

Together we can help families move from isolation to community!



Dear Friend,

Do you want to make the world a better place, but don't know where to begin? You don't have to look much further than right here in our own neighborhood. English Language Learner families living in Waltham with young children are not aware of preschool opportunities. Parents are also fearful and isolated because they are not able to communicate in English.

In 2003 Waltham Family School was created to prepare children of low-income English Language Learner families for kindergarten success. While the program has made adjustments and changes over the years, we continue to empower English Language Learner families to be literate, self-sufficient and connected to the community.

From Fear to Confidence!

Friends of the Waltham Family School recently interviewed 26 WFS alumni from the past 14 years to learn about their experiences after attending Waltham Family School. The results were eye-opening!

The WFS program focuses on much more than just English; it also teaches parents how to partner with the schools in their children's education. All parents reported that they are attending parent-teacher conferences, half reported they volunteer at their child's school, participate in field trips or read to their child's class. A WFS alumna described how learning English gave her the confidence to interact more outside her home:

When I came to WFS, I didn't know any English and coming here was not easy. I was ready to give up. But now I feel empowered – you need to overcome fear. I feel confident enough to go to a parent-teacher conference without a translator.

- WFS Alumna

From Isolation to Community!

A recurring theme in the alumni interviews was fear and isolation. Parents reported that before joining WFS, they were afraid to go out and lived in fear at home because they were unable to communicate. Learning English was their main reason for joining Waltham Family School, but what they gained was much more than comprehension and vocabulary:

This is a really good program - it helps us with everything. This place is like a family - it helps us learn. Here you are a part of a community - most of my friends are from here. What you ask of me is so little compared to what you have given me.

- WFS Alumna



Intensity and duration are part of the WFS success. Parents and children attend the program 4 days/week, 3 hours/day.



Digital literacy is an important part of the WFS program. Parents learn to use computers, email and smart phones.



During Interactive Literacy parents and children work on age-appropriate projects to encourage them to learn together.

English Language Learner Families Improve Their Lives

Waltham Family School overcomes fear and isolation through a unique program that goes beyond English classes. WFS prepares children for kindergarten through a valuable preschool experience, guides parents in how to partner with the schools, and assists parents in making connections to community resources. Out of the 26 alumni interviewed, 18 of them are now employed, thanks to skills they learned in WFS.

When I came to the US I didn't know any English. I learned all my English here [WFS]. They taught me how to write letters and gave me some professional skills, using computers, and how to present myself. Now I'm a manager at a local restaurant. I have worked here for 4 years. Many professionals from local companies come in and I am able to talk with them.

- WFS Alumna

You can be part of something bigger. Give today!

Your donation – of any size – may seem like a small step, but together we can improve the lives of preschoolers and their families. Together we can transform the cycle of fear and isolation into one of confidence and community.

*Before coming here I felt frustrated because here in the USA all is very different. But that ended when I started to learn English here at Waltham Family School. Because now I can read, speak, and listen more than when I started. Now I'm more independent and I feel very happy because I'm more safe by myself. **Thanks WFS for the best opportunity! You changed my life.***

-2017 WFS Graduate

Together we succeed!

Let's make our community stronger. Please give to Waltham Family School to sustain our work to empower English Language Learner families.

Thank you,



Tom Maehl
Friends of Waltham Family School, Inc.



Britta McNemar
Waltham Family School

PS. Make your tax-deductible gift today in the return envelope enclosed or online at www.walthamfamilyschool.org




PPS. Want to learn more about the alumni interviews? Join us for the **FWFS Third Annual Meeting on Tuesday, November 14 @ 6:30 PM.**

PPPS. Want to see WFS in action? Join us for **Coffee & Conversation** on October 26, December 6 or February 8, 2018 @ 9:30 AM – 11 AM at friendsofthewfs@gmail.com



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