

# SYNERGY TIMES

The Newsletter of Synergy School

Fall 2025



## Fund-a-Need Softer Hard Yard

by Russ Curtis, Director of Technology

A new softer, hard yard surface is making a big difference in outdoor play at Synergy School. Thanks to the generosity of the Synergy community, the old plastic surface was replaced with a new Cushion X surface. The new light blue surface included five layers of coating.

At our Spring Fundraiser, parents helped raise more than \$75,000 for this fund-a-need project. The final price tag was \$125,000, and the remaining balance was covered by the school's sinking fund. The new court includes new striping for basketball, volleyball, foursquare, hopscotch, and pickleball—a popular elective. In addition, a

new, improved set of basketball goals was installed.

To prepare the area, the old 12” tiles were removed with the help of staff, parents, and students. All the tiles were recycled, and some were even used as parent projects for new surfaces in backyards. The old asphalt beneath the tiles was replaced with a new grading and drainage system.

A special thank you to Vintage Contractors of San Francisco and Cato's Paving of Hayward. All work was completed in the summer before the start of the school year. ∞

Watch the time-lapse video: <https://vimeo.com/1103927795>

### In this issue:

Softer Hard Yard	1
Diversity Dinner 2025	2
Author Angelica Carpenter	3
2025 Graduation Speeches	4
Rights of Passage	6
Author Kyla Zhao	7
The Synergy Scoop	8
Cave Wall Project	9
Board of Trustees News	10
Annual Report	11

“Thanks to the generosity of the Synergy community, the old plastic surface was replaced with a new Cushion X surface. The new light blue surface included five layers of coating.”



Students Having Fun at the Diversity Dinner

## Delicious, Warm, and Bright: Diversity Dinner 2025

by Shireen Malekafzali Taidi, Synergy Parent for the Diversity Committee

As a new parent to the Synergy community, I didn't know what to expect for the Diversity Dinner. Whatever I thought, it more than exceeded my expectations. Let's walk through the wins together.

The Delicious Food – diverse, savory, sweet, and plentiful. There were homemade enchiladas, two or three different sushi rolls, kabobs, Russian dumplings and Chinese dumplings, and mango sticky rice, homemade pies and desserts, and so much more. It was a culinary tour across countries, cultures, family traditions, and backgrounds. Very few things remained after the feeding frenzy was over, and

table, or to the trashcan, or to get a drink, I ran into a friendly face, a warm smile, and a chance to connect. People shared what food they brought or made and why. They asked questions and listened with genuine curiosity. And, knowing we were new, often checked in on how my kids were liking Synergy so far. Inevitably so many conversations ended with, “isn't Synergy great,” as a statement and not a question.

The Bright Spot—while the title of the event features the dinner, the centerpiece was not the food but the student speakers sharing about the People of Color in Independent

One speaker shared, “We may not speak the same language, have the same color skin, or be the same gender, but we are all human and we should be treated as such.” They shared how there are “many clubs at Synergy, but none as special as POCIS.” They shared the goal of POCIS is “to create young leaders to stand up against racial inequalities and things they believe are not right.” One POCIS leader shared how happy they were to have a group like POCIS, another about all the great ways they were going to learn and contribute over the course of the year. They ended by thanking the families for bringing the “awesome food,” but it was clearly us who needed to thank them. They modeled for us how to stand in our diversity, embrace the diversity of others, and lead with purpose.

The Diversity Dinner left me full in more ways than one. I walked away with a full belly, and a lot more hope for our future. The Synergy community is truly a bright spot in our lives. ∞

“The Diversity Dinner left me full in more ways than one. I walked away with a full belly, and a lot more hope for our future.”

