

together





Alone we can do so little; *together*
we can do so much. – Helen Keller



together we are committed

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

None of us, ever do great things.
But we can all do small things, with
great love, and together we can
do something wonderful. – Mother Teresa



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From the Board President

together we are Stronger

We all have heard the phrase “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” It is commonly attributed to the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, who first expressed the concept over 2,500 years ago. Joining or combining different parts or elements together often produces something much greater and stronger. Think about a rope. Each individual fiber is very weak. By itself, it can do little. And a haphazard pile of many weak fibers is little better. But twisting, weaving, or braiding thousands of such weak fibers together produces a rope strong enough to lift thousands of pounds.

Have you ever been part of a team? If you have, then you understand the concept of “together we are stronger.” An athletic team is made up of many different individuals, including athletes and coaches, the team doctor and trainers, the equipment and uniform managers, and the groundskeepers just to name a few. Each individual may be very good at what they do, but he or she can’t win the game alone. And putting the players on the court or field with no preparation, game plan, or common goal or bond won’t win the game either. Only by working together with shared values in pursuit of a common vision can the collective whole – a true “Team” – win the game. It’s no different in business. Numerous studies have shown that a well-formed and well-functioning team always performs better than an individual or a random collection of dissociated individuals.

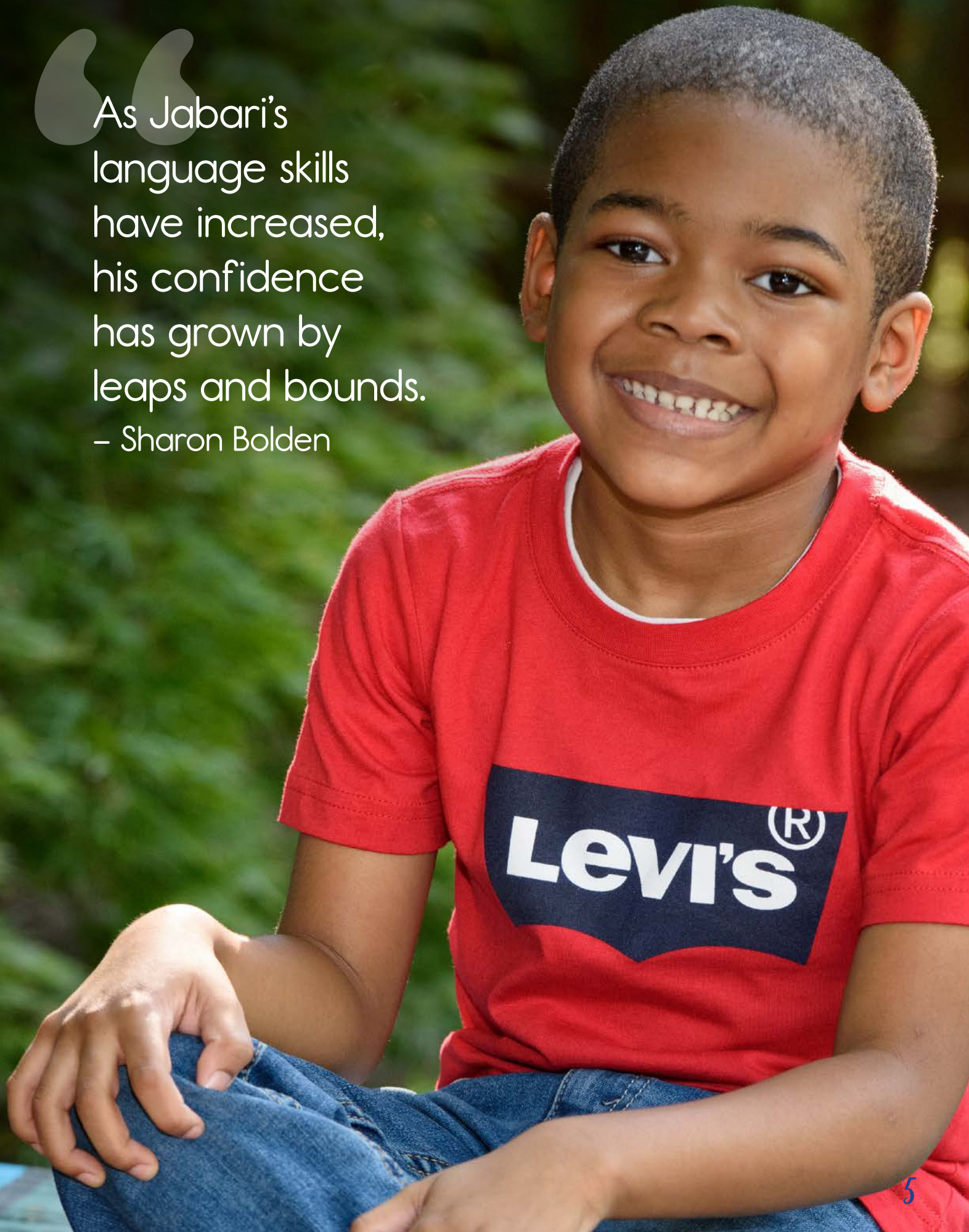
The Joseph Sams School epitomizes the concept of “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” Each teacher, administrator, therapist, volunteer, supporter, board member, and parent at JSS is amazing in his or her own right. And the sum of each individual’s contribution is meaningful. But what makes JSS so strong and special is the mission and values that bind these individuals together: a common purpose and mission to build a better and more engaged and inclusive community; a shared dedication to the education and life skills development of the JSS students; a collective commitment to challenge our students every day to reach beyond their assumed potential in a caring and compassionate environment; and most important, a unified and unwavering love for the JSS students.

