

Case for Support

MOVING FORWARD IN FAITH

—CAMPAIGN—

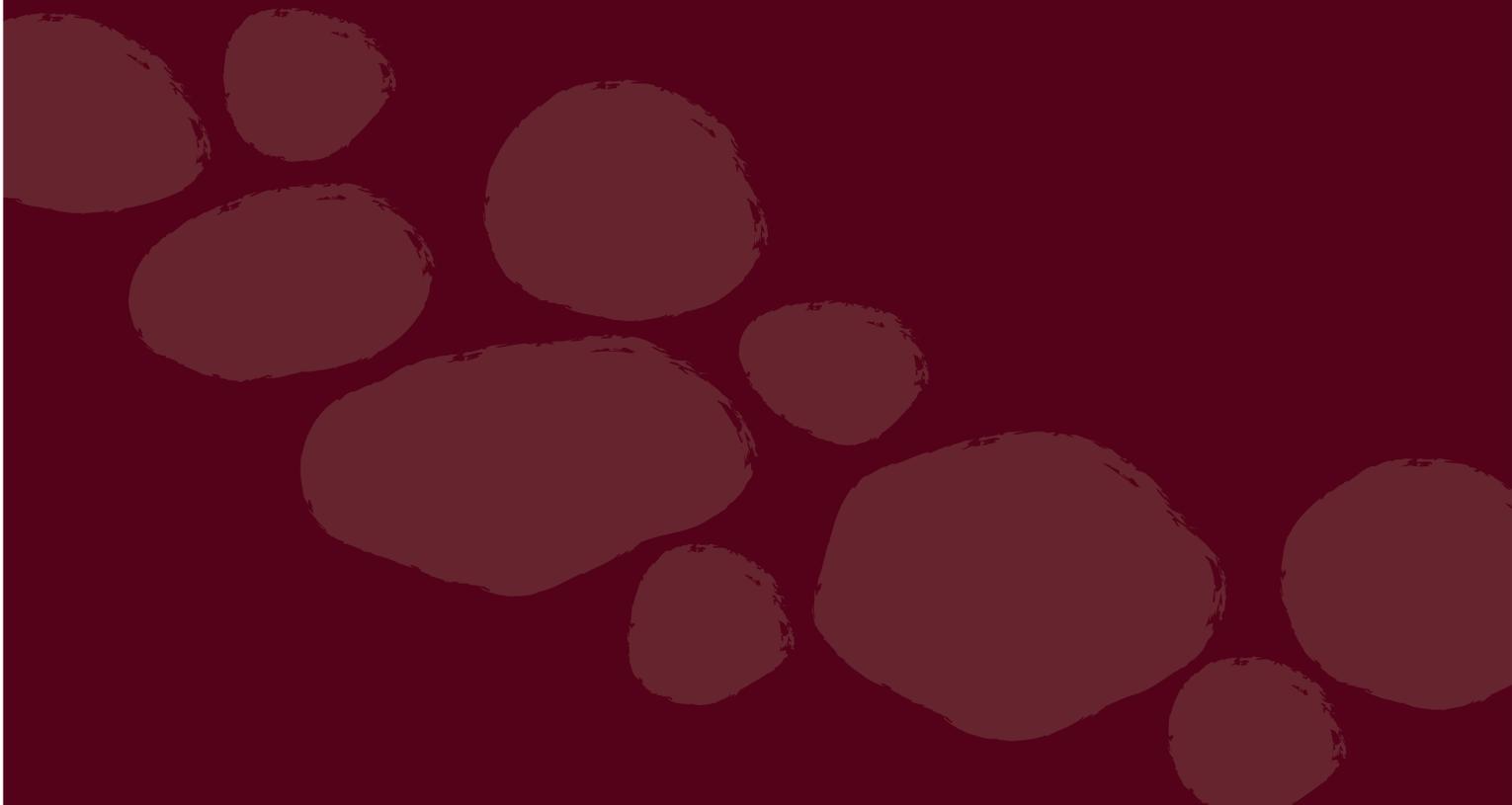


THE WORLD NEEDS

Living Stones

As you come to him, the living Stone — rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him — you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

– 1 Peter 2:4





Dear Friends & Neighbors,

Now more than ever the world needs people to live like Jesus. People who extend grace and speak truth—who live and work together, and see beauty in the diversity of God’s world. People whose lives are marked by compassion, humility, and wisdom. People who confront injustice and work daily to bring the kingdom of heaven down to earth.