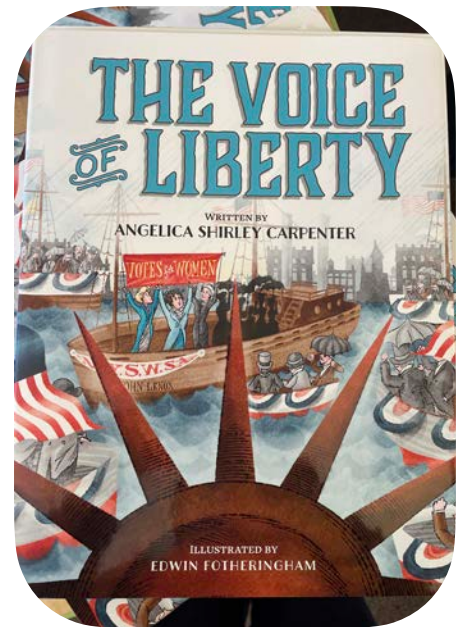
anything left was a function of the large quantities brought and full tummies, not for lack of flavor.

The Warmth of the Community—emanated across the yard. Every time I walked to the food

Schools and Friends (POCIS&F) Club. Poised and eloquent, the students stood confidently in their skin and spoke to the big crowd—something I could never have done at their age.



Author Angelica Shirley Carpenter Speaking to 4th and 5th Grade



## Author Visit: Angelica Shirley Carpenter

by Jess Boyer, Synergy Parent for the Diversity & Inclusion Committee

In March the 4/5 classrooms were treated to a visit by author Angelica Shirley Carpenter.

Ms. Carpenter did a read-aloud of her book *The Voice of Liberty* which is a historical fiction children’s book that tells the story of famous suffrage leaders Matilda Joslyn Gage and Lillie Devereux Blake as they chartered a boat to crash the naval parade and dedication of the Statue of Liberty.

Speaking of the fact the Statue of Liberty was a woman holding that famous torch and to “give her a voice”, Lillie wrote a letter to the men in charge of the celebration. She asked to speak on behalf of women at the ceremony. The men in charge wrote back and told her no, that no woman would be allowed to speak or to even be permitted on the island where the statue stood. Not taking this answer, Lillie and Matilda began working to secure a boat to sail in the naval parade.

They applied to take part in the procession and received the answer “yes”.

On October 28, 1886, 200 people boarded this boat with a long banner tied to the prow. The banner proudly displayed the initials “N.Y.S.W.S.A” which stood for New York State Woman Suffrage Association. As they toured with the parade of hundreds of boats, the women yelled “Votes for women!” and “Equal rights now!”

After finishing the read-aloud of her book, Ms. Carpenter took some time explaining the climate in which the story was placed. She told the students that women were not only not allowed to vote, but they were banned from receiving a higher education, speaking in public, serving on juries or testifying in court. If they were married, they were not allowed to own property or sign contracts. If a marriage ended, the woman had no rights to her children.

The class was very engaged with Ms. Carpenter, asking questions and sharing their own knowledge of how women in history have been treated. One student mentioned

the Salem Witch Trials which sparked an interesting discussion. Matilda Joslyn Gage happened to be the mother-in-law of L. Frank Baum (the author of *The Wizard of Oz*). It is believed that she inspired his portrayal of the good witch and the bad witch in the story.

The afternoon with Ms. Carpenter inspired my family to look into the women in our genealogy; we found that Jude’s third-great grandmother was also integral to the women’s suffrage movement. In communication with members of our family, we talked about how relevant the stories of these women are today as women face a degradation of their rights once again.

Attending Ms. Carpenter’s visit to the 4/5 was indeed very inspiring. I also imagine it made her granddaughter, Eastenders’ student Fiona, very proud. ∞



Graduate Skye Gustafson



Graduate Jaden Benefield

## Class of 2025 Student Graduation Speeches

by Skye Gustafson, Jaden Benefield, and Ari Mireles, Synergy 8th Grade Class Speakers

The 8th grade Class of 2025 graduation ceremony was held at Synergy School on May 31st. Graduates Skye Gustafson, Jaden Benefield, and Ari Mireles were the three class speakers. (See below for their speeches.)