This is the JSS Team! Together we are stronger! Stronger for our students! If you are not part of the JSS Team, I encourage you to join us today. Imagine how much stronger we will be with you on the Team.

Wayne Hillis | December 2021

“As Jabari’s
language skills
have increased,
his confidence
has grown by
leaps and bounds.

– Sharon Bolden









Facts & Figures The Joseph Sams School

Students by County

35%	Fayette
19%	Fulton
16%	Clayton
15%	Coweta
8%	Henry
3%	Douglas
2%	Spalding
2%	Meriwether



Program Enrollment by Number

7		Preschool
13		Primary
15		Elementary
21		Upper School
6		Collaborative - Autism
2		Joey's Club

Sources of Funding

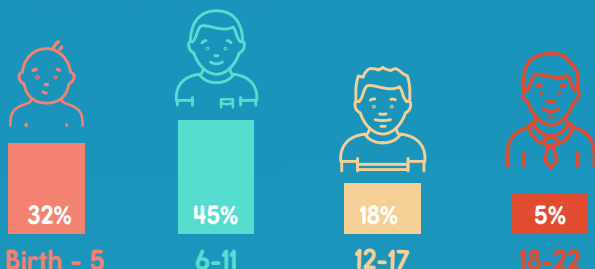
45%	 	Tuition/Fees
24%	 	Fundraising
18%		Community Support
5%		Grants/Foundation Support
8%		Interest/Dividend Earnings

Areas of Spending

72%	Personnel
15%	Operational
5%	Fundraising
8%	Program

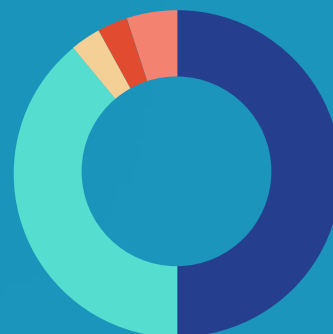


Age



Ethnicity

49%	Caucasian
44%	African American
3%	Hispanic
2%	Asian
2%	Bi-racial



Diagnoses

51%	Autism Spectrum Disorder
15%	Down syndrome
13%	Other Chromosome/Genetic Disorder
11%	Developmental Delays
8%	Cerebral Palsy
2%	Medically Fragile

JSS working together has built confidence, compassion and motivation for Elizabeth and LouLou. JSS meets them with unconditional love for where they are at and joyfully moves them to their greatest potential each and every day.

– Katie Robinson



Program Highlight

Speech & Language Program

The JSS Speech and Language Program has helped push our son past his comfort zone and tremendously improved his interaction with his siblings"

– Carmen Neal



The Speech and Language Program at The Joseph Sams School uses a Total Communication Approach. A total communication approach is all about using the right combination of communication tools for an individual to ensure the most successful forms of contact, information exchange, and conversation. We make use of various modes of communication to support our students' communication needs. This approach allows us to ensure that our students experience successful interactions with others so that they can build relationships using meaningful language in an intentional way. Language can be expressed in a myriad of ways. Across our school on any given day, you might witness students communicating using the Picture Exchange Communication System, verbal speech, sign language, gestures, and a variety of communication devices.



