2017-18 Annual Report

Academy of Whole Learning



THE EXCEPTIONAL SCHOOL FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS



Table of Contents

Academy of Whole Learning 2017–2018 Annual Report

Welcome	1
School Overview	2
New Support Services	3
Strategic Plan & 2017–18 Highlights	4
Financial Report	5
Staff Highlight	6
Success Story	7
Stakeholder Highlight	8
Volunteer Highlight	9
Governance	10
Giving Report Sponsors & Donors	11-15



Our Mission

We provide a personalized learning path integrating academic, social, and life skills for qualifying students with autism spectrum disorder or related learning differences.



Welcome

Dear Supporters,

We are extremely grateful for your support for AOWL and your engagement in our community. AOWL is a vibrant school with increasing enrollment and expanding services. We have continued to evolve as an organization, and our success and growing reputation are only possible with your support.

AOWL was founded fifteen years ago. Over that time, families have shared with us the profoundly positive impact we have had on their children's development. We have seen enrollment increase ten-fold from 6 students to 64 students. Our staff has grown, our services in and out of school have expanded, and we are emerging with a strong local and regional reputation for excellence as we serve our community.

We have an outstanding Board of Trustees that is highly engaged and dedicated to helping steward the school's development and planning to secure its future to serve this community. As important as our first fifteen years were in helping form our school, the strategic focus of the Board of Trustees compels us to be centered on long-term planning for the next fifteen years.

Over the past year, we hired Greg Saunders as our Director of Exceptional Learning. Upon joining, Mr. Saunders focused immediately on the interconnected areas of Parent-Teacher communication because strong, effective communication between staff and parents is vital.

We recently formalized our Behavior Department's role within the school by integrating behavior therapy support through highly qualified behavior therapists. This includes psychotherapy, intensive behavior intervention, as well as individual and family counseling, providing a full range of services to the families in our community.

The stories you'll read in this Annual Report are just some of the highlights from 2017-18. They represent the pillars of growth and best practices in reaching students with individual learning needs. But it is you, our supporters, who are the bedrock upon which we stand and build. You empower us with your generosity and demand the best from us for the children and families we serve together. Your compassion enriches their lives, as it does ours, and we continue to be deeply grateful for your ongoing support.

Thank you very much,

Wyayn Rasmussen

Wyayn Rasmussen, Head of School

John Higgins, Chair, Board of Trustees

Celebrating



School Overview

Academy of Whole Learning (AOWL) is one of the only independent schools in the nation providing personalized, rigorous academics to students (K-12) with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and related learning differences. This year we are celebrating our 15th year. AOWL began in 2003 when several families banded together to create a school where their children with varying developmental and cognitive disabilities could be safe, nurtured, and guided to reach their potential. They envisioned a school where their child received direct instruction and attention on a personal level.

In 2012, the school board decided to take a narrower approach and specialize in an area that was rapidly growing in the public sector. In Minnesota, 1 in 42 people under the age of eighteen is diagnosed with ASD. Schools are beginning to understand the needs of these learners, but they're also realizing that they cannot sufficiently meet those needs. AOWL does. Staff at AOWL have developed a model that not only serves students with ASD, but also students who may have similar needs for their academic environment. From 2012, when enrollment was 15 students and 5 staff to a current enrollment of 64 students and 34 staff, we continue to personalize learning and nurture exceptionality. A 501(c)(3) school, AOWL is conveniently located near Highway 494 and Minnetonka Boulevard in Minnetonka.

Our facility is uniquely designed to fit our model of fostering both the academic and social needs of our students. We designed our spaces with sensory conscientiousness, academic support, and therapeutic services in mind. Each child at AOWL has a personalized learning plan that speaks to his or her strengths, needs, and future aspirations. Our families become part of a multifaceted support team when they first walk through our doors. Teachers and specialists work with the student and his or her family on developing these plans so caregivers can take part in ensuring their child's success and achievement.

