



"What do students and teachers value most at Synapse? The sense that another person is there for them and loves them for who they are. Kids learn to give themselves to the fullest capacity of their potential because the teachers at Synapse, with authenticity and kindness, do that for them." —Jim Eagen, Head of School

"The art of being wise is the art of knowing what to overlook." —William James

Sometimes, less is more. Over my 10 years, this has not always been the case. We have grown each year, expanded programs, added buildings and grade levels, and hired more staff members. The growth felt good, an obvious signal that Synapse was on the right track. We did a whole lot in a short amount of time, and took pride in our ability to add unique and innovative features such as our one-of-a-kind Brainwave Learning Center and Engineering and Design Center. But we also created a robust literacy program; enhanced our music and arts program; made changes to mathematics as well as computer science and computational thinking; grew our Learning Center; added shuttles, Middle School trips, a Transitional Kindergarten, a jazz band and a rock band... It's dizzying to try to comprehend what has been accomplished on Edison Way over the past decade.



Jim Eagen, Head of School

Through it all, we had to overlook some things. We had to learn to move on from mistakes, as there were many. Some big, some small—all important learning moments that needed to be put in the rear-view mirror. We also developed a strong set of guidelines when making choices to avoid discipline fatigue and keep our focus on the most important thing to all of us: people.

I have found the best decisions are always people decisions. This year was no exception. Who we brought into our community in August had a profound impact on our year. This Annual Report is a celebration of our community—a group of committed risk takers who take care of each other. Therefore, the images and words that follow are created to honor our people, whose well-being and growth have had the greatest impact on learning and belonging than anything else we could do.

This should be obvious to all who run schools, but it's not. In fact, putting people first is still something of a novel idea. Not here. From Synapse's founding, we have believed in the co-creation of a committed community of people who believe our world needs positive change. This is at the essence of all that we do. I have found our culture—healthy, joyous, curious and yes, fun—enables us to adapt to a world where the one constant is change. Our students need to understand this and learn to do impactful things with people, and for people. I don't think there is a school anywhere whose culture prepares students for this task better than Synapse.

This report tells the story of this school year: our healthy financials, new, exciting programs, the importance of our fundraising, enrollment goals and what we did together as a school. All of this is crucial to understand and worth celebrating. But the students, the staff, the board, the partners and the families who had a hand in this year's tremendous success are the ones we should celebrate most of all. So, yeah, Synapse! Go Narwhals! As head of this outstanding school community, I can't thank you enough for making this year one to remember.

Cheers, Jim



Thích Nhất Hạnh

THÍCH NHẤT HẠNH 2022-23 CHANGE MAKER

Each year, the Synapse community identifies a Change Maker who embodies that school year's theme and can be a lens through which we view our curriculum and projects for the year. Every class, TK-8, learns about the life and work of this Change Maker.

The theme for the 2022–23 school year was Crisis and Opportunity, and our Change Maker was Thích Nhất Hạnh. His life of mindfulness and peaceful work inspired our TK-8 curriculum for the year.

Thích Nhất Hạnh was a Vietnamese Thiền Buddhist monk, peace activist, prolific author, poet, teacher, and founder of the Plum Village Tradition—historically recognized as the main inspiration for engaged Buddhism.

INTERACTIVE LAB

Our culminating curricular event that celebrates learning across the whole school, our Interactive Lab this year featured many student exhibits and work that focused on our Change Maker Thích Nhất Hạnh and on the theme of Crisis and Opportunity. Our Lab was extra special this year as we were honored to be joined by Brothers Phap Dung (Brother Embrace) and Phap Luu (Brother Stream) from Deer Park Monastery. In addition to leading our schoolwide assembly and being with us throughout the day talking to students and families about their various projects, they also led us in afternoon mindfulness activities. Our Lab was filled with incredible joy and interconnection for our entire community.



