LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As I contemplate the fact that Middle Grades Partnership is planning for the launch of its 15th summer, it seems to me to be a good time to take stock of where we have been, what we have been able to achieve with the help of so many, and to plan for what we can become. It is with both tremendous sadness and unfailing gratitude that we acknowledge the passing of one of our greatest mentors and supporters, Suzanne F. Cohen. With the help of Sue and an extraordinary group of generous, long-time donors, recognized here, we have been able to change the trajectory of over 4,000 students’ lives.

In honor of Sue, a great patron of the arts as well as a tireless advocate for the children of our city, we are highlighting the intersection of art and intellectual curiosity. This is exemplified by the multidisciplinary approach to academics explored by the Afya and Park partnership this summer.

Finally, I ask you to stay tuned as Middle Grades Partnership engages in a new strategic planning process that promises to take full advantage of our place at the intersection of public and private schools, bringing these communities together to break down the silos that isolate us.

With your support, we have accomplished much and with your continued generosity we can continue to build towards profound change in our communities.

Thank you,

Wendy Samet, Executive Director
Middle Grades Partnership serves nine public and private school partnerships. We provide year-round academic programming for over 500 middle school students each year.

- Afya & Park
- City Springs (boys) & Boys’ Latin
- City Springs (girls) & Garrison Forest
- Cross Country & Bryn Mawr
- Hamilton & Calvert
- Hampstead Hill & Friends
- Lillie May Carroll Jackson & Roland Park Country
- Mount Royal & McDonogh
- Southwest Baltimore Charter & Gilman
FACTS AND FIGURES

Since 2005, Middle Grades Partnership has served more than 4,000 Baltimore City middle school students.

Our attendance rate is 87% - which is remarkable for a voluntary summer program. Even more impressive, most of our students have to get up early enough to catch a public bus to their home school prior to boarding another bus to the partnership site.

Last year, 81% of our rising ninth graders were accepted into top competitive public high schools. Another 8% were accepted into Baltimore School for the Arts, parochial or private schools. Note that the citywide average for student acceptance into the top academic criteria public high schools last year was 19%.

Our three-year retention rate is 78%.

Middle Grades Partnership provided 150 hours of summer programming for 500 students in nine public and private school partnerships.

Of all Middle Grades Partnership students, 72% identify as Black/African American, 11% White, 5% Latino, 2% Asian and 10% other. Girls comprised 60% of our students while 40% were boys.
2018 FINANCIAL SUMMARY
January 1, 2018 - December 31, 2018

REVENUE
Contributions from public and private schools $142,000
Contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations $871,070
Total revenue for 2018 $1,013,070
Funding reserve from 2017 $201,126
TOTAL REVENUE $1,214,196

EXPENSES
Programs $700,828
Operations $320,798
TOTAL EXPENSES $1,021,626
Funding reserve for 2019 $192,570

WHAT IT TAKES...

90 TEACHERS AND STAFF $529,144
DAILY TRANSPORTATION $63,132
COLLEGE VISITS/FIELD TRIPS $6,023
MATERIALS/SUPPLIES/FOOD/PROGRAMMING $102,529
TOTAL $700,828
In November 2018, Middle Grades Partnership lost a great friend in Suzanne F. Cohen, long-time vice president of our board and an early and consistent supporter of our program. Sue was a nurturing mentor, passionate advocate for Baltimore City kids, arts enthusiast, and unwavering social justice advocate.

Sue served as Middle Grades Partnership’s vice president from 2005 on. She quickly became, and remained, an ardent supporter and advisor to our growing organization, noting that her investment in Middle Grades Partnership “furthered my commitment to this age group and my desire to provide opportunity and promise for these kids. I loved the connections between the city schools and independent schools.”

Former Baltimore Community Foundation President and CEO Tom Wilcox recalled how Sue helped grow our fledgling pilot program to a full-fledged organization through her personal contacts, wise governance and mentoring of staff. “Sue ensured that public school principals and independent heads of school came onto our board,” recalled Wilcox. “She really was the wisdom and power behind the throne at Middle Grades Partnership.”

Sue always had a broader vision for what could be possible for all children, especially those in Baltimore City. Of particular interest to Sue was the relationship the Park School had with the local community. Her children attended the school and she hoped that the experience they had could extend into the community through programs like Middle Grades Partnership.

“For me, she has helped me recognize that Park’s mission must be aligned with a mission that is larger and we must be part of the greater Baltimore community,” said Park School Head Dan Paradis. “When I think about the partnering we’ve done with Sue, it has really been focused on access; about ensuring that as many students as possible who are coming from the most challenging of socio-economic backgrounds are able to access Park and fully benefit and thrive from what we are able to offer our students.”

Sue’s guidance, influence, and vision will be missed by all of us at Middle Grades Partnership and the Baltimore Community Foundation.
INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING

Compose a musical score and record a podcast inspired by a book recounting a young girl’s fight against 1930s segregation. This is the interdisciplinary approach the Afya and Park partnership took this summer when teaching *Stella by Starlight*.

Interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary learning and its benefits aren’t new. The traditional classroom doesn’t always allow for flexibility in teaching outside specific subject areas like math, reading, or science. In the Afya and Park program, teachers have embraced an interdisciplinary teaching model. “The structure of Middle Grades Partnership allowed us to break out of the traditional educational mold,” said Park School Director Sarah Howell. “Middle Grades Partnership gives us the five overarching goals of the program and we can design the program in a way that best meets the needs of our students.”

Students studied *Stella by Starlight* with Afya Humanities teacher Molly Grant, but instead of simply writing an essay about what they had read, were pushed to become personally involved in the story in a different way. Park Music Director Maeve Royce coached students in composing a musical score (playing actual instruments) that captured particular moments from the book. Then, in technology class, the same students researched people who are visionaries (like the lead character in *Stella*) and used recording software to write, engineer and record podcasts talking about what they had learned. Students worked in teams on their group projects, enhancing student engagement.

Ms. Howell found that this approach helped students understand the different skills needed to achieve a common goal, “Some students enjoy reading and some enjoy music. By having more learning opportunities, they can identify what their learning preference is and generate interest in a topic.”

By working as an ensemble across different mediums, students collectively work towards a bigger finished product. “Teachers are often seen as ‘givers of information,’” noted Ms. Howell. “This kind of learning provides a concrete way for students to direct their own learning.”
CONSISTENCY WORKS

Consistency matters and defines the donors below. These, our most consistent supporters, have over 15 years contributed a total of $8.8 million – enough to support more than half the 4,000 students Middle Grades Partnership has served. We could not celebrate our 15th summer of breaking down barriers, bringing students together, and enhancing the lives of public and private school students in Baltimore without them.

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THANK YOU

On behalf of our students, teachers, and board, we thank all those who contributed in 2018 for making a difference in the lives of Baltimore City middle school youth.

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Middle Grades Partnership is an initiative of the Baltimore Community Foundation.

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