first arrived at the school. It was difficult to keep him in the classroom, in the school, and scary to take him on a field trip or community outing. During the programs - Christmas and the end of the year programs - he would run around the stage and run to the edge of the stage, making everyone a nervous wreck. As his parents, we were terrified when he outgrew a stroller, requiring us to still harness him to his Dad sometimes because he's super fast when he decides to run. He has "conditioned" us to be cautious about that. BUT, his teachers trust him and have confidence in him, and he has made more progress in this area than we could ever have hoped for. He runs errands around the school for his teacher, and he walks into the school and goes to his classroom by himself. He goes on field trips and community outings without darting away. When I say this is like a miracle, I am not exaggerating!

Beyond expectations and more to be accomplished in the short time we have left, I am sure. Sadly for us and for him, he will "age out" of the school after next school year. We can only hope for a program for special needs adults as special as our years at JSS have been.

-Linda Lowen

We will never forget the day we toured The Joseph Sams School as prospective parents. Alex was barely 6 months old and we were still trying to process the many diagnoses we had accumulated in 6 months. We were told that Alex may never speak or walk. During the tour of JSS, we were embraced with sunshine, happiness, and hope. But most of all, a group of very special individuals that would soon become part of Team Alex. The tour was Beyond Expectations.

Soon after Alex was enrolled, the staff developed a collaborative oral motor plan. At that time, Alex received 100% of his daily nutrition through his G-Tube. Alex's feeding tube was removed by the time he was 2 years old. The dedication and persistence of the staff went well beyond the call of duty. Over the next few years, we began to see accomplishments one after another. The speech department worked hand in hand with classroom teachers to make sure Alex achieved the goal of communication. The dedication and collaborative approach between the staff was beyond our expectations. By the age of 5, Alex utilized multiple forms of communication, including verbalization. Not only could he communicate his basic needs, he could also walk independently. Socially, Alex experienced significant stress in public at an early age. Through significant efforts of the JSS staff, Alex is now the "mayor" of any place he goes. He has no hesitation saying "Hi" to everyone he meets, and most times gives a "high five". We went from avoiding public places to prevent stress, to now watching him enjoy meeting new people everywhere. We know that Alex far exceeded our expectations due to the exceptional staff at JSS. Collectively, the staff and administration demonstrated their passion to provide extraordinary children the opportunity to exceed expectations.

Never once has a staff member looked at Alex and thought he was limited in some way. After ten years at JSS, it is obvious that the staff's first priority is to provide each and every student the skills necessary for a happy, healthy and independent life. The JSS staff are never complacent and independence is always the goal. While independence will look differently for each individual child, the JSS staff will always find a way to go above and beyond to allow each child the chance to exceed expectations.

In short, JSS is an extraordinary school that provides students with remarkable and lasting skills that they will carry far beyond the walls of the school. The Joseph Sams School is beyond expectations.

-Amy Sheffield



Alex Sheffield

FOUNDATION SUPPORT

Throughout FY2018, financial contributions from local and area private foundations remained a vital component of our annual funding. Every year funds are solicited, and each year we are fortunate to receive donations to support general operations, scholarships for students, program enhancements as well as capital and equipment needs.

Funds in support of general operations remain the most difficult to secure, yet vital to attain, in order to keep our lights on, our doors open, and to bolster the daily administrative needs of the school. Once again, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to The Clothes Less Traveled Thrift Shop (CLT) for its gift of \$25,000 and The John and Mary Franklin Foundation for its contribution of \$7500. We are truly grateful to both organizations for their long-standing and generous support! Additional operational funding was received from The Ekkebus Charitable Foundation in the amount of \$2500 and The Jackson Smith Peck Children's Foundation with a grant of \$2000. We simply could not provide our valuable services and programs without these essential contributions in support of daily operations.

Given the costs involved in raising and supporting a child or children with disabilities, scholarship funding has always been a priority; it continues to remain an area of need for JSS. It would be impossible for many families to access quality programming for their children without financial assistance. We extend our gratitude to several faithful donors for their support of scholarship aid. These include: The William R. and Sara Babb Smith Foundation for its \$20,000 gift that provided scholarship assistance to families from Henry County; The Pennies From Heaven Foundation for a contribution in the amount of \$15,000; and an Anonymous Foundation for two grants totalling \$15,000, \$5000 of which was used to assist families throughout the 2017-2018 school year and the remaining expended for the current school year. Additional support in the amount of \$10,000 was received from The John and Polly Sparks Foundation, a grant which specifically assists qualifying families who have more than one child attending JSS or families experiencing unusual and/or extreme economic stresses. We extend a special "thank you" to these foundations for providing many parents the opportunity to access quality programming for their children!