### *Skye Gustafson's Speech* *Written in verse*

You know they always say that  
time will move fast  
That I will be graduating before I  
know it  
What I didn't expect was that it  
was actually going to happen  
That time did move fast  
That I am graduating right now  
I can't believe this is actually  
happening  
That I'm standing up here  
speaking for the class of 2025  
If you had told me in sixth grade  
that I was doing this, I wouldn't  
have believed you— I would have  
said that was impossible  
But here I am  
This class has been everything to  
me ever since I got here in the 2nd  
grade— I can't remember what it  
was like without all of you

Sometimes I can't help but  
wonder what it would be like if I  
had never gone to Synergy  
Now that I think of it, I definitely  
wouldn't be where I am right now  
I think this class was fate  
Even if some of you don't want to  
believe it  
Everything happens for a reason  
Like the first time I met my best  
friend, Hazel  
Or the time Cami dropped her  
phone in the bay and had to get  
another one  
Or me and Paulette's first yap  
session in the upstairs hallway  
(we've had one every Monday  
since then)  
This class is amazing  
I don't think I would change  
anything about it  
Some of us may have our  
differences  
(Some differences may be justified,  
some not so much)  
But that's not the point  
The point is that we all made it  
here together  
I hope you all have amazing high  
school experiences

That y'all meet new lifelong  
friends  
That y'all get good grades  
That y'all become your best selves  
And remember to stay in touch  
I love you all

### *Jaden Benefield's Speech*

When I first came to Synergy, I  
didn't know what to expect. Once I  
entered the hallways, I felt unsure  
and trepidatious. Upon entering  
my classroom, I was immediately  
greeted with warmth and love. It's  
like they knew exactly how to make  
me feel relaxed and comfortable. I  
immediately began to think  
positively, and I told myself this is  
gonna be a great journey.

Sometimes all kids need is  
positivity and a great learning  
environment. This is exactly what  
Synergy provides. I've made so  
many awesome friends and met  
amazing teachers. Of all my years  
of school, this has been the most  
challenging yet the most rewarding  
experience I have ever had. I am  
comfortable with calling Synergy  
my second family, which I will  
never forget.



Eighth Grade Graduate Ari Mireles



Jesse Kitsets, Master of Ceremonies

Academically, I've attained and achieved great milestones that will catapult me successfully into high school. The experience that Synergy provided was unmatched. Let's take Puerto Rico as an example. This was a culturally dynamic traveling experience that has instilled long-lasting memories that I can draw upon for the rest of my life. This opened my eyes to how big the world is and how much there is to see.

Athletically playing basketball and running track was a phenomenal experience, but most importantly, it was winning a championship for the Synergy Wolves. My Synergy experience has broadened my horizons and has inspired me to attain higher

"A lot of my life took place here and it's given me more memories than I care to count."

learning. I look forward to high school, college, and beyond. Thank you to all of my teachers who supported me throughout my time at Synergy. Good luck to all and best wishes, thank you very much!!

### *Ari Mireles Speech*

It's a lot to sum up nine years in ninety seconds, so I'll get right to the point.

I'm honored that I was invited to come to school today and give this speech. The last time I was invited to come here, it ended up costing me two hundred grand and some change, but it's been worth every penny.

The twenty-two graduates in this room today have made me laugh more than anyone else has. A lot of my life took place here and it's given me more memories than I care to count, like the time I broke my arm in P. E. or on the backpacking trip when Otis was cooking our food, dropped my quesadilla into the

sand and told me it was "Hawaiian style," or when Jaden came over to my house and lobbed his water bottle across the living room. It landed inside the chandelier—a perfect three-pointer.

One of my earliest memories was my second-grade trip to the Egyptian Museum. It started out innocently enough, with me and my class waiting for a tour guide. I asked Ebony if I could take a quick walk around the koi pond. She said, "Yeah, as long as you're careful not to fall in."

Not only did I fall in, but I did it within the first 25 seconds and took a complete nosedive. Didn't have a change of clothes either. I'm still not sure whose pants I was wearing when I got home that day. But what I do remember is how great everybody was at helping me up, making me feel comfortable, and trying not to laugh.