"Synapse is unique because of the thoughtfulness with which each student is treated. The staff shares a willingness to reassess any assumptions about what it is that children need and what our roles should be in their journeys." —Synapse Parent

EDUCATING A COMMUNITY



PARENT EDUCATION

Parent education is a central part of the Synapse family experience, and it supports the school's mission of "Educating a Community of Change Makers." Parent education at Synapse aims to help parents navigate the challenges and celebrate the joys of parenthood. This is achieved through various opportunities for parents to learn from experts, each other, and themselves. Synapse is committed to supporting parents on their journey through parenthood, particularly during these challenging times.

In the 2022–23 academic year, Synapse Parent Education offered parents the following programs:

The new Emotional Intelligence (EQ) Gym series where parents:

- Participated in a 6-class series with a consistent cohort of 12-15 parents
- · Learned the EQ model, deep-dived into the competencies, and practiced tools together
- Connected their experience with what their students are learning in Self Science
 EQ Seminar and EQ Essentials
- Developed a supportive community within and across cohorts
- Five cohorts have completed the program, and many chose to continue meeting

Other Parent Education programs included:

- · Mindful Parenting Workshop led by monks, disciples of our Change Maker, Thích Nhất Hạnh
- Health Connected Sex Education for Families in Level 3 through Middle School
- Dialogues on the Digital Lives of Students for Lower School and Middle School families
- Additional resources from Common Sense Media and Common Ground Speakers
- The Bold Ideas Speakers sharing their big, bold ideas related to our school's program priorities

OF CHANGE MAKERS

TEACHER/STAFF EQ EDUCATION

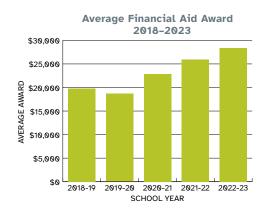
What sets Synapse's Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) apart from other schools is the emphasis on teachers' social-emotional development. This emphasis begins on the first day of hire. All teachers and staff must complete the Emotional Intelligence for Educators program, which includes the following:

- One-on-one coaching with the Director of SEL to set intentions and goals, with check-ins throughout the year
- Three days of live instruction for teachers to learn about themselves, practice and embody SEL, and integrate SEL into all of their teachings
- Online learning modules that supplement the in-person learning
- Three additional workshops throughout the year on salient SEL topics
- Each staff member must complete a culminating project to finish the training

Teachers were also supported through a book club called "Happy Teachers Change the World," which had two meeting time options. One group met weekly to practice mindfulness and discuss issues of self-care monthly. Another group met monthly to deepen their practice and discuss ways to integrate mindfulness into their teaching and daily lives.



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ADMISSIONS & FINANCIAL AID

Synapse Admissions had another successful year, marked by significant accomplishments and growth. The expansion of Kindergarten to three classrooms and increased enrollment in Transitional Kindergarten exemplify Synapse's commitment to providing an excellent education to more students.

To attract new families and showcase Synapse's unique programs, Admissions implemented a comprehensive event schedule that included school tours, playgroups, experience days, and events highlighting the school's signature offerings. These touchpoints provided families with numerous opportunities to learn about Synapse and experience the warmth, authenticity, and inclusiveness of the school community.

Synapse's dedication to Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity is reflected in the school's commitment to increasing student diversity. In 2022–23, 70% of Synapse students identify as persons of color, and 9% identify as Hispanic/Latinx. This is a testament to Synapse's mission to create a learning environment that celebrates diversity and fosters inclusivity for all.

Synapse has continued to meet 100% of demonstrated financial need. Synapse's Financial Aid program continues to expand the total financial aid given. From 2021–22 to 2022–23, our average financial aid award increased from \$25,915 to \$28,359. Our partnership with Peninsula Bridge—a program that transforms the lives of highly motivated, low-income students—continues to grow with our enrollment of Peninsula Bridge students in 2022–23.