Our school has three Speech-Language Pathologists and two Speech-Language Pathology Assistants who serve our students. We collaborate with classroom teachers, fine arts staff, our physical therapy consultant, and outside therapists to ensure that our students are set up for communication success during the entire school day. We have the mindset at The Joseph Sams School that every moment is a teachable moment. Our staff targets communication from the second our students come into the building during morning carpool and it carries over for the rest of the school day, both on campus and in the community. Our staff finds great joy in watching a student's eyes light up using a device or when a preschool student waves for the first time. These are precious moments that are the result of meeting our students where they are and working consistently to support and equip them to participate in their environment in a meaningful way.

together

we shine brightly

STUDENT #1
SPOTLIGHT | Anna Olson

Our fourteen-year journey with the Joseph Sams School has helped our daughter Anna develop new skills, become her own person, and expanded our family to include the school family. Anna joined the JSS family when she was six; today she is a vivacious twenty year old. She has a dual diagnosis of Williams Syndrome and autism. Along the way we have shared many special moments with Anna and the school. Here a just a few:

Learning skills by the day & in Life

Anna started her journey in communicating via introduction to the PECS system. PECS changed Anna's life and our family's life. For the first time she could tell us what she needed or wanted. It quickly became normal for Anna to routinely show us a picture of the beach to which the family response was 'yes Anna, we all want the beach right now'. When Anna was ten, a moment that we will never forget was when her teacher grabbed us one morning and said, "Follow me, I have something I want you to see." In the classroom Anna was seated in front of a computer. Her teacher said, 'Hey Anna, what is your name and where do you live?'. Anna proceeded to type her entire name and her address. Perfectly. We all cheered and cried. We still don't know who was more proud, her teacher or her parents. Today, Anna uses an iPad for communication in addition to a small verbal vocabulary. To learn another major life skill, the school guided us through potty training. Potty training a child with special needs is no small undertaking. The method, coaching, and ideas from the school accomplished the task with Anna faster than we could have ever imagined.

Meal time for Anna is an enormous challenge. She doesn't chew food, so all of her meals need to be puréed for her to eat. Through constant engagement with her teachers, Anna now feeds herself lunch and cleans up after herself. Anna's version of cleaning up is a version of the shot put. She seems to think walking calmly to the sink with her dishes and throwing them into the sink is hilarious. Her brother and sister think it is hilarious too. As parents we are thankful for her ability to feed herself and entertain the family at the same time.

The most amazing skill achievement to date (we know more are coming) has been Anna's ability to say 'No'. She didn't accomplish this until she was 17 years old. Imagine how hard it is to never truly understand if your child is in pain, sad, frightened, or hurting. Or, what does your child want, given all of the basic choices they face on a daily basis? Do you want to hear this, wear that, go here or do that? For 17 years Anna's answer was always 'yes.'

Then one day, she said 'no'. Our entire house stopped. We confirmed, Anna do you want dinner now? A very clear and decisive 'no' was delivered. We erupted in cheers and applause!

Helping the family is as important as helping your special needs child

Every parent of a special needs child realizes early on that surviving, let alone thriving, with a special needs child requires the love, patience, support, and investment of the extended family. Wisdom we received from JSS was that protecting and helping the family is as important as the development of the special needs child. The day trips with the school have helped Anna acclimate to the daily trips to the grocery store and riding in the cart (when she was young we left a cart full of food in the middle of the isle and walked out because of Anna's epic meltdown). Through a school trip, Anna visited Atlanta Symphony Hall. That allowed our family to do something special by attending ET, performed live by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. What a treasured family memory that we have the school to thank for!

A unique memory for our family was taking Anna to her Prom. Upon entering, Anna ran to the DJ, saw her friends and jumped with joy. We were astonished when she knew the words to almost all of the songs! We ran to her teacher and said 'What?!?!?' And nonchalantly she said 'Oh yeah, she loves I heart Radio' and giggled. We had a ball dancing and singing that evening.