I'd like to thank the teachers not only for helping make our class what it is today, but also for letting us wear normal clothes today as opposed to those weird-looking graduation gowns in all the movies. And I'd like to thank my classmates for all the great conversations and all the shared moments. ∞

Check out the video of the Class of 2024 Graduation Ceremony and speeches at: [vimeo.com/synergyschool](https://vimeo.com/synergyschool)

## CLASS OF 2025

Last year's eighth grade class was accepted to a wide range of public, parochial, charter, and independent high schools:

Lowell High School  
Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts  
St. Ignatius College Preparatory  
Gateway High School  
Junipero Serra High School  
Archbishop Riordan High School  
Balboa High School  
Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory  
Drew School  
Mercy High School Burlingame  
Stuart Hall High School  
Urban School of San Francisco  
San Francisco Waldorf High School

## CLASS OF 2021

Our 2021 alumni matriculated to the following schools:

Wellesley College  
Tufts University  
Bard College  
Northeastern University  
Brown University  
Scripps College  
Claremont McKenna College  
San José State University  
New York University  
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University  
Carleton College  
Parsons School of Design  
University of Texas  
UC Los Angeles  
UC Santa Barbara  
UC San Diego



Camping Trip to Del Valle Regional Park

## Eighth Grade Rights of Passage

by Ariel Leighton, Middle School PE/Outdoor Ed Teacher

The eighth-grade Rights of Passage Program is a long-standing Synergy tradition that allows students to come together and share their thoughts on upcoming transitions. Our goal is that the class comes back with the common knowledge that they are all going through similar changes and that they can trust each other to share what they are going through and receive peer support. We emphasize what it looks like to be a leader at Synergy.

This year, we took a new approach. Instead of joining the lower grades at Farm School, we took the 8th graders to their own site, Del Valle Regional Park. We set up our own tents, cooked our own meals, played bonding games, hiked, swam, sat together by the fire pit, and spent a lot of time talking. We saw deer, wild turkeys, skunks, quail, and turkey vultures. Little did we know it was tarantula season, and we saw a few of them as well.

On our last night, we turned the focus inward. After a long evening

of games and a culminating group ceremony, the students set out on their solo night. They set up and slept alone under the stars. They woke up in the morning feeling strong, brave, and ready to conquer their 8th-grade year. ∞



Eighth Grade Camping Trip



Kyla Zhao Visits with the Sun Room, Skylights, and Eastenders Students



Kyla with Her New Book

## Author Kyla Zhao Inspiring Readers

by Susanne DeRisi, Synergy Librarian

Author Kyla Zhao made all the right moves during her visit to Synergy School on October 10, 2025, captivating our Sun Room, Skylights, and Eastenders students. Kyla's middle-grade novel, *May the Best Player Win*, tells the story of character May Li, a middle school chess team player whose love for and enjoyment of playing chess become overshadowed by the pressure to win. The novel tackles gender stereotypes as well as the high expectations often placed on children to perform well in and out of school.

Our students really appreciated how Kyla made her presentation fun and engaging. One student shared afterwards that it's sometimes hard for them to focus for so long, but Kyla kept their attention throughout by playing interactive games. Kyla encouraged audience participation with guessing games about puns, chess, famous first lines, and more.

Beyond entertainment, Kyla delivered meaningful content that resonated deeply with students and teachers. Kyla explained how chess

is a very male-dominated space (women make up only 11% of players globally) and shared how her childhood experience competing in chess tournaments inspired her to write *May the Best Player Win*. A student remarked that it was powerful

“The novel tackles gender stereotypes as well as the high expectations often placed on children to perform well in and out of school.”

when Kyla discussed how she loved playing chess but felt lonely as one of the few girls playing at a competitive level.

Students and teachers appreciated Kyla's clear explanations about the writing process—from developing interesting characters and ideas for stories, to the reality that good writing takes many drafts. Skylights teacher Rea Inglesis noted that when Kyla showed six versions of the book's cover, it “helped her make a great point about not getting hung up on first

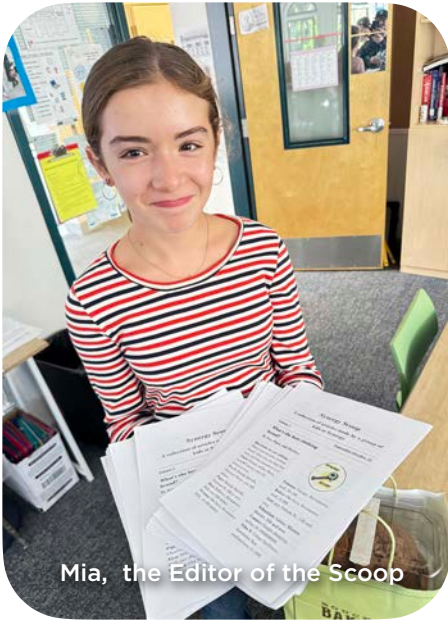
drafts and the iterative process of creating good work.”