TK SUCCESS & KINDERGARTEN EXPANSION

We launched a Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program this year and it has been an absolute delight! Veteran teachers Michele Barry and Natasha Sanchez have crafted an incredible journey filled with community experiences and exciting milestones. As we reflect on the year, we are moved by the heartwarming friendships and lessons learned. TK's curricular units spanned author studies, a deep dive into colors and the world around us, and inventions.

Here were some of our favorite moments:

- Going on community excursions, including visits to the creek at Burgess Park, the Arizona Cactus Garden at Stanford, the Lytton Gardens Senior Center in Palo Alto, and a Pumpkin Patch in Half Moon Bay where the children bravely petted the goats
- Practicing mindfulness as a daily routine, culminating in an amazing visit with the monks from the Deer Park Monastery
- Honing our skills in letters and numbers through read-alouds, journaling, games and puzzles
- Discovering our culinary skills by making pasta and apple pies, and taste-testing many wonderful foods
- Enjoying visits from guest experts like the bee lady
- Parent lunches that formed strong community bonds
- "Picasso" time to build and create in the Engineering & Design Center
- Playing with older kids, including the Middle Schoolers who visited us weekly
- The friendship assembly for Thanksgiving
- Rainy days when we played outside

Our TK students learned many SEL skills this year, including how we are the same in some ways and different in other ways. We are all unique! Above all, TK cherished their friendships and embraced the joys of being 4- and 5-year-olds. The TK students are ready for Kindergarten (Level 1), which is expanding to three classes this fall instead of just two!



BRAINWAVE LEARNING

STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS:

- "Impact of Attention on Visual Working Memory" by Anya Jain
 Simran Thakur
- "Investigating the Relationship Between Audiovisual Integration and Dyslexia" by Caroline Walker & Jackson Rose
- "How Sleep Affects Memory" by Alex Lu & Arav Ramchandran



PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

The Brainwave Learning Center (BLC) presented scientific research findings at a number of recent national and international conferences, including the American Educational Research Association meeting in Chicago; the Cognitive Neuroscience Society meeting in San Francisco; and the International Mind, Brain and Education Society meeting in Montreal, where the BLC was also awarded the 2022 Exemplifying the Mission Award!

BLC research on early literacy and brain development was published in the journal *Developmental Science* in November 2022, with the two-year follow-up study coming soon.

MIDDLE SCHOOL RESEARCH ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Six 8th graders actively participated in all stages of the research process as part of the BLC's Middle School Research Assistant Program in 2022–23. Throughout the school year, these students assisted in ongoing Stanford research studies, then built on this knowledge to drive independent research projects on a variety of cognitive science topics.

To disseminate their scientific insights, they submitted their projects to the San Mateo County STEM Fair. All three projects received high honors, receiving first and second place awards. "How Sleep Affects Memory" also secured the first-place award in the Behavioral Sciences category at the California State Science Fair and advanced to the Thermo Fisher Scientific Junior Innovators Challenge at the national level.

CENTER (BLC)

ANNUAL RESEARCH SHOWCASE

The BLC successfully hosted its inaugural annual research showcase, a celebration of this unique research-practice partnership between Synapse and the Educational Neuroscience Initiative at Stanford University. The event highlighted the BLC's accomplishments and vision for the future, while also spotlighting the experience of the Middle School research assistants. In a lively panel discussion, these students shared their firsthand experiences of conducting independent research in collaboration with the BLC team. Attendees gained insights into Middle School research projects, the Stanford research studies conducted in collaboration with Synapse, and enjoyed an interactive poster session and reception.

[Check out the highlight video! BLC Research Showcase]





ENGINEERING & DESIGN

EDC PROJECTS

- TK: Rideable horse project, safety modifications to new playground equipment, bi-monthly "Picasso Time" where students work on creative design and build craft projects with custom provided materials and workspaces
- Level 1: Introduction to laser cutting and communicating with computers project, Fairy Village infrastructure project, simple machines demos, provided materials for Fairy Village modifications
- Level 2: Custom, scaled Mayan village silhouettes and construction
- Level 3: 8-foot custom CNC'd topographical map of Egypt, trimester-long Egyptian pyramid construction theory, simple machines build, large-scale simple machine demos, custom-built display cases

Formerly called the Synapse "Makerspace," we changed the name to the Engineering & Design Center in 2022 to better reflect and communicate our program priorities and what the EDC is set up to accomplish for our community of Change Makers. We believe the new name also better supports our school's goals and mission.