The faculty at AOWL is comprised of a diverse group of highly qualified professionals. Our classroom teachers are licensed in special education, general education, or both. Our teacher associates are experienced in classroom management and hold post-secondary degrees, many of whom are pursuing graduate-level education. Together, the staff at Academy of Whole Learning collaborate and support each other relying on

a strengths-based model of teamwork. As teachers form support networks for each of their students, they are guided by leadership teams comprised of department heads, school leaders, organizers, and lead teachers. These teams facilitate the day-to-day operations of the school and the overarching schematics of classroom design and programming. Board members are engaged community members and parents of students who convene with the Head of School to oversee the long-term plans for the school. These board members also serve on various committees and are dedicated to growing and sustaining the school's quality and character.

Academy of Whole Learning

New Support Services

While you may be familiar with AOWL as a private, nonprofit school for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and related learning differences, we also offer therapy services for individuals and families in the community. Our services include psychotherapy, Intensive Behavior Intervention (IBI), testing and assessments and support groups. We offer our therapy services to all age groups and are not limited to individuals diagnosed with ASD nor those within the school.

Therapy Services is an exciting integration within the school. It is an integral part of a multifaceted approach that supports students in all areas. The purpose of psychotherapy is to provide individual and family therapy that address the social-emotional needs of families whose loved one struggles with mental health. Our teachers are highly qualified in teaching academics to students with autism and related learning differences, but our teachers are not behavior therapists. The behavior therapist focuses on

behavioral goals, teaching skills that reduce maladaptive behaviors and increase learning readiness skills. They also review progress regularly and make adjustments as needed. Teachers and behavior therapists working together in a consistent manner provides the greatest benefit for the student. Additionally, offering therapies, such as Intensive Behavior Intervention (IBI) through Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services helps individuals and families manage some of the difficult behaviors that may occur in the home or community. Our IBI services allow our behavior therapists to work alongside families so the student has consistent expectations at school, home and in the community.

Clinical Services

- Individual/Family Therapy
- Group Therapy
- Testing/Assessments
- Individual/Family Skills Training

- Individual Skills Training
- Family Skills Training
- Natural Environment Training
- Individual/Family Therapy
- Group Therapy

Celebrating

- Testing/Assessents
- Behavior Support for Teachers
- Behavior Intervention Plans (Classroom Specific)
- Individual Skill Management

Years

School Services

- Behavior Support for Teachers
- Behavior Intervention Plans (Classroom Specific)
- Individual Skill Management

Strategic Plan & 2017–18 Highlights

Our strategic plan, first written in 2015, drives our progress forward. Here are some of the new initiatives for 2017-18:

Attract, retain and serve qualified students

- Implemented school-wide Positive Action Social and Emotional Learning curriculum
- · Added Life Skills class for all upper school students
- · Published high school course catalog
- Created Google sites for all classrooms

Attract, retain and support qualified staff and faculty

- · Hired Greg Saunders as Director of Exceptional Learning
- Moved into larger building in July 2017
- · Expanded Behavior Therapy department
- Commissioned salary survey in conjunction with the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management
- · Increased Professional Development budget

Communicate and collaborate with families

- · Began offering psychotherapy and counseling to students and families
- Piloted GradeLink parent portal system
- · Held monthly PTO meetings with updates in the school newsletter The Bridge
- · PTO Implemented a proactive volunteer and recruitment process

Cultivate beneficial relationships with the community

- Established consultative services; conducted training in several local schools
- Presented at numerous workshops throughout the year
- Had eight local media placements on TV and in print
- · Hired Cindy Schriever as Donor Relations Officer

Strategic Planning Framework



Academy of Whole Learning

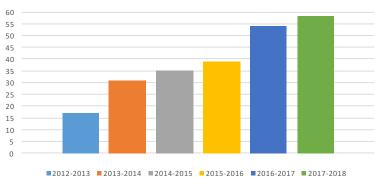


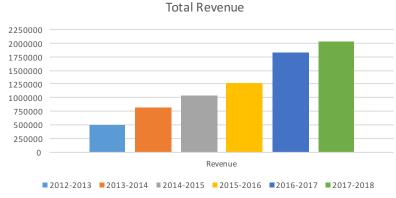
Financial Report

Measured Growth

With your support, Academy of Whole Learning is experiencing growth and financial stability.