JSS continuously strives for its students to become as independent and productive in life as possible. To ensure this outcome, funds are always needed to maintain, expand, and enhance our many programs. For FY2018, we express heartfelt appreciation to the Heritage Community Foundation for its \$3400 gift to purchase a Dynamic Pacer, a vital piece of equipment to use with students in the MOVE Program. We are also grateful to Wells Fargo for contributing \$5000 in support of our Speech and Language Program.

As we continue our efforts to secure capital funds for constructing a new facility, we have been thrilled to receive a \$15,000 gift from Coweta Fayette EMC. This generous contribution was applied toward the purchase of property for our future campus.

To these foundations, we say "thank you"! Thank you for assisting JSS in continuing in its mission of providing the best possible education to children with unique and very special needs!



thanks for your generosity!

FUNDRAISING



The Joseph Sams School relies heavily on the generous philanthropic support of foundations; community gifts, both business and individual; and year to year fundraising event participation. All of these areas continue to grow, exceeding expectations, and we remain more humble than ever and in absolute amazement of how far above and beyond our community of supporters is willing to go to serve the school.

In 2018, the school's fundraising events generated 34% of the school's total income. All gifts, large and small, are key and highly relevant factors to the school's financial sustainability, and our ability to provide for and serve our precious students. From start to finish, our annual fundraising campaign features events that appeal to different audiences, bringing both financial resources and awareness for The Joseph Sams School. The school's annual events include a Sporting Clay Tournament, a 5K Race, and two private, invitation only events (The Dinner Dance & Auction and Southern Flair). Other events are hosted throughout the year by community members, businesses, civic groups, organizations and individuals.

We are forever grateful for the bright, warm embrace of our loyal, loving and supportive community as they continue to surpass all expectations in the ways in which they serve and provide for The Joseph Sams School!

SAVE THE DATE!

April 27, 2019

RACE FOR A REASON

location TBD

October 4, 2019

CLAYS FOR A CAUSE SPORTING CLAY TOURNAMENT

at Big Red Oak Plantation

May 18, 2019

the **DINNER, DANCE & AUCTION**

at the home of Marie and Jim Sams

October 19, 2019

SOUTHERN FLAIR FIELD PARTY

at Camp Southern Ground

APOGEE SCHOLARSHIP

HELP YOUR MONEY WORK FOR KIDS!

Ensure our students achieve beyond expectations by choosing where your tax dollars go. It's your choice—send your money to the State or move it into a scholarship fund to help children reach their fullest potential.

It's rare that you have the opportunity to give without having to donate any of your money. The Georgia Educational Tax Credit makes this possible! Georgia's independent school tax credit scholarship program allows you to tell the state how you want a portion of your tax dollars spent. It costs you nothing but is a significant benefit to our students, as it ensures that families are able to access the therapies and services they so desperately need. This program offers a unique opportunity for you or your company to redirect your tax dollars to provide tuition assistance for Joseph Sams School students.

Since 2011, we have received over \$300,000 in scholarship revenues from The Apogee School Choice Fund which has allowed JSS to award 159 scholarships.

JSS partners with the Apogee Scholarship Fund, a Georgia registered SSO (Student Scholarship Organization) administering the tax credit program.
Go to www.apogee123.org and select the "Go Paperless" link.

2018

APOGEE SCHOLARSHIP DONORS

KATRINA BRADBURY
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REGIS & LANA CARR
MICHAEL & LINDA COPPOLINO
CHARLES & PHYLLIS COPPOLINO
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BOB & DENISE ROLADER
JIM & MARIE SAMS
FLETCHER & DANA SAMS
DAVID & ANNE SAPP
JOHN & LISA SOWER
GREGORY & CINDY TIBBETTS

PASS THROUGH TAX PAYER REDIRECT UP TO \$10K!

A recent change in the law now allows individuals who receive income through a pass-through entity to redirect as much as \$10,000 towards private school educational opportunities and receive a Federal charitable deduction with a dollar-for-dollar State tax credit.

C-CORPS/TRUSTS

- Divert up to 75% of your GA tax liability
- Establishes a convenient and consistent mechanism and incentive for your business to contribute directly to educating Georgia's children
- Targets educational expenditures directly to families and children in local communities rather than institutions that may reduce the amount of resources going directly to students
- Provides a cost effective method of maintaining philanthropic goals in a much more tax beneficial manner.
- In general, businesses are rewarded by owners, shareholders, equity analysts and financial institutions for minimizing the percentage of income going to taxes because a lower tax burden is associated with sound financial management (even though contributions to Georgia tax credit scholarships would be equivalent to the amount being paid in taxes).