The EDC continues to be a space for cross-disciplinary, collaborative problem-solving projects, big and small. The main differentiator that defines the EDC is how integrated it is throughout the school. The philosophy, curriculum and mindsets that are deeply connected to the Synapse innovation model and mission are embodied throughout the TK-8 student experience. Students engage in the EDC through collaborative course curriculum across all subject areas and grades, specialized electives in the Middle School, the Middle School Computational Thinking classes, and through the EDC's "prop shop," an in-house fabrication initiative that creates one-of-a-kind instructional tools built to teacher specifications.

The EDC includes a variety of fabrication tools, including a fully built-out woodworking shop; three brand new, high-end 3D printers; a laser cutter; a full-size industrial CNC machine; and hundreds of different materials and tools for student and teacher use. All the tool storage systems and student workspaces are built in-house and are modular, making the space innovative and nimble. The EDC is built to quickly adjust to fit any student level, from Transitional Kindergarten through 8th grade.

CENTER (EDC)

This year, the EDC hired its 4th teammate, Josh Levin, as the Computing and Engineering specialist, tasked with collaborating with EDC Director Brian Bicknell at reimagining how Synapse approaches computing education. Their yearlong effort—guided by experts from Google, Digital Promise, and educators in the field—resulted in a robust Middle School Computational Thinking class that met weekly, a TK-8 specialist "push-in" program to introduce Computational Thinking to the Lower School, and a 3-year roadmap scope and sequence to ensure the Computational Thinking program is aligned with the Synapse mission and vision, as well as best practices and current research.

EDC PROJECTS (CONT.)

- Grades 5/6: 1–2 STEAM electives per trimester (fine woodworking, EDC stewardship, 3D printing, etc.)
- Grades 7/8: Bathymetry surf site models and 12-foot electronic wave testing tank, cell biology carnival exhibits
- Exit Tickets: A custom-designed and machined trophy case, two portable mindfulness spaces
- Parent Maker Nights throughout the year





PROGRAM



TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Synapse takes a mission-driven approach to teacher professional development. In addition to our Graduate School Assistance Program, all teachers are given stipends to attend workshops and conferences.

This year, representatives from our Middle School team had the opportunity to attend the "Learning & the Brain: Teaching Behaved Brains Conference" in San Francisco. The various talks from the conference by experts in the field not only confirmed several of our practices about how students learn but also provided fresh perspectives into how we continue to iterate and enhance our program and adopt best practices in working with different behaviors of students. Moreover, we learned evidence-based strategies to improve emotional self-regulation, executive skills, classroom management, discipline and school climate.

The executive team of The Writing Revolution presented their program and teaching strategies at a staff meeting this year. Many teachers are enthusiastic about how this program inspires and helps students at all levels improve upon their writing skills. Many educators attended TWR workshops over the summer and some have already started implementing the program's approach and strategies into the curriculum.

BLC Director Liz Toomarian and Head of School Jim Eagen were presenters during the February break at the NAIS Annual Conference, where they posed a question: *Have you ever wondered how you could design, present and test curriculum through the lens of the learning sciences?* They then shared how Synapse does just this by partnering with Stanford University on the Brainwave Learning Center, which has transformed teaching and learning for our entire community. During the session, participants learned about our model for advancing leading-edge research while ensuring excellence in the classroom, and they also heard about existing practices in the learning sciences while exploring how to embrace a cycle of innovation.

IMPACT

LEARNING CENTER (LC)

The Synapse Learning Center program wrapped up its third year, expanding its programming and deepening integration into Synapse's teaching and learning community. The LC saw 20% more students than the year prior and increased the frequency of classes and intervention sessions for learners. New program offerings included small group math sessions for students in L2 and L3, two sections of 5/6 Language Arts, and a 5/6 elective supporting students' development of work habits.