One of the most memorable moments was when Kyla mentioned that she could touch her nose with her upper lip—and after the presentation, when a student asked her to demonstrate

this skill, she did! The students were absolutely delighted by her willingness to be playful and authentic with them.

The enthusiastic questions and the line of students waiting to talk with Kyla afterward spoke volumes about the impression she made. Chess fever has gripped Synergy School, with students gathering around multiple chessboards in the school yards.

We're so grateful to Kyla Zhao for sharing her time and talent with our Synergy School community. ∞



Mia, the Editor of the Scoop



Working on the Synergy Scoop

## The Synergy Scoop: a Middle School Newspaper

by Mia Blumenberg, 8th Grade Student

The Synergy Scoop is an all-middle-school newspaper that features comics created by fourth- and fifth-grade students. In the newspaper elective, ideas range from recent Synergy volleyball games to detailed book reviews. People have conducted interviews throughout the middle school, showcasing other kids' voices through their usual McDonald's orders, or gathering people's opinions on their favorite music artists.

As the editor, The Synergy Scoop is an important part of my everyday life at Synergy. I love reading articles from diverse perspectives, discovering new ideas in unique stories, and learning about the community through each one. I see the Synergy Scoop as a way for kids to express themselves, develop their writing skills, and grow through journalism.

Not only does the newspaper's voice range across genres, but it also does so across age groups. People throughout the middle school have written articles for the

Synergy Scoop. Ages have ranged from eleven to fourteen, providing different perspectives on how the newspaper is formed.

Mila Durkee, a sixth grader, said, "The Synergy Scoop has been really fun. I'm learning a lot about journalism, and interviewing has brought me closer to other people." Another sixth grader, Hazel Follin, agrees, "I think being in the Synergy Scoop is really cool. It's great to be able to write and learn how to interview."

Some people have been in the newspaper elective for a few weeks, while others have been in it for 2 years, and some for their entire middle school experience. The combination of everyone's perspectives is what makes journalism an open space for different opinions and thoughts. The culture of the Newspaper Elective has created an amazing community: "I have been in the Synergy Scoop for 2 years, and it's been fun to write articles with my friends," says 7th grader Eva Svane. Being able to work with your friends and collaborate on ideas is

an amazing part of the community that the newspaper brings to Synergy. Being able to take your thoughts and express them to other people is fully shown in the newspaper. Eighth grader, Audrey Kitses, states, "I really enjoy being a part of the Synergy Scoop; it's a great way to build community and be a part of something bigger than myself. I have been in the Synergy Scoop for 3 years, and I have learned to develop my writing and get my ideas across to other people."

In the past year, we published six editions of the Synergy Scoop. Our goals this year are to get at least one edition out each month (nine or more editions total). Once we finish an edition, they are placed in the two newspaper boxes outside the Science and Humanities rooms. Getting the new edition out to the school is one of the most exciting parts of being in the newspaper, as you can show your article to friends and family. Be sure not to miss out on the next copy! ∞



Student Creating Modern Cave Painting



## “Did They Dream at Night” Cave Wall Project

by Dominic Altieri, Middle School History Teacher

In our mixed sixth–eighth grade history block class, we have been studying Human Origins in Africa, focusing on the rise of the first cities. To bring this journey to life, students watched Werner Herzog’s documentary, “Cave of Forgotten Dreams.” The film takes us deep into the Chauvet Cave in southern France, where some of the oldest human-painted images, dating back more than 30,000 years, reveal how early humans expressed what mattered most to them. The documentary sparked some great conversation about why humans create art and what it says about their values.