Through the school we have become closer to other parents, staff, school administration and the Fayette County community. One evening at a fundraising event we bumped into friends of ours that didn't know we had a child with special needs. The blending of our life with Anna into our life in the community has been one of the most healing and supportive effects of the Joseph Sams School.

Some people call them Teachers, we call them Our Gift

When Anna was eleven, she had a case of life-threatening scoliosis. During her surgery and recovery, teachers came to see Anna. Her music therapist came to our home and would play guitar for Anna. The first day Anna sat upright in a chair and smiled was a victory not just for her parents but for the teachers of the Joseph Sams School. Their love helped her heal.

For three days every year, Anna's teachers take her to camp. This year was a special one. After a couple of years of climbing the zipline tower only to climb down, Anna did the zipline! That high five with her teacher after watching the video when we picked her up was heart-warming.

The teachers and staff's commitment to Covid safety exceeds anything we have seen or experienced in our society. They hold themselves to a different standard of behavior and safety, often at significant personal cost and inconvenience in their personal lives. This is all to keep our children safe. We admire and salute the professionalism, discipline, and fortitude of the entire team at the Joseph Sams School.

Anna lives a life of joy and normalcy and her family does the same. All of it is a gift from the Joseph Sams School.




together

we shine brightly

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT #2 | Wesley Bauhan

Wesley has genuinely made such amazing progress I do not think would have happened in a different environment.

I always found it fascinating that Wesley, my second born was such a “good baby”. And by good, I mean...he was really, really good. Even in the hospital after his birth he barely cried while I heard all the other babies screaming at various times in other rooms. I can count on ONE hand the amount of times he got upset when I would put him down for naps or to go to sleep at night between the ages of 1 and 3. He was perfect, smiling at everything and an overall goofball. This was such a welcomed improvement after my first son had been a more, let's say, difficult baby. When Wesley turned 2 and still had not started talking, I began to worry. He didn't seem like he was picking up language skills, both receptively or expressively like his peers. For a while we thought he just couldn't understand, or maybe hear well and that he would catch up. But a year went by, still no talking and a major deficit in understanding. We scheduled a meeting with a neuropsychologist to finally get some answers. Even to her, he was a bit of an unusual case and she wasn't comfortable diagnosing him yet with autism. Instead, he received a diagnosis of global developmental delay, expressive and receptive language disorder and severe childhood apraxia of speech. An appointment was made at Scottish Rite to evaluate him for an AAC device which he qualified for with flying colors. We started him in the public school special needs program the day he turned 3, but immediately started researching other options because we wanted to find the perfect place for our son to thrive. In public school, they loved on him, but were trying to force academic skills that he simply wasn't ready for yet. I still had a feeling he was not processing the receptive language input like he should be and was getting frustrated. We had heard about the Joseph Sams School through an on-line support group for special needs parents. We weren't sure at the time it would be the right fit but scheduled a tour. Once we were there it not only felt like the perfect fit, but we were ready to immediately make the move. Looking back, this was the best decision we have made for Wesley to date. Not only does he jump out of the car every day ready and excited to be at school, he has genuinely made such amazing progress I do not think would have happened in a different environment. His first word was at 4.5 years old...“Mama”. He didn't say anything else until 6 and then suddenly something clicked, and he tries to say anything you ask him to! I am just stunned by his progress, his positive attitude and all the teachers at JSS. Every teacher knows him by name and gets excited to hear his voice. They ALL push him to speak and I know this contributes to the success we have seen the last year in his language growth. I know in a large public school there is no way every teacher would know the specifics of our Wesley.



Looking back, this was the best decision we have made for Wesley to date.

Another wonderful thing about the JSS program is the ability for me as a parent to have input on his IEP. We can ask for certain things for Wesley that the public school system would not have considered. At JSS they work with him on his speaking device, but the second I said I wanted to force language more, they agreed, and truly push him to speak at all times and not always rely on the device. Not everything has to be about academics. No school understands this better and I will be forever grateful.

Wesley is thriving, and I mean thriving. He is so happy and joyful, and that for me is truly the most important thing. For the staff at JSS to let Wesley, and all the kids enjoy true happiness while also teaching them to interact with this world, both academically and in ways that emotionally keep them happy is more than I can ask for. We are so pleased with our decision to send Wesley to JSS and don't think we will ever be looking back.