The LC collaborated with teachers on designing accessible projects, integrating best practices and accommodations in the classroom, developing strategies to assist students in their learning, devising skills-focused MS elective and support periods, and communicating student progress and needs to families.

In October, the LC celebrated LD Awareness Month with weekly newsletter resources for parents, a display in B3, read-alouds in Lower School, MS student contributions to the *Voice of Synapse* (the student-run literary publication), and wearing red for Flair Friday, a day in which students and staff wear something fun and colorful to express themselves. In partnership with Yvonne Kunstenaar, Director of Lower School Literacy, the LC presented to faculty on the Science of Reading, helped expand DIBELS mClass assessment and screening to all students in K-4, and hosted members from The Writing Revolution's executive team for a campus visit and presentation. The LC worked with the BLC to present to teachers and parents on the Science of Learning and contributed to round table discussions related to an upcoming study on multisensory learning.

A significant highlight for the Learning Center was receiving funding to sustain and develop the program for several years.

synapse school



BOLD IDEAS @ SYNAPSE SPEAKER SERIES

This school year, we kicked off our Bold Ideas events, which aim to highlight uniquely dynamic thinkers sharing their big, bold ideas related to our school's program priorities: Innovation, SEL, and leading-edge academics. We were fortunate to host two current Synapse parents and one alum parent as our first three speakers.

As CTO of Meta and a leading voice and visionary on all things AR/VR/AI, Andrew "Boz" Bosworth and Jim Eagen discussed many ideas about the future of machine learning and new immersive technologies. A key takeaway Boz began and ended the interview with was that "The kids are alright," and that although we are living in a world where technology is central to our existence in many ways, there will never be a replacement or better way to educate our children than to let them thrive in a school environment where building relationships between teachers and students is pivotal to learning. [Bold Ideas: Andrew "Boz" Bosworth]

Our second guest speaker was Synapse parent of three and childhood development expert Brooke Stafford-Brizard. Brooke, the Vice President of Research to Practice at Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, has spent much of her career researching the whole child approach to learning and development and spoke about the integration of cognitive and social-emotional development within schools.

In Jim's conversation with Brooke, she stressed the importance of building confidence in children and making sure they have strong role models. "The environment around us produces who we are and makes us feel safe and ready to take risks." The integration of SEL is a social process: "True learning for human beings needs to be engaging and meaningful" and involves strong connections between people, Brooke said. [Bold Ideas: Brooke Stafford-Brizard]

As parents and educators, some of the best ways to nurture a child's social-emotional development are by "supporting a child's ability to be self-aware and curious and have a sense of purpose in life."

For our final Bold Ideas speaker of the school year, we welcomed Cristina Spencer. Cristina, a parent of two former Synapse students—one who is transgender—gave an informative and riveting talk about gender diversity and said that rather than being a social construct, gender is "a process that happens over time." Cristina, an expert in gender diverse kids and parent coach who regularly hosts gender education workshops and has also authored a book to be published next year, shared this quote to best define the word "gender"—"Gender is nature through nurture in culture." —Dr. Erica Anderson, UCSF Gender Clinic [Bold Ideas: Cristina Spencer]

SCHOOL MAGAZINE

This year we published the first edition of the Synapse magazine, *The Optimist*. The purpose of *The Optimist* is to highlight the many wonderful people and programs of Synapse School. *The Optimist* was mailed to every Synapse family, alumni, and staff. A big thank you to our inspiring Synapse community of students, alumni, teachers, families and staff for helping make the idea of a school publication a reality. There were many people who contributed to the magazine—whether they took time out of their busy days to be interviewed, wrote an article, edited the magazine, helped with photos, or encouraged the process along the way—and we are so grateful for each and every person who helped. Creating something like this takes a lot of time and effort from many, but when the focus is the people of Synapse, it becomes much easier. [The Optimist] Be on the lookout for our second edition of *The Optimist* in the fall!