Students then created the “Did They Dream at Night” cave wall project, producing two pieces each: one in the prehistoric style, inspired by the Chauvet Cave, and one about their own lives today, drawn in the same style. Imagining what’s important to them today, students decided how they would leave their mark on the walls of history.

Using only red, black, and white paint pens on crumpled paper bag walls, students shared their stories across time—handprints, spirals, and herds of animals alongside images of phones, music, and basketball. They

always inspiring to see the connections my students make between the past and their own lives. History isn’t just something from the past that we study—it’s something we join in on. ∞

“Imagining what’s important to them today, students decided how they would leave their mark on the walls of history.”

created modern cave paintings that symbolize their own lives today, drawn in the same ancient style. These will be displayed together as a makeshift hallway cave wall, to be experienced with flashlights as if by torchlight, just as people did over 30,000 years ago.

This project reminds us that, across millennia, humans have consistently found ways to convey that we were here, and this is what mattered to us. It’s





Rea Inglesis, New Director of Operations

## News From the Board of Trustees

by Cynthia Louie, Board of Trustee Member

### *New Director of Operations*

Congratulations to Rea Inglesis in her new role as Synergy’s Director of Operations. In her 24 years as a Synergy teacher and trustee, Rea brings a wealth of experience, having managed the school’s 2021 building renovation and the recent Furniture Fund-a-Need projects. She also led the initiative to install a 30kW rooftop solar system in 2013.

As a teacher-administrator, Rea’s priority is to proactively maintain an enriching learning environment that supports student and staff well-being and creativity. She will also ensure that the After School and Summer programs are aligned with our mission and core values.

Rea is an avid birder and sailor. She and her wife, Kat, sail in San Francisco Bay and Puget Sound and are putting together a project for the R2AK, a 750-mile endurance race from Port Townsend, Washington, to Ketchikan, Alaska. ∞

### *Strategic Plan*

The Synergy Board of Trustees is pleased to release details of its strategic plan, a plan which is purposeful, needs-responsive, action-oriented, and forward thinking. It aims to respond to new needs and contexts emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. Our areas of focus include ensuring a sustainable administrative structure, nurturing a healthy and vibrant community, evolving our educational program to meet the needs of the future, and cultivating our resources. ∞

Please read more in the newly published strategic plan brochure at <https://synergyschool.org/governance>

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## Synergy School 2024-2025 Annual Report

### Gifts to the Synergy Annual Fund

Thank you for your support.

We are grateful for the generosity of our donors who helped to raise \$578,470 for the Synergy Annual Fund in 2024-2025. Our Board participation in the Annual Fund was 100%, and Synergy families' participation was 85%.

### Ways to Give to Synergy School

Synergy School is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and gifts are tax deductible to the extent allowed by the law. Donations are accepted in the following ways:

Mail your donation to:  
Development Office  
Synergy School  
1387 Valencia St  
San Francisco, CA 94110

Donate online or download a pledge card at [www.synergyschool.org/giving](http://www.synergyschool.org/giving)

Gifts of appreciated securities are gladly accepted. For more information, please contact Liz McDonald at 415 567-6177 or [liz@synergyschool.org](mailto:liz@synergyschool.org)

Many employers have a matching gift program that allows an employee's gift to be matched by 1:1. Ask your employer about their matching gift guidelines.

For more information about including Synergy School in your estate plans, please contact Liz McDonald.

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Synergy School Annual Report 2024 - 2025

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Shana Murray Baird and Tripp Baird  
Melissa Myers and Tom Smalara  
Kaori Oginio  
Masayo Okamoto and Tommy O'Neil  
Sofia and Jonathan Perel  
Erica Pfeiffer and Scott Streeter  
Jasmine Probst and Tim Callan  
Melanie Puno and Edward Smith  
Jared Ravetch and Kayo Sugawara  
Inara and Sönke Rohde  
Elba Rosales  
Katherine and Brian Rosch  
Samantha Schaadt and Stuart Fitzgerald  
Toby Shaw and Ira Simkhovitch