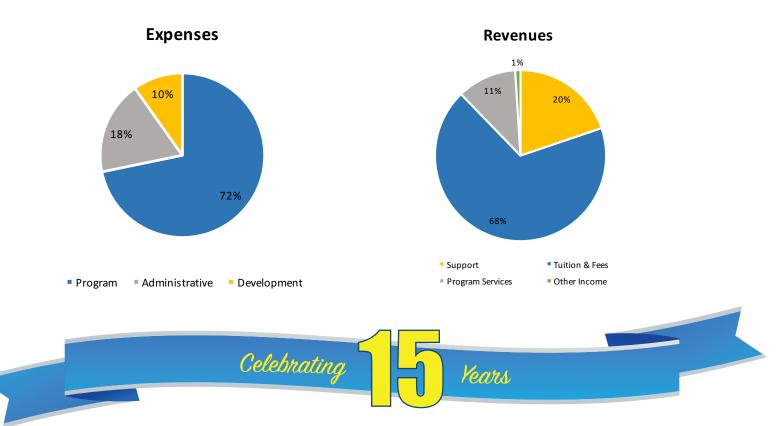
Student Enrollment





Our student enrollment has steadily increased over the last 6 years. Our total revenues are a reflection of the same trend.

2017 - 2018 Financial Data



Staff Highlight

Three years ago, Kate Drechsler began her teaching career at Academy of Whole Learning, coming all the way from Melbourne, Australia. In that short time, her persistent work ethic and collaborative spirit have bolstered our teaching community and brought a fresh perspective to our team. When Kate first learned of the Academy in 2016, the only open positions were for Teacher Associates. So, despite being qualified as a teacher, Kate chose to join the staff as a Teacher Associate (TA), feeling a deep resonance with the philosophy and mission of our school.



After a few short months as a TA, Kate transitioned to classroom teacher and has since taken on a variety of tasks — from helping with clubs and tutoring students to being the teacher representative for the PTO, to presenting at this year's Minnsota Independent School Forum (MISF) STEM Conference. In fact, 2018 marks Kate's second year working as part of a team to write and submit a STEM grant to MISF, and both years we've received the grant!

One of the highlights of Kate's STEM presentation has been implementing what she's learned to help build the science curriculum for our lower school students. The curriculum she is creating utilizes cross-cutting concepts — a pedagogy for teaching essential concepts across disciplines so as to reinforce students' understanding and

practice of key skills. One of the seven core concepts for science is cause and effect; using cross-cutting concepts, Kate may introduce cause and effect in science, looking at the components of a chemical reaction, and then reinforce that concept as the anchor for her students' reading and writing unit or even as the focus in social skills. Teaching students to identify and translate concepts across subjects and contexts is an essential component of equipping them with critical thinking and independence in their daily living. We are so grateful for the creative insights and dedication that Kate brings to our team!

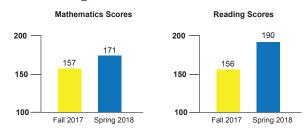
Academy of Whole Learning

Success Story

By the end of second grade, Morgan dreaded going to school. She was a curious learner, but learning and medical issues made it hard for her to fit into the "one size fits all" approach that many schools expect. Her diagnoses labeled her in ways that set her up for low expectations and pity. Years of not being able to keep up with her peers academically and socially meant that she would run away from expectations that were difficult, rather than try and try again. The "inclusion" classroom made Morgan feel even less included because she understood that what she was doing didn't look like anything her peers were doing.