SPORTSHOUSE

Our campus addition at 3151 Edison Way is undergoing some exciting improvements:

- Currently going through the process for updating the Conditional Use Permit and securing building permits to add 6 classrooms and outdoor playspace
- Recently upgraded all exterior lighting to LED
- Replacing existing soccer turf with new higher quality turf this summer, which will include placing the Synapse logo on the turf and side walls
- Painting exterior to match the rest of campus and installing Synapse signage
- Hung 3 Synapse Championship Athletics banners in rafters



CAIS ACCREDITATION

We are excited to announce that the Board of Directors of the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) accepted Synapse School into provisional accreditation.

Our staff and school board members will soon be eligible to attend the array of events that CAIS sponsors to promote the professional development of administrators and trustees.



23,328

photos taken and uploaded to Google albums by Synapse staff



BLC Research Showcase



3

SSIL championships won this year: Girls Volleyball, Boys Cross Country and Boys Soccer





69

songs performed & created by students for our winter & spring concerts



\$170_K

raised at our Annual Spring Benefit

323

mandarin orange "cuties" mindfully consumed during Interactive Lab day



MATCHING GIFTS, GIFTS-IN-KIND, CORPORATE DONORS

- Apple
- · Bank of America
- · Barre3
- ByteDance
- · Chan Zuckerberg
- · Cisco
- Esface Basketball
- · FIG
- · Garrod Farm Stables & Winery
- Gilead Sciences
- · Google, Inc
- · Kaiser Permanente
- · KOOP, LLC
- · La Petite Playhouse
- · LinkedIn
- · Littles Athletics & Education
- · Michael David Winery
- Microsoft
- PayPal
- · Red Rock Volleyball
- Redwood Pacific Management
- Riekes Center
- Roblox
- · SportsHouse Indoor Sports
- · Sundance the Steakhouse
- WildSeed

FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

Thank you! We are very grateful to have such an engaged and supportive community at Synapse. Community members have several ways to support our school philanthropically.

ANNUAL FUND

The Annual Fund that fuels the engine of our school program represents the largest source of non-tuition revenue for the school and is the backbone of our fundraising efforts. It provides funds that sustain our exceptional program—from teacher salaries to financial assistance, supplies for classrooms to sports transportation. Synapse reached 100% participation in our 2022–23 Annual Fund, raising more than \$1M for the second year in a row. This is a testament to the profound support we have received from our Board, staff and parents. We want to express our deep appreciation to everyone who contributed.

SPRING BENEFIT SUPPORTING FINANCIAL AID

Each year, the Spring Benefit brings the entire community together to celebrate our special school and to raise funds to support a worthy initiative. This year we raised more than \$170,000 for our financial aid fund. We believe that socio-economic diversity enriches the educational experience for all students. It is our goal that prospective families not let the cost of a Synapse education deter them from applying and that sufficient aid be available to support current families.

Our 2023 Spring Benefit "Synapse Goes All In!" was held in our latest building addition, SportsHouse. The Las Vegas-themed event was attended by almost 200 Synapse community members and reinforced our priority to support fundraising as community building through our community auction parties.



"My favorite part of every day is waking up knowing that I get to go to school and learn something new. That's how it feels to teach at Synapse; it's a learning experience for everyone, from the students to the teachers, and it's always fresh, new and exciting to be there." —Synapse Teacher



"The teachers at Synapse have really helped me when I am having a rough day, or if I just need someone to talk to. I am so grateful for everything they do and for how they have helped me with my SEL skills and resilience." —Synapse Student

2022-2023 FINANCIALS

Synapse School ended the fiscal year with a balanced budget. Revenue sources for the school include tuition and philanthropy. Thanks to strong leadership by our Head of School, CFO and Board of Directors, expenses were carefully monitored, such that Synapse concluded the year with a surplus, which was allocated to replenish reserves.