Belis and Jonathan Sly  
 Madison Smith and Andrew Godwin  
 Amy Standen and Chris Colin  
 Natalie Stormann  
 Dustyne Sutherland and Iain Baker  
 Mikkell and Laura Svane  
 Heidi and Martin Sweeney  
 Tayvee Taechasukij  
 Michele and Cameron Tana  
 LaTresha Tanner  
 Evonne Thong  
 Ellen and Nick Tiano  
 Alison True  
 Helena True  
 Laura Valentine & Beckett Madden-Woods  
 Carol and Randy Villazon  
 Scott Weir and Crystal Moy  
 Julie Ullman and David Whitfield  
 Nova Wilson and Elsu Martin  
 LeRoy Wise  
 Jennifer and Gary Witt  
 Danielle and Robert Wrixon  
 Parul Yadav and Ankit Srivastava  
 Vera Zaskodna and Adam Jany

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 Jeffrey Ravetch  
 Lynne and Jeff Schaadt  
 Carl Schleicher  
 Elizabeth and Chinin Tana  
 Tania and Adam Triolo  
 Christine Valentine  
 Betsy Wolff Frey  
 Linda and James Troup

### Alumni and Alumni Parents

Andrew Ma  
 Caroline and Haney Armstrong  
 Janet Arnesty and John Good  
 Marilyn Bancel and Rik Myslewski  
 Rebecca Barmore and Lisa Pooley  
 Staci Boden '80 and Alex Gologorsky  
 Vincent Campasano and Harris Meyer  
 Emma Carlson and Ramon Felciano  
 Susan Caston  
 Hilary and Ron Davis  
 Elena Dillon  
 Ronan and Patty Dunlop  
 David Emanuel and Maria Wamsley  
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 Consuelo Faust-Anderson & Thor Anderson  
 Yuko Fruth and Ariano Lembi  
 Annelise Goldberg and Aaron Roland  
 Carla Gomez and Sandy Feinland

Julie Graham and Candace Thille  
 Estella Habal and Hilton Obenzinger  
 Karen Klein and Benjamin Golvin  
 Paul Linde and Laurie Schultz  
 Winnie and Kenneth Ma  
 Constance Matthiessen  
 Alison Kim and Christiane Medina  
 Rev. Eric and Jessica Metoyer  
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 Derek Rosenfield and Jenna Schott  
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 Risa Sandler  
 Urmimala Sarkar and Theodore Omachi  
 Lois Scott and Bernie Choden  
 Elizabeth Silver  
 Shannon Thyne and Christopher Benitez  
 Helen Wood  
 Diane Zacher and Howard Gelman

### Staff and Former Staff

Cynthia Eaton and Jim Halligan  
 Elena Dillon  
 Charmaine Stavedahl and Bruce Jancin  
 Diana Wild

### Friends

Cecilia and Lawrence Chazen  
 Patricia S. Dinner  
 Steve Grand-Jean  
 Noel and Terry Hefty  
 Alan Markle  
 Mr. John S. Osterweis  
 John Schulz D.D.S.



Carolyn Zecca Ferris

## Foundations and Corporations

Anonymous  
Bessemer Giving Fund  
GAP Foundation  
Jewish Community Federation  
Endowment Fund  
Lembi Family Trust  
Messing Family Charitable Foundation  
Salesforce.com Foundation  
SAP  
Sephora  
The Ettinger Foundation  
Wells Fargo Community Support Campaign  
Workday  
Zuora

## In Honor/Memory

Kim McClain in honor of Quentin Noverio  
Messing Family Charitable Foundation in honor of Russ Messing and Arlene Naschke  
Noel and Terry Hefty in honor of Russ Messing and Arlene Naschke  
Jasmine Probst and Tim Callan in memory of David B. Callan  
Jan and Paul Pfeiffer in honor of Carson Streeter  
Diana Wild in memory of Tammy Damon  
Urmimala Sarkar and Theodore Omachi in honor of Nikaash and Mika Omachi  
Susan and Jim Duthie in honor of Jemma and Juna Duthie  
Rita and George Gorman in honor of Dorothy Gorman  
Bessemer Giving Fund in memory of Tammy Damon  
Winnie & Kenneth Ma in memory of Tammy Damon  
Diane Zacher and Howard Gelman in memory of Eli Golvin-Klein  
Pat and Diehl Jones in honor of Jude Harris Boyer  
Linda and James Troup in honor of Zander Hoare  
Jewish Community Federation  
Endowment Fund in memory of Tammy Damon  
Annelise Goldberg and Aaron Roland in memory of Tammy Damon  
Lembi Family Trust in memory of Igris Lembi