TAX TALK

Q. WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT I CAN CONTRIBUTE?

A. Up to \$1,000 for a single individual. Up to \$2,500 for a married couple. Up to 75% of a C-corp's or eligible Trust total GA income tax liability. \$10k max for Pass-through taxpayers

Q. HOW IS THIS EDUCATION CREDIT BETTER THAN A TAX DEDUCTION?

A. This credit gives you a dollar-for-dollar reduction in the amount you owe in Georgia taxes. For example, if you donate \$2,500, then your tax bill would be reduced by the full \$2,500.

Q. HOW DOES THIS IMPACT MY CURRENT TAX WITHHOLDINGS?

A. Participation in the program does not automatically change your withholdings amount. The benefits of your donation will be realized when you file your year-end taxes.

Q. IF I AM ITEMIZING ON MY FEDERAL RETURN, UNDER THE TAX CODE, IS THERE ANY ADDITIONAL BENEFIT?

A. Great news! Any amount of your contribution above and beyond your \$10k max deduction will significantly reduce your Federal tax burden.

Q. WHAT HAPPENS IF MY DONATION EXCEEDS MY TAX LIABILITY?

A. The tax credit is a "nonrefundable" credit. Any excess can be carried forward for up to 5 years.

Q. CAN I DONATE IF I PLAN TO GET A REFUND WHEN I FILE MY TAXES?

A. Yes! Getting a refund means you've overpaid your tax liability. Making a donation will decrease your "pre-paid" tax liability, potentially resulting in an additional refund.

Q. CAN APOGEE ACCEPT MATCHING GIFTS AND CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS?

A. Yes. Apogee is a 501c3 non-profit and is eligible to receive all charitable gifts.

the
JOSEPH SAMS
SCHOOL

2019 wish list

Each year we watch and learn as the needs of our students and their families change. We continue to be challenged with successfully utilizing our resources as efficiently and wisely as possible. Many of you are already aware of the financial demands on our families; however, you might not be aware of the behind the scenes, operational needs. Just to quickly highlight a few:

\$2,000,000 } cost per year to
operate the school

2.09 } student to staff ratio

the average day at The Joseph Sams School involves

29

pieces of standing &
walking equipment

28

group therapy
sessions

107

speech devices
for facilitating verbal
& non-verbal
communication

22

specialty
visitors

Please know that all gifts, no matter how large or small,
will help better The Joseph Sams School's specialized programs and services.
We are most grateful for your continued support in ensuring the sustainability
and success of The Joseph Sams School and our sweet students.

Please consider providing a financial gift toward the purchase of these
much needed materials or making a general donation to support the
necessary operating costs of The Joseph Sams School.

\$25,000 Interactive whiteboards
for all classrooms

\$15,000 Building/Facility and
technology enhancements

\$10,000 Smart tables for Preschool
and Primary programs

\$5,000 iPads for classrooms
Gasoline for a year for bus
Staff development and conferences

\$2,500 Augmentative speech devices
Art supplies

\$1,000 Music therapy supplies
Playground equipment
Unique Learning System curriculum
Sensory tools and games

\$500 Adaptive living supplies
Adaptive technology devices & components

\$100 PECS Supplies
(Picture Exchange Communication System)



DONOR LISTING

\$100 - \$499

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Mr. and Mrs. Casey Allen
Amazon Smile Foundation
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Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Anderson
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Mr. and Mrs. Bill Anderson
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Anderson
Mr. and Mrs. Andy Anderson
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Ms. Shannon Erickson
Mr. and Mrs. Matt Ernest
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Fayette First United Methodist Church
Fayetteville First United Methodist
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Ms. Leah McDonough
Mr. M. Orell McEachern
Mr. and Mrs. Robert McIntire
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Michel
Ms. Rosi Milla
Mr. and Mrs. Jim Minter
Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Mirabella

PLEASE NOTE:

This list is only representative of our fiscal year, and is only reflective of cash donations received from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018.

Ms. Kellie Moreman
Mr. Timothy Morrison
Most Blessed Sacrament - Knights
of Peter Claver Ladies Aux.
Mr. and Mrs. Chris Mucha
Mr. and Mrs. Buck Murphy
Mr. Jimmie Murray
Mr. and Mrs. Billy Nation
Nature’s Landscaping Services, INC.
Mr. and Mrs. Matt Nelms
Mr. and Mrs. Brad Niksa
Mr. and Mrs. Matt Oates
Mr. and Mrs. Billy Odom
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