Morgan's mom, Michelle, knew that there had to be a place that could see past the "checkboxes" to help Morgan succeed. When they visited Academy of Whole Learning, Michelle and Morgan knew that they had found their school home. Now a fifth grader, in her third year at AOWL, Morgan loves going to school. "She is, I think, the only child who started summer vacation saying 'AW, MAN...I want to go to school!", Michelle laughs. Morgan has made strides academically, moving from barely reading to reading chapter books in her first two years at AOWL. The creative, individualized approach to learning means that Morgan is using tools that help her succeed both socially and academically. She has friends — real friends. "For parents of kids like ours, the idea that our child is invited to birthday parties – plural – brings tears to our eyes." Michelle's biggest hope when Morgan started at Academy of Whole Learning was that she would discover that learning is fun and that she could succeed. She has.





Morgan's Progress

Why Give?

At Academy of Whole Learning, all students have learning potential.

Our responsibility is to discover how to motivate each student and develop a plan that fosters curiosity and a love of learning.

YOUR financial support provides that opportunity and TOGETHER we change lives.

Years

Celebrating

Stakeholder Highlight

Robert and Teri Crosby

Over 30 years ago, at age 33, Robert was diagnosed with Aspergers. Throughout Robert's childhood and adulthood, he often dreamed of a school with no bullying, with compassionate, understanding teachers.

Robert remembers that as a child, "I fed the coals that burned the fire," — when he was teased, he would say things that made the bullying worse.

When Robert and Teri met, they imagined what it would be like to start a school for children diagnosed with Aspergers and to eliminate the frequent agony Robert was forced to endure throughout his childhood: "We want to end the meanness and give hope to the ASD student to actually enjoy school.

Academy of Whole Learning



Clearly, public schools are not meeting the needs of the ASD students — most certainly not offering the specialized educational services desperately needed." Fast forward to 2017, while researching philanthropic opportunities through Robert and Teri's family foundation, Academy of Whole Learning caught their eye.

Robert and Teri added, "After meeting Wyayn and learning the history of the Academy, we clearly saw dedication and determination. We immediately wanted to get involved — financially as well as volunteering."

"Wyayn invited us to the annual spring Minds of All Kinds benefit breakfast. The breakfast was emotional for both of us. While we listened to parent testimonies, we witnessed how the school offered great hope for often ignored and desperate parents. By the end of the breakfast, we realized that at Academy of Whole Learning, families had been changed — lives had been saved."

Robert and Teri further explained, "What we hope to accomplish with our philanthropy is to provide a solution for the ASD student. We know it is an expensive solution, yes — but critical. We want to help parents experience the relief of knowing their child is in a SAFE place. We DON'T want children to endure bullying, we DON'T want children to be punished for releasing their anxiety, and we DO want children to make friends."

When Robert and Teri talk to others about Academy of Whole Learning, "We encourage their financial partnership with a school with a proven track record. A school filled with an administration and teachers who work there because they want to make a difference and DO make a difference — where passions are fulfilled. AOWL is a supportive environment for parent-to-parent communication and friendship and a school where specialized teaching builds meaningful lives. Simply put, we want to provide the hope and caring Robert's education did not provide."

Volunteers of the Year

Cheryl Smith

Cheryl has been a volunteer at each of her children's schools, but when her daughter began attending Academy of Whole Learning, she undertook a special passion project for our school: creating a school library. Five years later, Cheryl still spends time at the Academy weekly to manage donated books and organize the library. When asked what she finds most rewarding about volunteering in the library, Cheryl commented that seeing which books the students check out is always exciting. One of our staff expressed our gratitude for Cheryl's work perfectly, saying: "Cheryl's contributions to our school's library, in particular, have been enormous. Not only does Cheryl maintain the library each week, she initially helped design the system we use for our library with the foresight to create digital records and tracking so that as we grow, so can our library. What a lasting gift!"

