



SACK TO SCHOOL

BACK TO MATURE

ANNUAL REPORT

FY 23 - July, 2022 - June 30, 2023





OUR MISSION

To provide a comprehensive, high-quality early childhood program designed to give all young children, regardless of their family's financial resources, a strong foundation on which to build the rest of their lives.

Dear Friend,

What an amazing year of accomplishments for our school! As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude and excitement for all that has been achieved by our children, staff, and community. The 2022-2023 school year was my first full year as Executive Director of Falls Church-McLean Children's Center. This year also marked the start of a "new normal" as the school adapted and grew after the challenges of the pandemic.

Last year, we reintroduced in-person field trips—welcome adventures for our young learners. Parents were invited back into the classrooms under less restrictive mask mandates. Our **Fall Festival** grew in scope, partnering with local organizations and individuals to strengthen our bonds with the community. Perhaps most exciting of all, we introduced **Forest Days**, a new initiative in our deep commitment to exploration, learning, and nature-based education.

Input from our dedicated teachers confirmed the need to expand outdoor education and led us to become the first preschool in the U.S. to partner with the Eastern Region Association of Forest and Nature Schools (ERAFANS), now the **Association of Nature-Based Education** (ANBE), for the Forest Days program. This milestone exemplifies our school's innovative spirit and showcases the strength of **our teachers'** remarkable willingness to learn and adapt. Their **growth mindset**, **teamwork**, **and adventurous approaches ensure our children are prepared for kindergarten and beyond.**

We'd like to reflect on last year through the lens of "Back to School, Back to Nature." For example, generous support of donations and grants enabled the purchase of new playground equipment for our toddlers. We extend our deepest thanks to the donors and organizations who helped make this dream a reality. Your support continues to provide our children with a vibrant, safe, and enriching environment to explore and grow.

We are also proud to share that Falls Church-McLean Children's Center has been recognized for its excellence within the community. This year, we were finalists for the Falls Church Chamber of Commerce's Large Business of the Year and Non-Profit of the Year. We were also honored to receive the Rabbi Richard Sternberger Social Justice Award from Temple Rodef Shalom, a testament to our commitment to serve children of all backgrounds and ensure them the opportunity to succeed.

Our mission is firm: to prepare every child for the future with age-appropriate skills, a love of learning and problem solving, and a strong connection to the natural world. We could not achieve these milestones without your continued support. You are the roots that allow us to flourish.

Thank you for being a part of this journey with us. We look forward to a future where we continue to grow, learn, and explore together.

Sincerely,

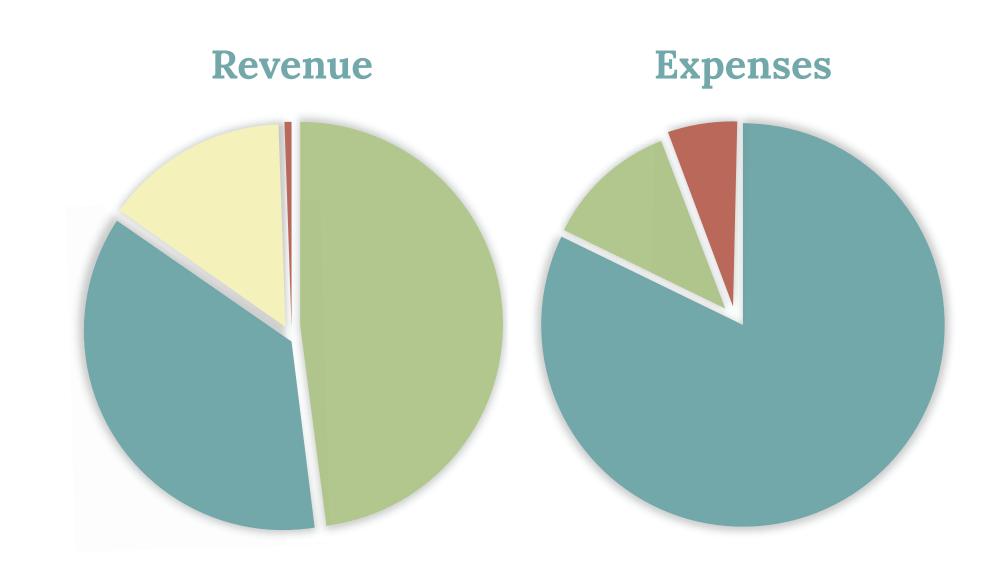
Hallye Smith
Executive Director

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



FY 2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Revenue	\$2M	
Government	\$951K	48%
Tuition	\$731K	37%
Contributions	\$291K	15%
Investment	\$11K	1%
Expenses	\$1.5M	
Program	\$1.2M	82%
Management	\$180K	12%
Fundraising	\$87K	6%



























COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Literacy

Reading is Fundamental and the New Dominion
Women's Club visited FCMLCC to read and
distribute books for our children to take home and
enjoy with their families! Thank you for supporting
our center and providing our students with books
for their home libraries.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Early Childhood Education Specialist Rock Spring Cooperative Preschool

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Falls Church-Mclean Children's Center

Hallye Smith



CONTRIBUTIONS

Charles Moody

Falls Church-McLean Children's Center gratefully recognizes the following for the period July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023:

		v		
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Just like a thriving tree needs sunlight and water to grow strong, FCMLCC relies on grants to nurture and sustain the programs at the heart of our mission.

These grants help us build and expand without the weight of repayment, allowing us to focus resources on essential operations.

FCMLCC was incredibly fortunate to receive the support of these grants in 2022-2023. We are endlessly grateful for these organizations' support. We look forward to continuing this journey together for the sake of our children and the community as a whole.

GRANTS

2022-2023

The Dominion Guild
The American Rescue Plan Act
(ARPA)

Immanuel Presbyterian Church

Frances R. Dewing

Rotary Club of McLean

Fairfax County Government



FOREST DAYS

forest days

Embracing Nature-Based Learning in Early Childhood Education

Nature-based education is gaining traction as a powerful approach to early childhood development. Grounded in the belief that children thrive when they connect with nature, this model encourages exploration, play, and hands-on learning in natural settings. The **Eastern Region Association of Forest and Nature Schools** (ERAFANS) and programs like Forest Days are leading this movement. By prioritizing outdoor learning, these programs help children build confidence, creativity, and problem-solving skills, all while fostering lifelong appreciation for the environment.









Spotlight on Mr. Jim: A Champion of Nature-Based Learning

Mr. Jim has been a dedicated member of ERAFANS since the 2016-2017 school year and served on its board from 2019 to 2022. His involvement began after attending a professional development workshop where he was introduced to the organization. Impressed by ERAFANS' strong community and its commitment to outdoor education, he became a significant contributor by leading professional development workshops training early childhood educators.

Seeing students excited about playing in the mud and finding worms.

Hearing students say, "I did it! Mr. Jim, look at this!"

How I've Seen Students & Teachers Grow

by Mr. Jim

Seeing the connections they are creating with nature.

Watching teachers give kids the opportunity to persevere and problem-solve.

Seeing the connections they create with nature.

Watching teachers connect with their childhood.

















Forest Days helps families and teachers spend more time in nature. In 2023, 86% of students' families felt that Forest Days encouraged more time outdoors.

Teachers were pleasantly surprised that the program fostered community in the classroom. Teachers became more comfortable going outside with children—even seeing it as a need.



This project would not have been possible without a grant from Frances R. Dewing Foundation. Thank you for allowing our program to bring this innovative educational experience to our teachers and students!



The 3rd Annual Fall Festival was a huge success! In 2022, we expanded the event to include community partnerships that support FCMLCC.

Organizations that had booths at our Fall Festival included:

- Devotion to Children
- Fairfax County Public Library and Amy Dager Stewart
- Family and Child Therapy
- Immanuel Presbyterian Church
- Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, McLean, VA
- New Dominion Women's Club
- Reading is Fundamental of NOVA
- St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church

3rd ANNUAL FALL FESTIVAL





FCMLCC is grateful for the volunteers who bring the Fall Festival to life.

Every year, volunteers support staff and agency partners like the vibrant colors of autumn leaves, creating a rich tapestry of joy, learning, and community. These dedicated individuals breathe energy into every activity. Their passion weaves through the crisp fall air as children laugh, learn, and explore.

Our discovery classroom explored science, language and math concepts with pumpkins from the Fall Festival.









COMPOSTING & GARDENING

Children Harvest what they Grow

Each Spring through early Fall, FCMLCC engages students in hands-on learning with The Creative Curriculum for Preschool Gardening Study. Children explore what it means to garden by being asked openended questions like, "How can we plan and care for our garden?" This process fosters collaboration and a sense of community across the school.





Students build on prior knowledge while developing literacy skills by creating labels for their plants. Vocabulary such as "compost," "pollination," and "habitat" is introduced. Graphing and measuring activities help answer predictions, like how tall their sunflowers will grow.

Field trips to Meadowlark Gardens and the D.C. Botanical Gardens deepen students' understanding. At the study's conclusion, students harvest and taste the fruits of their labor, reinforcing lessons on nutrition and healthy eating.