This kingdom-building work does not come easily. It requires in-depth knowledge of God’s Word and empowering of the Holy Spirit. It requires a community of faith-filled followers of Jesus who live with compassion and conviction. And, it must involve an experience where authentic, meaningful relationships can be built—relationships that cross cultural, economic, and ethnic boundaries.

To live like Jesus today—in our actions, our speech and our hearts—demands an interruption from societal norms. It begins with a rigorous education that is intentionally diverse. It grows in a place that is welcoming, safe, and respectful. It thrives in an environment committed to raising followers of Christ.

The world needs the next generation of disciples. People who can reshape how we interact with each other, learn from one another, live together, and truly love our neighbor as ourself.

The world needs living stones.

We ask you to join us as we move forward in faith to boldly answer this call.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aaron Winkle".

Rev. Aaron Winkle
Head of School

Discovering GOD'S DIRECTION

From the beginning Living Stones Academy (LSA) has been guided by the Triune God. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, He prompted a small group of people to imagine a Christ-centered education that would be academically rigorous and radically inclusive. They were longing for a place where families of all races, cultures, educational backgrounds, and income levels would be welcomed, and could work together to build community.

From the beginning Living Stones Academy has also been rooted in prayer. At every turn the LSA community has sought God's guidance and provision, fully aware that this is His school. On a number of occasions people have gathered on their knees in living rooms and classrooms to fervently pray for God's leading.

This was true in 2010 when a small group of people boldly hired a head of school and signed a three-year lease before any students had enrolled. It was still true in the spring of 2014 when school leadership signed a purchase agreement to buy Hillcrest Elementary at 1415 Lyon St. NE

to secure a long-term home. Living Stones Academy's commitment to offering a rigorous, Christ-centered education to all who seek it remains at the heart of who we are.

This spring the Living Stones Academy board reaffirmed this calling by approving a sharpened mission statement: "We're a neighborhood Christian school committed to inspiring the hearts and minds of our students, equipping them to embrace cultural, economic, and racial diversity; and empowering them to love and serve in community."



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“At LSA, we teach kids that diversity isn’t an image or a marketing tool, it’s an identity. Justice is less about ‘saving’ someone than identifying and dismantling systems that favor one group of people over another. Reconciliation isn’t something that happens in our heads but something that happens in authentic relationship with God and with each other.”

– Parent & former staff member

Reflecting GOD'S IMAGE

Living Stones Academy emerged to fill a real need in our city. For many, a Christian education was perceived as exclusive and unattainable—dividing along racial, cultural, and economic lines. In response, Living Stones Academy committed to being an intentionally inclusive school where all people would be welcomed. Here, we throw open our doors and pursue families for whom Christian education has been

previously unattainable. We developed a sliding-scale tuition model to remove one of the greatest barriers, cost. But our core philosophy goes far beyond scholarships and financial help. We focus on relationships and fully living out the Gospel so that everyone can flourish—as students, as members of our community, and as children of God.

WHY DOES ALL THIS MATTER?