Margie Fuchs

Having been an AOWL parent for four years, Margie's presence at any given school event could easily be taken for granted. Instead, her steady organizing and engagement with staff and families has made a host of events possible, opening the door to many new relationships and partnerships. When asked how Margie has made a difference at AOWL, a staff member described the impact of her contributions this way: "Margie has dedicated energy and time to building the community life of AOWL. As co-chair of the PTO she shows a welcome and enthusiastic gratitude to teachers, but also offers warmth and energy to new families. Her leadership in this role has modeled what it can look like to be a generous, engaged member of the AOWL community for staff, families, and students alike. On several occasions, she has taken the first step in a conversation with other parents, extending a welcome to anyone she encounters." We recognize and honor Margie's spirit of generosity and commitment because we know the Academy wouldn't be the same without her practical skills or warm presence.

Jodi Benson

As a wife and mother of three, Jodi has somehow found ways to put her own time aside to help AOWL when needed. She served as the Parent Liaison on the Board of Trustees for three years during a time when the school was growing and changing, keeping families informed, planning parent get-togethers, and meeting with the Head of School twice a month. Jodi has given countless hours of her time and generosity to AOWL, especially as co-chair of the Minds of All Kinds Breakfast for the last three years. In no small measure, due to Jodi's hard work, the Breakfast has always been a success. In reflecting on Jodi's help with the Breakfast, another organizer noted that, "She went

above and beyond the definition of 'parent volunteer' to ensure there was never a detail missed. From making hundreds of napkin rings, organizing parent volunteers, decorations, and so much more, she always made sure everything was done in its entirety and to perfection!"

We are so grateful to each of these Difference Makers for their gracious gifts of time and work on behalf of our students. Our school wouldn't be the exceptional place it is without the outstanding commitment of our volunteers!





Governance

Board of Trustees

John Higgins - Chair - Chief Executive Officer, Ligand Pharmaceuticals, Inc., and parent of an AOWL student

Rebecca Gibson - Vice Chair - Sales Director, Lifetouch-Shutterfly

Chris Elliott - Secretary - Director of Marketing, Berkley Risk

Ashley Lee - Treasurer - Audit Manager, Boyum & Barenscheer

Allison Barosko - Parent Liaison - Parent of two AOWL students

Wyayn Rasmussen - Head of School

Members at Large

Rob Dingmann - Community Member, Retired

Samantha Funk - Program Director, BestPrep, and Development Liason

Patty Salmon - Trade Marketing Manager, Crystal Farms Cheese, and Governance Committee Chair

Teri Crosby - Community Member and Philanthropist

Margie Fuchs - President, Go! Marketing, and parent of an AOWL student.

Chad Kinart - Senior Director of Partner Services, Assessment Systems, and parent of an AOWL student

Pat Mulvihill - Assistant Provost of Global Education, Augsburg University, and Finance Committee Chair

Ross Olson - Advisor, Cargill, and parent of an AOWL student

Bob Tift, Ed.D. - Partner, Partners in Mission



Thank you to all our **Corporate Sponsors**













Delta Dental of Minnesota



LEGEND COMPANIES ANICAL® FACILITY SERVICES® CONTROL SYSTEMS











Capernaum Pediatric Therapy, Inc



BMW of Minnetonka

and Family Sponsors

The Higgins Family

Anne Ursu and Jordan Brown

The Lenhart/Williams Family

CORVAL GROUP®

Becky Gibson

Years

The Sloan Family

The Kansara Family

Celebrating





Thank you to all our supporters

\$50,000 +

Robert and Teri Crosby of the Longview Foundation Babs Koch John and Amy Higgins

\$25,000 - \$49,999

Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation Donna and Rob Sheeley

\$10,000 - \$24,999

Allison and Jim Barosko Leuthold Family Foundation Dorothy and Harry Perkins Fund John and Mary Ursu Anonymous (1)