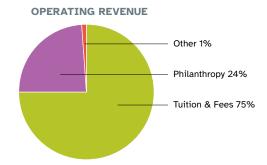
Synapse is thriving with a solid balance sheet, and the Board will continue to partner with the Head of School to preserve the financial health of the school. *Thank you to our entire community for your unwavering support and generosity.*

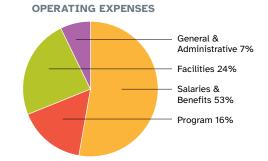
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES

(For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023)

| | Dollar Amount | Expenses % |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------|
| OPERATING REVENUE | | |
| Tuition & Fees | \$15,649,087 | 75% |
| Philanthropy* | \$5,122,773 | 24% |
| Other | \$235,250 | 1% |
| TOTAL REVENUE | \$21,007,110 | 100% |
| OPERATING EXPENSES | | |
| General & Administrative | \$1,486,323 | 7% |
| Facilities | \$4,713,377 | 24% |
| Salaries & Benefits | \$10,586,785 | 53% |
| Program | \$3,178,780 | 16% |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$19,965,265 | 100% |
| | | |

Philanthropy includes gifts to the Annual Fund, Capital Campaign and other donations. The Head of School, Board and CFO continue to work together to strengthen the financial position of the school.





VOLUNTEERISM

Synapse could not function without the dedication of our parent volunteers. We are grateful to all of you who filled the staff snack cabinet, planned and hosted community gatherings, appreciated our teachers, and did the countless other caring acts that make our community so special.

Our volunteer leaders set the example for us all. Thank you.

SYNC (SYNAPSE PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION)

Co-Chairs: Anna Harik, Vanessa DellaPasqua

Treasurer: Josh Salcman

Secretary: Carridine Eubanks

Level Parents

Transitional Kindergarten:

Kathy Silverman **Level 1:** Kristin Casado,

Shivani Govind

Level 2: Raina Malik, Raquel Munoz

Level 3: Deeksha Talwar, Kelun Zhang **5/6:** Bernie Meyler,

Libby Dabrowski

7/8: Jeanne Chevillet, Sara Woodham-Johnsson

Coffees & Grownups' Nights

Out: Jamie White, Janice Chan, Sarah Cross, Subha Shetty

Parent Teacher Social:

Angel Roeding, Aparna Sreeraman, Heidy Li, Janice Kim, Michelle Bessler, Sara Husain, Shital Kadakia

Ice Skating Party:

Laura Demetriou, Mary Obelnicki

Teacher Appreciation:

Emily Mangini, Heather Qi, Jeanette Mihov, Pallavi Rao, Pooja Oysgelt, Shital Kadakia

Snack Cabinet: Dawn Sue

Family Camp: Basia Montauk,

Carrie Shaked, Dan Barak, Eric Story, Keren Messer, Manish Sambhu, Matt Beebe

Weekday Parent Hikes:

Liz Handley, Vanessa DellaPasqua

Weekend Family Hikes:

Hattie Chen, Jen Salcman, Kelun Zhang, Rob Bland

Give Yourself: Jennifer Booker,

Jennifer Holthaus

Summer Camp Sharing: Colleen McCallion

ANNUAL FUND

Parent Chair: Lauren Angelo

Board Chair: Jennifer Kitt

Parent Ambassadors:

Jeff & Susan Sher, Jennifer Yu, Josue Figueroa, Laura Demetriou, Manish Sambhu, Pooja Mittal

Staff Ambassadors:

Holly Campbell, Isha Jain, Jennifer Wences, Jim Eagen, Joanne Mull, Sarah Hill, Stephanie Seto, Yvonne Kunstenaar



ADMISSIONS

Ambassadors, Info. Night Speakers & more:

Abby Haile, Asish Ramchandran, Basil Hashem, Brooke Stafford-Brizard, Cameron Turner, Christie Callaghan (alum), Dani Chammas, Eric Peng, Garrett Rice (alum), Heidy Li, Jane Bryson, Jeanne Chevillet, Kavitha Ramchandran, Kristin Casado, Laura Demetriou, Matt DiFonzo, Mindy Hsu, Neha Jha, Shamim Tong, Shital Kadakia

BOOK FAIR

Volunteers: Abbi Ball, Abby Haile, Ailey Crow, Amanda Williford, Angel Roeding, April Bosworth, Ben Smith, Carridine Eubanks, Cathy Song, Colleen McCallion, Dani Chammas, Emily Sawtell, Eric Kwan, Hattie Chen, Heeral Prakash, Heidy Li, Holly DiFonzo, Janice Chan, Jeanette Mihov, Keith McCallion, Kim Caldbeck, Laura Demetriou, Lauren Angelo, Marisa Bauer, Michelle Lin, Michelle Marchena Curtis, Mike Eubanks, Molly Zielezinski, Patama Gur, Priya Raghavan, Reena Lee, Sarah Cross, Shital Kadakia, Smitha Prabhu. Veronica Singleton

SPRING BENEFIT

Solicitations Committee:

April Bosworth, Cassy Christianson, Jeanette Mihov, Julie Jurgens, Kim Caldbeck, Michelle Forrest, Shamim Tong

Party Committee:

Amanda Williford, Cathy Song, Emily Mangini, Mindy Hsu, Natalie Wu, Niloo Mansourian, Shital Kadakia, Veronica Singleton, Vincent & Judy Shu

CONSTRUCTIVISTS

Band Leader: Udaya Patnaik





Synapse has been fortunate for many years to partner with The Riekes Center for Human Enhancement. Riekes is a contracted organization (right next door) that provides Synapse with nature and arts instruction. Riekes instructors manage Lower School Nature Day activities, and provide class options for Middle School electives.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Synapse is always looking for ways to form new community partnerships. As part of our EQ Model/ Give Yourself and ongoing efforts to bring awareness to the socio-economic diversity in our community, Synapse began partnering with LifeMoves in 2022. This organization provides interim housing and supportive services for unhoused families and individuals to rapidly return them to stable housing and achieve long-term security. The sourcing of this partnership came from our Give Yourself Committee, headed up by Synapse parents Jenn Holthaus and Jennifer Booker.

Our TK class helped launch this partnership with an assembly on friendship last fall. Lynnelle Bilsey from LifeMoves spoke with our students about what it means to be unhoused, who these families and individuals are, and what we can do to help. The TK class presented 25 snack bags to LifeMoves as an initial gesture of partnership.

In December, we hosted a holiday gift drive for LifeMoves—to support the families currently living at Life Moves' Haven Family House and Redwood Family House shelters, which are both near our school.

For Interactive Lab in March 2023, our entire Lower School participated in the El Supermercado project, in which each class from TK through Level 3 visited a local Spanish supermarket and helped raise awareness for a collection of different foods from Synapse families so that our community could assemble nearly 100 bags of food on Lab Day for families who receive help from LifeMoves.

This school year, we also expanded our partnership with Peninsula Bridge High School Academy. Two days a week after school, Peninsula Bridge students use our campus for various activities. In addition, the nonprofit also utilized the Synapse campus for its summer program. Peninsula Bridge holds sessions on Saturdays about topics including high school success skills, college and career readiness, and social-emotional skills development with Project Wayfinder curriculum.



REMEMBERING DYLAN

Synapse student Dylan Burke was the epitome of optimism. From the day he stepped onto the Synapse campus as a curious kindergartener filled with wonder through his sixth grade year, he inspired all of us with his insight to ask big questions and always appreciate the little things in life. After a long struggle with cancer, Dylan passed away on June 26, 2022.

We are honored and grateful to have been part of Dylan's story. Dylan embodied a true Change Maker, and brought to life the best of Synapse. He has made, and will continue to make, an incredible impact on all of our lives and our community.

He will always be in our hearts.







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