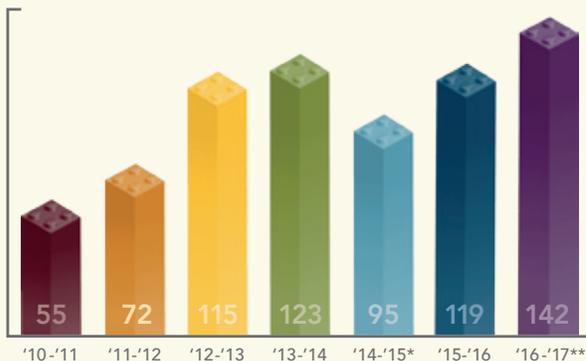
Because the needs of the world are great. In our own community we see the damaging effects of cyclical poverty, rampant materialism, segregation, and lack of access to quality education.

As followers of Jesus we grieve this brokenness; we know God created the world for so much more. We also know He has called us to be people who “act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him.” Consequently, we respond to these needs not with fear but with hope. God is at work—and He has invited us to join Him.

At Living Stones Academy, we are called to train, shape, and nurture the students and families God has entrusted to our care. That means creating an environment where students can build authentic relationships with one another and with teachers; it also means offering an education that will challenge and inspire them as they learn about God's world and their place in it.

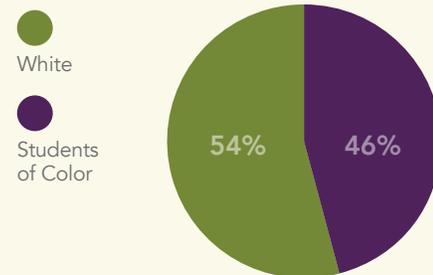
OUR FAMILIES REFLECT THE BROAD DIVERSITY OF GOD'S GREAT WORLD

STUDENTS ENROLLED BY YEAR

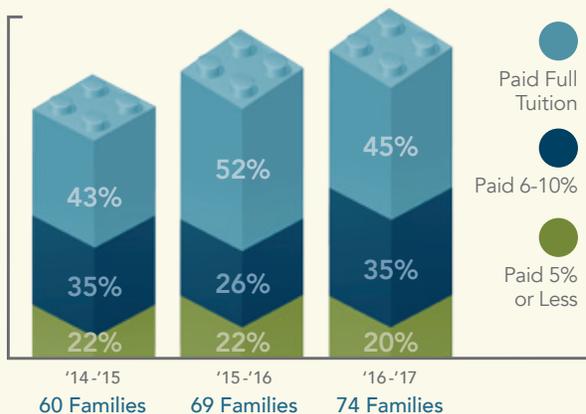


* In 2014, LSA moved to its new home.
 ** Enrolled as of August 1, 2016

RACIAL DIVERSITY



ECONOMIC DIVERSITY



CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Our students were born or have a parent that was born in one of the following countries:

- BURMA
- CAMEROON
- CHINA
- ERITREA
- ETHIOPIA
- MALAWI
- NEPAL
- SOUTH KOREA
- UKRAINE
- UNITED STATES

Engaging in GOD'S STORY

From the beginning of time, since the fall of Adam and Eve, God has been working through followers of Christ to restore things that are broken: broken hearts, broken relationships, broken systems. To do so, He has called, equipped, and empowered His people to do things that they could never do on their own. And as a result, people have been restored, relationships have been reconciled, and unjust systems have been replaced. This is the story of Living Stones Academy.

For six years now we have flung our doors wide open in the hopes that more families and students will experience a welcoming and rigorous, Christ-centered education. It comes out of our fundamental belief that each student is made in the very image of God, and thus has been created with great potential and worth. This is a high calling, but not an easy one.

As God continues to lead us, and we continue to grow, we need you and others to join us. Simply saying (and hoping) that all children should have access to this kind of education does not make it so. We have to work hard to remove all of the barriers—financial and otherwise—to make it possible.

“I chose LSA for its giving and loving spirit it displayed. LSA is teaching my family how be givers instead of a takers. LSA has completely changed my life. I chose to stay so I can continue to learn how to spread God’s Word through giving.”

– Parent

TO ACHIEVE THIS, WE NEED YOUR HELP!