\$5,000 - \$9,999

United Health Group CMG Marketing & Events, LLC Capernaum Pediatric Therapy Mary C. Dolan of the Longview Foundation Howard and Heidi Gilbert Jen and Todd Graham

\$1,000 - \$4,999

Academy of Whole Learning

Minnesota Life College Corval Group Gefrey F Rasmussen DDS PA Straight Line Theory Harold and Dorothy Madson Family Foundation Legend Companies Delta Dental of MN The Howard and Nikki Applebaum Foundation Chip's Trees LLC The Murray Road Agency CarVal Investors Illinois Tools Works Inc.

\$1,000 - \$4,999 (Cont.)

Boyum & Barenscheer **General Dynamics** Stephanie Albert and Pam Quiram David and Deb Beard Mike and Rhonda Benjamin Henry Chang and Sheryl Knopik John and Gretchen Corkrean Mike and Peg Cuccia Rob Dingmann and Ethan Reynolds Becky Erdahl Cathie and Gary Erickson Susie Fry **Becky Gibson Bill and Helen Hartfiel** Regina and Tom Hudson Ramesh and Sushila Kansara Rahul and Niti Kansara Frank and Cindy Kerr Jennifer and Elliot Konschak Janet LaFrence Chris Lenhart and Audra Williams Brett Letourneau Judy Lively and Curt Stine Steve Livermore Shana Murray Ross Olson and Bill Hudson Kristi and Scott Pearson Josh Pearson and Erika Schinler



\$1,000 - \$4,999 (Cont.)

Mike and Trish Ringler Liz and Jeff Sloan Ralph and Grace Strangis Patrick Sullivan The Leonard and Rita Higgins Fund Anne Ursu and Jordan Brown Stacie and Mark Vandermyde Mark and Pam Van Ert Joe and JoAnn Ward

\$500 - \$999

Anchor Bank Sit Investment Associates Foundation Wells Fargo Ryan Companies Media Minefield Inc. Ligand Corporation Walmart

\$500 - \$999 (Cont.)

Celebrating

BMW of Minnetonka Assessment Systems Corp National Financial Services Thrivent Mike Amsbrv Mark and Deb Basco Diana and Steve Benjamin Anna Biorkstrand Morgan and Anna Burns Kurt Chackan Nancy Etzwiler and Dan O'Neill Ted Fleener Francis and Patti Halm Carlton Hoagland Brandon and Christi Kruse Perry Leo and Lisa Villalta Roberta and Tom McNellis Pat and Agi Mulvihill Stephanie Paulson Steve Peacock and Kate Seng Wyayn and Gefrey Rasmussen

Thank you to all our supporters

\$500 - \$999 (Cont.)

Andrew and JoEllyn Roalstad Monica and Tim Schultz Jon and Lea Theobald Gary and Kathie Vander Vorst John and Darlene Vandermyde Colleen and Ben Wilkinson Anonymous (1)

\$100 - \$499 (Cont.)

Years

Thiel, Anderson & Kukla Network for Good MN AG in the Classroom Foundation **Daniels Development Corp Casidy Anderson** Jennifer and Thor Anderson Chad and Carissa Anvary Erin Bastian-Phillips Andrew and Jodi Benson David and Erin Berglund Dean Boegeman Lindsey and Timothy Brandt Amy Brenengen Kristi Broderick David and Kerry Brown Anita Burris Regan Carlson and Jeffrey Hinz Steve and Theresa Carlson Joseph Casey Sophia Chang

Thank you to all our supporters

\$100 - \$499 (Cont.)