Brenda Bauhan

together

we move mountains



Through the generosity of foundation support, The Joseph Sams School is able to provide the highest quality programming for students with disabilities in the metro-Atlanta area. Whether for program support, general operations, scholarship, or capital needs, foundation support is critical to our continued success. Throughout 2020-2021, we were blessed to have the support of local and area foundations that provided much needed funding to support The Joseph Sams School, and we are most grateful.

Given the financial needs our families continue to demonstrate, scholarship assistance remains a priority of the school's Board of Directors. We remain grateful to those foundations that continue to provide funding for scholarship assistance to deserving and qualifying families seeking much-needed educational programming for their children with disabilities. Once again, **The William R. and Sara Babb Smith Foundation** provided \$20,000 to support scholarship assistance to students from Henry County. In addition, **The Pennies from Heaven Foundation** once more generously contributed \$20,000, for scholarship funding awarded during the 2020-2021 school year. On behalf of the families receiving these scholarship awards, we say "thank you for allowing our children to access the programs which let them reach their full potential!"

For several years, **The John and Mary Franklin Foundation** has provided generous contributions in support of general operations, which have been both appreciated and necessary to sustain our ability to keep our doors open, lights burning, and quality programs available to children with disabilities. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to for its \$10,000 gift. **The Pennies from Heaven** provided support in the amount of \$30,000 and **The Ekkebus Charitable Fund** provided an additional \$5,000. This funding to maintain and enhance the daily operations of the school remains critical and difficult to obtain, and we could not provide our valuable services and programs without this essential assistance.

Our students have unique needs, and we are proud of the quality programs provided at JSS to meet these needs. Funds received to allow program expansion and development are always a blessing. We thank **The Frances Wood Wilson Foundation** and **Lehigh Hanson Cares** for their gifts of \$5,000 and \$2,500, respectively, to support the purchase of iPads – which supports our Unique Learning System school-wide curriculum.

As we continue our efforts toward creating a facility to meet the changing and growing needs of our students and families, we thank **The Hart Family Foundation** for its contribution of \$10,000 to this fund. In addition, both the loyal support of the **Fayette Civitan Club** and **Coweta-Fayette EMC** continue to be blessings, as we are most appreciative of their gifts of \$2,000 and \$25,000, respectively to apply to the future capital needs of our school.

The Oleta and Jimmy Collins Family Fund contributed \$29,000 to assist 3 of the aforementioned areas of need: general operations; the future capital campaign; and scholarship endowment funds. We are grateful for the faithful support and generosity of the Collins family!

Through these foundations, we can execute our mission and ensure that our students become as independent and productive as possible. We remain grateful to these foundations for not only supporting us but believing in our mission and students. Thank you for recognizing **together** we best support the ever-changing needs of our students and families!

Together we raise funds



Fundraising

The Joseph Sams School relies heavily on the generous philanthropic support of foundations; community gifts, both business and individual; as well as fundraising event participation. Each of these areas continue to grow and are key and highly critical factors to the school's financial sustainability.

Our annual fundraising campaign features events that appeal to different audiences and raise both awareness and funds for The Joseph Sams School. Annual events include a Sporting Clay Tournament; a 5k Race and two 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 that raise funds for The Joseph Sams School.

We remain grateful for the loyal and loving support of our community.



amazon smile

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to The Joseph Sams School! When signing up, make sure to select The Joseph Sams School as your charity of choice and shop away!



Save The Date

March 19, 2022
Race for a Reason

May 14, 2022
Dinner, Dance & Auction

October 7, 2022
Clays for a Cause

October 2022
Southern Flair

2022 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.

\$2,300,000 cost per year to operate the school

2.81 student to staff ratio

The average day at The Joseph Sams School involves

11 pieces of standing & walking equipment

146 speech devices for facilitating verbal & non-verbal communication

35 group therapy sessions

17 Specialty visitors

“When Jailynn started at JSS, she was having a really hard time walking. Once entering the MOVE program, her capabilities became endless. This school has given my family a sense of hope. We appreciate all that the staff does to ensure parents such as myself, feel comfortable.