In 2014, we were blessed to secure a home for Living Stones Academy. There is so much to love about our new building. It is full of natural light and surrounded by green space. It is across the street from Hillcrest community garden and is nestled in a vibrant city neighborhood. It offers such a rich environment for learning and has been relatively well-maintained over its 61 years. But it still needs substantial updates and improvements to be a good long-term home for our school.

We have other needs that don't involve brick and mortar. We need to continually be mindful of our school culture. We must ensure that our teachers and staff are properly trained and equipped to educate in a diverse community. And, that our students have the necessary resources to live up to their God-given potential and become Christ-like leaders for our world tomorrow.

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At Living Stones Academy, every child and family who desire a Christ-centered education can find a home where they belong, and where together, working as one community, we can bring forth a more just, humane and peaceful world.



Responding to GOD'S CALL

We ask you to be part of our response to answer God's call to create living stones right here in our community that God can use to build something significant, something beautiful, something eternal.

OUR CURRENT, MOST PRESSING NEEDS:

One Word: Some of our students come to school hungry. To serve them well, we need a commercial kitchen to offer a school lunch program.
Lunch.

Improve Accessibility. Our 61-year-old building wasn't built with our mission in mind. To welcome all, we need to improve accessibility in our hallways and bathrooms.

Extend our Stability. Roof, windows, boiler, asphalt. Replacing these will extend the duration of our building (and our school).

Make our Building our Home. A school is more than a building structure—it's a place where kids grow. Our kids will receive a richer educational experience by providing a playground, improved lighting, and creating a welcoming atmosphere.

Develop our Staff. In order to deliver our educational goals, we must continue to invest in our teachers through professional development, visiting sister institutions and exposing them to best practices within the field.

Grow in Digital Literacy. We don't want our students to have an average education—we want them to learn with the most current tools available. We also want to provide technology in our community room so that all our families can have access to the Internet.

CAMPAIGN BUDGET:

External Capital Improvements	\$682,000
New roof, replacement windows, skylights, parking lot and entrance, playground, landscaping, masonry	
Internal Capital Improvements	\$357,500
Commercial kitchen, carpet, improved accessibility, gym improvements, furniture, HVAC, lighting	
Technology	\$150,000
Student Chromebooks, staff laptops, Internet access for families, community room computer	
Mission-Focused Teaching and Learning	\$100,000
Professional conferences, restorative justice, visiting model schools, strategic recruitment fund	
Repayment of Building Loan	\$520,000
Contingency and Campaign Costs	\$140,000
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TOTAL	\$1,949,500

MOVING FORWARD IN FAITH.

It's time to build on that foundation and keep moving forward in faith.
WON'T YOU JOIN US?

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It takes a lot to start a new school with a strong vision designed to raise up world-shaping followers of Jesus. Living Stones Academy's six-year track record shows its strengths not only in academic performance, parent satisfaction, and student unity, but through the simple fact that we have done our best through passion and dedication to create a culture that works.



VISION: A community of learners, living our part in God’s story.

MISSION: We’re a neighborhood Christian school committed to inspiring the minds and hearts of our students; equipping them to embrace cultural, economic, and racial diversity; and empowering them to love and serve in community.

VALUES: In our classroom and in our community, we learn and share how to:
Be Dynamic | Act with Care | Embrace the Unknown | Work Together | Be a Partner

**LIVING STONES
ACADEMY BOARD
OF DIRECTORS:**

Trish Borgdorff, Board Chair
Peter Boumgarden
Jeremy DeRoo
Michael Remo

Rachel Swierenga
Lillian Tchuente
Melissa Williams

**MOVING FORWARD IN FAITH
CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRS:** Peter Borgdorff
Jonathan Bradford

“*The school’s value of justice is visible in its curriculum, informal conversations, and community gatherings. The teachers walk, and learn, alongside the students on a path discovering how to be Christians in an unjust world. Combine this with academic rigor, and we are confident our girls are being well prepared for the future.*”

– Parent



1415 Lyon Street NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

www.livingstonesgr.org