Vincent and Kate Conley Kristy Crowley William and Mary Jo Culbertson Milton Dodd Chris and Jamie Elliott Rhonda Engle Paul and Elizabeth Erdahl Barb and Tom Ernster Susan Feliciano James Fisher Steve and Margie Fuchs Barbara and James Gahlon Dana Gilbert and Matt Sanders Tom and Candee Goodman Jack Goodwin Lynn Groh David and Jodi Gubbrud Amy and Kai Gudmestad Kim Haley Jeremy Hallett Melissa Hansen Andrea Hanson Anna Hilfers Carlton and Karen Hoagland Lyndsay and Chris Holding Zachariah Hubert Sam Itskovich Cassandra Kelly JoAnn Kinart Nathan Knoernschild Amanda and Troy Kopischke

\$100 - \$499 (Cont.)

Jen Kyllonen Peggy Landy Amy Langer Ben Lentz David Leo Harriet and Frank Letourneau Anne Letourneau Patrice MacGibbon Ann and Robert Maher Dan Martin Nadia and Joe Martyn Marcia Mattson Sue and Bill McCarthy Gavin McKee **Neal Millsaps** Margarer Neuville Stacy O'Reilly Timothy Odegard Dawn Odenthal Kara and Al Olsen Lisa Olson Bonna Olson Michael and Connie Onan Jeanne Osgood David Pittman Harry Poulos Isaac Ramberg Luella and Bruce Ramberg Carly Rasmussen Abby Reddy Dave and Barb Reilly

Academy of Whole Learning



\$100 - \$499 (Cont.)

Brent Rickenbach Amanda Rivera Circuns Karen and Scott Rynerson David Saben Patty and Scott Salmon **Gregory Schlee** Annette and Dennis Schmidt Dawn Schuette Julie Sjordal Loren and Deb Sposito Tracy Stevens Eric and Jennifer Stine Paul and Susie Strangis Dan Sullivan and Becky Erickson Tim Thoreen John and Patty Thornton Lori Urmann Matthew Waldschmidt Dan and Emily Ward

\$100 - \$499 (Cont.)

Glenda Watry Chris Way Eric Weathermon Vicki Weber Ann and Eric Werner Nichole White Monica White Preston and Sharon Williams Beth and Bob Wright Ron Zickefoose Anonymous (3)

Up to \$99

General Mills - Box Tops For Education Costco Kelsey Agather Georgette and Mike Benton Darla Baumgartner Inez Bergquist Melinda Bialke Rebecca Casey **Chrissy Cleveland** Marc Cohn Thomas Conley Nichole Deweerdt Drew DeWitt Patricia M Elliott Pat Feeser Samantha and Tim Funk Ron and Jane Furlong Paul Gandrud Paul Gloudemans

Thank you to all our supporters

Up to \$99 (Cont.)

Cindi Hager Julie and Bruce Hjerpe Brinn Johnson Donna Johnson Chad Kinart and Nicole Zickefoose Mark Kirschner **Charles Kortuem Bethany Krepela** Amanda Labo Joel Landskroener Ashlev Lee Dana and Matthew Liberty Nicole Lussier Jack and Tracy Maloney Lillian McDonald Jason and Elizabeth McGrew-King Jasmin McKenzie William Neiss Kathy and Jon Olson Eric Olson Bruce and Patty Patterson Lawrence Paulsen Micky Pecchia Jen Peterson Susan Pfau Julie Phillips John and Nancy Price Sarah and Matt Rice

Up to \$99 (Cont.)

Robin Rumsey Greg and Katy Saunders Jason Schafer Chris Schleper Nathaniel Schmidt Matt and Dee Ann Schnacky Cindy and Mark Schriever Jennifer Service Melissa Sirek Chervl and Chuck Smith Arlene and Ralph Sonday Susan Stebbins Laura Tarr Glenn Terrell Bob Tift Becky Waege Addie Washington Melony Weathermon Sarah Wessel Melissa and John Wilcox Michelle Williams Heather and William Zerull

Celebrating

Years

Tim Robinson



Academy of Whole Learning 3500 Williston Rd. Minnetonka, MN 55345 952-737-6900 www.aowl.org