Elizabeth and Chinin Tana in honor of Atticus Tana  
Susan Caston in memory of Michael Schweizer  
Alison True in honor of Russ Messing and Arlene Naschke  
Constance Matthiessen in memory of Eli Golvin-Klein  
Cynthia Eaton and Jim Halligan in memory of Tammy Damon  
Consuelo Faust-Anderson & Thor Anderson in honor of Madeleine Anderson  
Patricia S. Dinner in honor of Steve Grand-Jean  
Alan Markle in honor of Russ Messing and Arlene Naschke  
Dale Katzif in honor of Lucie and Zoe Fix  
Heather Lubeck and Chad Gorman in honor of Henry, Beatrice and Dorothy Gorman  
Carolyn Zecca Ferris in honor of Steve Grand-Jean  
Daniel Gelfand and Nicole Avril in memory of Arthur Gelfand  
Marilyn Bancel and Rik Myslewski in memory of Tammy Damon  
Cynthia Eaton and Jim Halligan in memory of Tammy Damon  
Rabab Tawfik and Marc Garvey in memory of Aden Bakr Garvey



## Fund-A-Need

We are grateful for the generosity of our donors who helped to raise over \$76,850 in the Fund-A-Need for the new softer hard yard.

### Anonymous

Julia Ahn and James O'Neil  
 Bianca Alberto and Cody Alberto  
 Marco Ambron and Gabbriella Yates  
 Carolina Arias and Diego Acosta-Alvear  
 Jennifer Chang and Rafael Delarosa  
 Grace Cheung and Adam Sweet  
 Sharon and Shaun Clowes  
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 Kim Dau and Pablo Stern-Plaza  
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 Nova Wilson and Elsu Martin  
 Jennifer and Gary Witt  
 Vera Zaskodna and Adam Jany

Donors who made gifts to the school between September 1, 2024 and August 31, 2025 are listed in this annual report. We have tried to provide accurate and complete information for this report. Our apologies for any names omitted or listed incorrectly. Please contact the

## SAVE THE DATE

### SYNERGY SCHOOL SPRING FUNDRAISER

Saturday, March 7, 2026  
 6:30 - 11:00 PM  
 The Grand Theatre

### SPRING CONCERT

April 2, 2026

### GRANDPARENTS AND SPECIAL FRIENDS DAY

April 24, 2026

## Thank you for your generous support!

Return Service Requested

## Mission Statement

Our mission is to nurture the intellectual, creative, and emotional potential of every child in a community dedicated to diversity, inclusion, and social justice.

Synergy School was founded in 1973 and is a non-profit educational cooperative. We are a vibrant, diverse community with 190 students in transitional kindergarten through eighth grade located in San Francisco's Mission District.

Synergy Times is published twice a year by the Development Office of Synergy School. Feedback and story ideas are welcome.

Editors: Cynthia Louie, Liz McDonald

Photography: Russ Curtis, Liz McDonald, Barbara Lobb, Gary Wagner

## Synergy Annual Fund



## Every Gift Counts

The Annual Fund helps to bridge the gap between tuition and the actual cost of educating a student at Synergy School for a full year.

The support we receive from our community of parents, friends, alumni and grandparents helps Synergy to maintain the strength of our program while keeping our tuition affordable and offering financial aid to at least a third of our community.

Every gift counts. Donate online at [www.synergyschool.org/donate](http://www.synergyschool.org/donate)

If you have any questions about donations, please contact Liz McDonald, Director of Development, at [liz@synergyschool.org](mailto:liz@synergyschool.org).

Thank you for your support!