This year, the gardening program expanded with the addition of a LOMI indoor composter, turning food waste into soil in just three hours.

We thank the Junior League of Northern Virginia for their generous gardening grant that helped purchase our composter.



Robert Burton from **ABC 7 News** visited for his **Reading with Robert** show, sharing a book with the class on June 21.

We thank our Explorers teacher, Ms. Susi, for nominating FCMLCC for this opportunity!







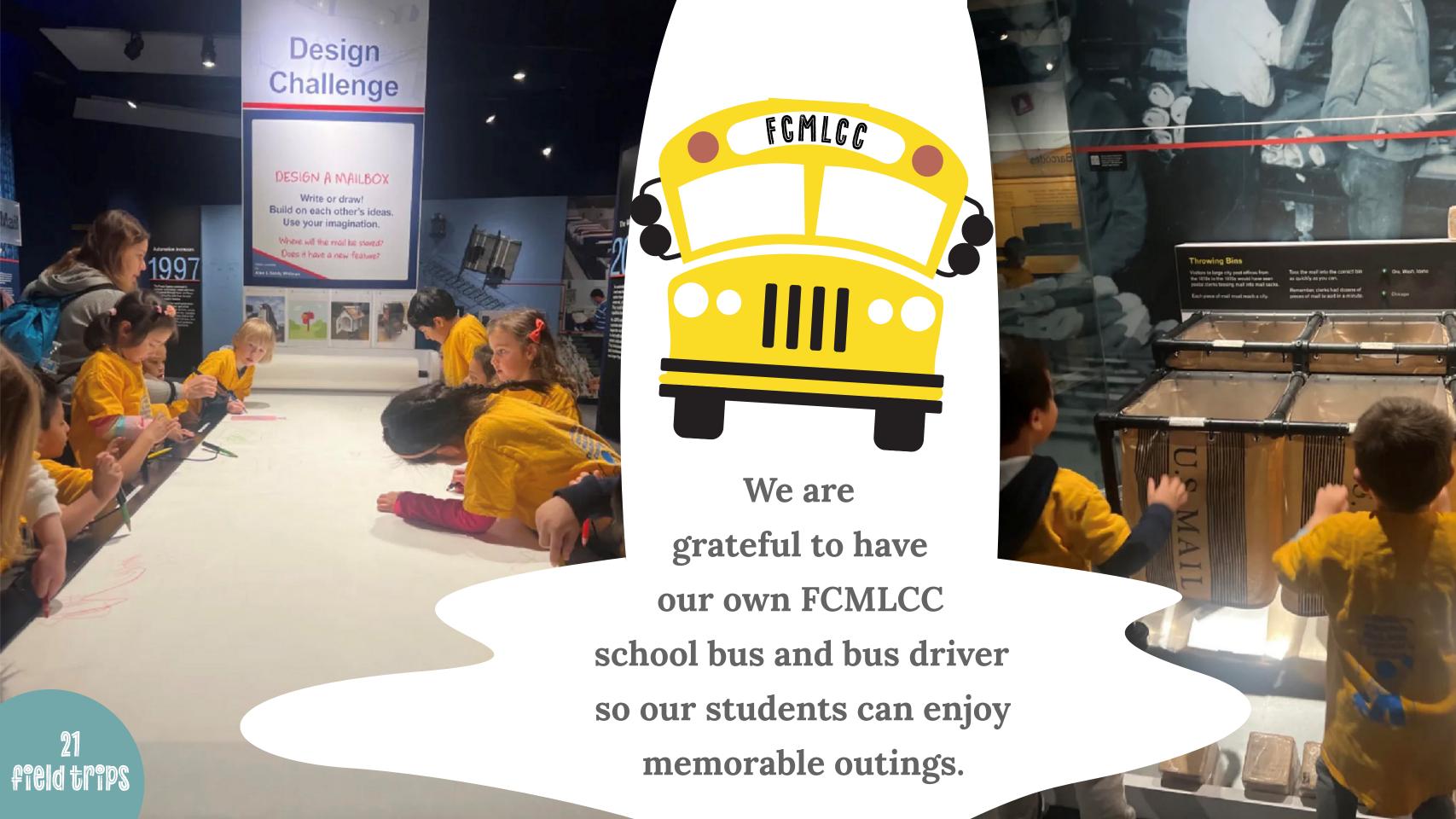
FIELD TRIPS

2022-2023 School Year

This year marked the return of monthly field trips for the first time since the pandemic. Each class participated in at least 12 trips throughout the year, bringing the FCMLCC curriculum to life and helping students connect with their community.