– Alicia Bryant





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

Could purchase:

- + Interactive whiteboards for all classrooms
- + Playground surfacing

\$15,000

Could purchase:

- + Building/Facility and technology enhancements
- + Touchscreen classroom computers
- + Unique Learning System curriculum

\$10,000

Could purchase:

- + Playground equipment
- + iPads for classrooms

\$5,000

Could Purchase:

- + Appliances for Living Lab (Refrigerator, Dishwasher, Washing Machine, & Dryer)
- + Large classroom televisions
- + Gasoline for a year for bus

\$2,500

Could purchase:

- + Adaptive cognitive toys
- + PPE and cleaning supplies
- + Staff development and conferences
- + Augmentative speech devices

\$1,000

Could purchase:

- + Sensory Path supplies
- + Art supplies
- + Music therapy supplies

\$500

Could purchase:

- + Mobility equipment parts & accessories
- + Adaptive living supplies
- + Adaptive technology devices & components

\$100

Could purchase:

- + PECS Supplies (Picture Exchange & Communication System)
- + Communication & instructional apps for iPads

Apogee Scholarship



Ensure our students achieve beyond expectations by choosing where your tax dollars go. **It is your choice - send your money to the State or move your money into this 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 \$610,000 in scholarship revenues from The Apogee School Choice Fund which has allowed JSS to award 224 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.

2021 APOGEE SCHOLARSHIP DONORS

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“We were driving into carpool one morning, and as we pulled up, Reese smiled and said “Look there are my people”. No truer words have been spoken.

-Kim McDonald

Circle of Hope

Scholarship Giving Societies

Although scholarship donations are made at different times throughout the year, The Circle of Hope members continue to provide the bulk of our needs-based scholarship donations. The Circle of Hope is a Giving Society that was created in 2008 to help ensure that we had enough funding to be able to award scholarship monies to students whose families qualified for needs-based financial assistance with their annual tuition.

Since its inception in 2008, The Circle of Hope members, and the Friends of the Circle of Hope (donors who make a straight cash donation less than \$1,000 to this fund), have provided over \$1.6 million in scholarship funding and have cumulatively provided 390 scholarships to JSS students and families who qualify for need-based assistance. Our 2020-2021 Circle of Hope members are an exceptional group of benefactors, and their contributions have been met with great admiration and appreciation.

Circle of Hope Donors scholarship donation \$1,000 or greater

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JSS has brought out the P.J. we always knew was there - more words, more academic achievements. He is so proud of himself!

– Keisha Perrien



Donors

\$100 to \$499

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Bridging the Gap
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Carla's Dance Factory
Carter's
Challenge Air
Chick-fil-A Dwarf House
Chick-fil-A Towne Center
Clothes Less Traveled Thrift Shop
Community Corp of Peachtree City Rotary
Concordia Nursing and Rehabilitation Center
Delta Community Credit Union
Exceptional Ops
Fayette County Chamber of Commerce
Fayette County Civitan Club
Fayette County Department of Exceptional Children's Services
Fayette County Library
Fayette County Parks & Recreation – Special Olympics
Fayette County Sheriff's Office
Fayetteville Environmental Center
Fayetteville First Baptist Church
Fayette FACTOR
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FOCUS
Georgia Behavior Specialists
Hands on Healing
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Hope Memory Center
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Keller Williams, Katherine Bulloch
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Lekotek

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Georgia College and State University
Georgia Military College
Georgia State University
Grand Canyon University
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University of Georgia – Department of Special Education (Griffin)
University of Georgia – Department of Special Education (Athens)



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Melissa Patterson, Assistant Principal
Lynda Price, Business Manager
Faith Anderson, Administrative Assistant

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Leah Bear, Upper Collaborative
Joy Chapman, Pre-K
Debbie Clark, Pre-K
Rhendi Finley, Primary
Carly Gates, Elementary
Lisa Johnson, Upper School
Heather Kontos, Physical Therapist Consultant
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Amber Phillips, Upper School
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Payton Hoerner, Speech/Language Pathologist
Ellen Jeffers, Speech/Language Pathologist
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Alison Schmidt, SLP Assistant

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Michael Crofton
Alex Goodman

We are thankful to God for leading us to JSS where, as first-time parents, we are being guided on our sweet toddler's learning journey. We are grateful for their patience in teaching our son and carrying us along every step of the way.

We find JSS staff to be so kind, ready to share and resourceful.

– Uzo & Izu Ebenebe



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