Field trip destinations included local parks, pumpkin patches, PetsMart, the National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, JoAnn's, the U.S. Botanical Gardens, and Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, among others.







AWARDS

In 2023, FCMLCC was honored with the prestigious Rabbi Richard Sternberger Social Justice Award, presented by Temple Rodef Shalom.

"The Center's success lies in diversity and celebrating that diversity of all kinds—race, culture, income, and differing abilities.

Temple Rodef Shalom is very proud to have been a close partner in that success."

~ Marjery Leveen Sher former FCMLCC Executive Director



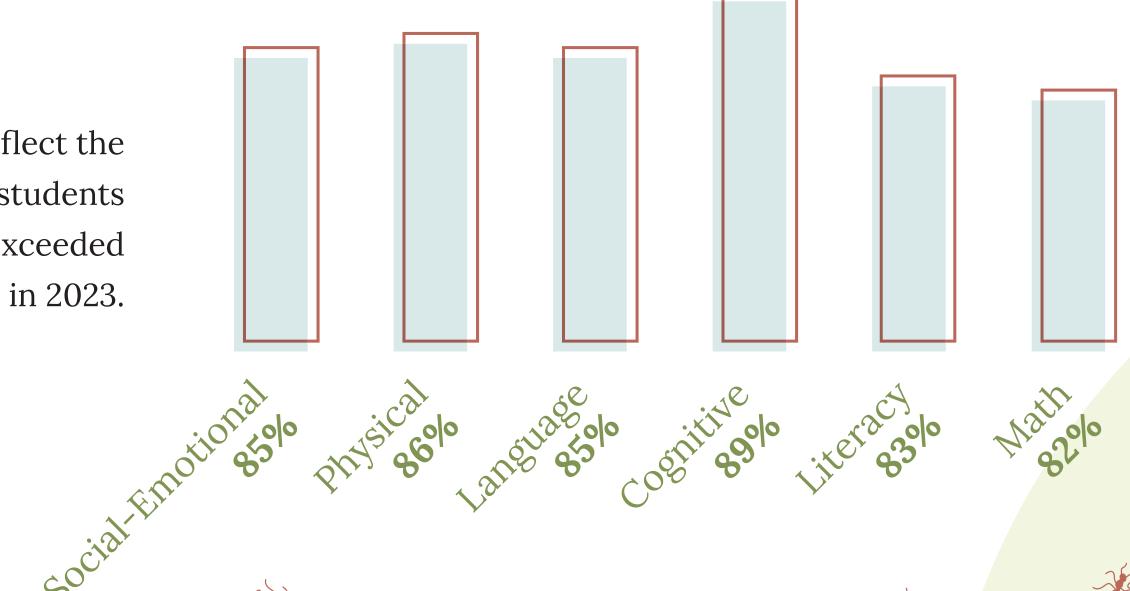
The Social Justice Award celebrates FCMLCC's dedication to providing quality early childhood education regardless of economic background, strengthening young lives as well as the broader community.

The Social Justice Award honors a commitment to Ikkun Olam, or repairing the world.

FCMLCC was also a finalist for Large Business of the Year and Non-Profit of the Year through the Falls Church Chamber of Commerce.

SPRING 2023 WHOLE-SCHOOL SNAPSHOT

Percentages reflect the number of students who met or exceeded expectations in 2023.















PARENT WORKSHOPS

In Partnership with the Eastern Region of Forest and Nature School and Family and Child Therapy

Parent workshops equip our student's parents with practical strategies for improving family dynamics, while providing valuable insights into child development and effective transitions. Topics in 2023 included:

- Forest Days
- Co-regulation
- Sibling Rivalry
- Increasing Cooperation and Setting Limits Without Punishment
- Transitions and Routines
- Kindergarten Information Night

ADDITIONAL 2022-2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Devotion to Children provided backpacks for students entering kindergarten.

Church donated space
in their facility for
our in person teacher
professional development
workshops and for our
holiday party.

Thank you!

St. John's Episcopal
Church had an art supply
drive FCMLCC during the
month of April.

FCMLCC started a school-wide newsletter for both our donors and parents.

reached our fundraising goals thanks to a generous matching gift from an anonymous donor.



Help Falls Church McLean Children's Center Give More Children a Strong Foundation



Make a generous gift today at fcmlcc.org/donate

For more information, email: Director.FLMLCC@gmail.com

Address: 7230 Idylwood Road, Falls Church, Virginia 22043

Hours of operation: 7:00 AM - 6:00 PM, Monday - Friday

Phone: 703-534-4907

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