

WISE SCHOOL

2014-15 ANNUAL REPORT



OUR VISION

The vision of Wise School is to inspire and empower our students and their families to learn deeply about our world and Jewish heritage, to be creative, and to experience wholeness so that we can make great happen in our community, our nation, Israel, and the world.

OUR MISSION

At Wise School, through depth, complexity and differentiation, our students learn how to learn. Children build knowledge as they ask questions, research, solve problems, and add layers to their understanding.

Through the application of creativity, children voice their independence, expand their minds, and work towards achieving their greatest potential. Students become creators instead of consumers; they focus more on the process than the product. Students maximize their opportunity to stand out in a competitive world by looking at life through innovative lenses.

Our students experience wholeness (*שלימות* - *shleimut*), by making interdisciplinary connections through development of mind, body, and soul. We acknowledge and appreciate moments of Shalom. We recognize each student's strengths and contributions as we build an inclusive community. We honor our Jewish faith as a living heritage, begin to develop a deep understanding of and commitment to Israel, and develop proficiency in and appreciation of the Hebrew language.

At Wise School, thoughtful people inspire meaningful actions in order to make great happen through acts of *Tikkun Olam* (תיקון עולם - repair of the world).

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Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback
Senior Rabbi

Tami Weiser
Head of School

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Assistant Head of School

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Academic Administrator*

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*Director of Admission &
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Director of Early Childhood

Marilyn Balachio
*Assistant Director of
Early Childhood*

Rachel Moghimi
School Counselor

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Nicole Mevorakh
Parenting Center Coordinator



Among the many highlights of our school year, one of the

key moments is watching our 6th grade students as they share their thoughts at graduation. Their culmination is a true expression of what Wise School is all about. These self-confident, articulate, and kind young adults are ready for their next academic step, and the broader life opportunities that lie ahead.

Students enter Wise School as eager young learners, and through our daily work on critical and creative thinking skills, interdisciplinary connections, the art of questioning, and problem solving, they acquire so many important life attributes. Through our partnership with the USC Rossier School of Education, we continue to develop the Wise Learning Process, which is evident through the conversations I hear walking through classrooms and the work on our hallway walls. Equally important to our academic skills, our students also learn how to positively impact the world around them, and this year's theme of "Love Your Neighbor" brought this to life. On the cover of our annual report is a picture of two students who embodied these concepts with their Chocolate Bar book. Only a school like Wise School could have two nine-year-olds raise \$1,000,000 for a life-saving cause, backed by our entire community, as we all change the world.

As the Principal for the past five years, I have had the pleasure of working with outstanding teachers, administrators, parents, and students. I love sharing daily learning, holidays, sports victories, musical performances, and family life events with each of you. I am deeply honored that you entrust us with your most prized possessions, your children, and I take this responsibility very seriously. As I transition to the Head of School position, I want to thank Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback for laying the groundwork of elevating Wise School and creating and embodying our vision of learning deeply, being creative, experiencing wholeness, and making great happen. I look forward to continuing this work in partnership with Rabbi Yoshi, our amazing staff, and our incredible WPA leadership on behalf of our community.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tami Weiser". The script is fluid and cursive.

Tami Weiser
HEAD OF SCHOOL

“Do you have any idea how lucky we are?”

he said. I nodded. He brushed a tear from his eye. “I wish that I’d had this kind of education, this kind of community, this kind of Temple when I was a kid. It’s why I feel so blessed to be able to give it to my son.”

It was right before last year’s graduation but it could have been at any number of events in our school: *Hagigat HaTorah* (the moment our kindergartners receive their “baby” Torah scrolls), our Midor L’Dor celebration, our first ever “Founders’ Day”. Those words that one of our Wise School fathers shared with me that day are what get me out of bed every morning feeling lucky—blessed—to be able to do the work I do.

Our school is a place of deep learning and creativity. It’s a place where our children and staff (and our parents and grandparents as well) feel a profound sense of *shalom*, of wholeness. And it’s a place where we are inspired to do great things, to make great things happen through our acts of *hessed* (kindness) and *tikkun* (repair).

This year was filled with blessings for which we should feel grateful and fortunate: our new debate program, our Odyssey victories, our Five-Star gifted award, our WASC accreditation, new facilities, our new Parent Ambassador program, record-breaking participation and generosity through Annual Giving, and growing enrollment, especially in our Parenting Center and Early Childhood department. Our end-of-year Parent Satisfaction Survey shows tremendous improvement, especially in the areas of communications, clarity of vision, sense of community, and overall “likelihood to recommend.”

It’s been my honor to serve as your Head of School for these past three years. I am excited to continue to be an integral part of the daily life of our school. And I feel blessed and lucky to have Mrs. Tami Weiser as my successor and partner as we go forward—all of us together—from strength to strength for our Wise School, our Stephen Wise Temple, our children and, it’s true, ourselves as well.

L’shalom,



Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback

SENIOR RABBI



This was another exciting year for performing arts as we formally introduced our Music Academy.

This past year saw profound artistic achievements with our Spring Musical, *Oliver*. Our first ever Spring and Winter Music Festivals

PERFORMING ARTS



included stellar performances by our musical arts students in our Primary Choir, Vocal Ensemble, Orchestra, Jazz Band, and first ever Rock Band. The new Introduction to Orchestra program for our younger students demonstrated the clear benefits of starting our children studying music at an early age. Our Private Instrumental Instruction program continued to deliver expert tutelage in violin, cello, clarinet, saxophone, piano, and added this past year, percussion and guitar.



MUSIC INNOVATION LAB

This year, our students made bold strides in their weekly Music Innovation Lab classes. As Pre-K through 6th grade students continue their music theory education using the computer based Music Ace Maestro program, **each grade level was also introduced to our Music Appreciation unit** giving detailed and diverse exposure to the vast history of music, the great composers of old and artists of the present day. Our 4th through 6th graders began their exposure to the Guitar Education unit, Rock Prodigy, an online study program each student can also access at home.

Wise School's science program has geared up this past year in a multitude of ways. The science team attended the National Science Teachers Association Conference where they added to their knowledge on ways to take our science program in new and exciting directions. Specifically they developed units for PreK-6th grade that covered Physical, Earth, and Life Science based on the Next Generation Science Standards. **We successfully implemented our 1st Annual Family STEM Night,** where 6th

grade students were able to showcase their work at the Science Fair and all students participated in activities that focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. The science department also worked closely with the Wise Parents Association and Stephen Wise Temple to further develop our Sustainability Committee, and we successfully held our first Annual EarthWISE Earth Day event that featured environmentally friendly activities and presentations for our community.

SCIENCE



PROJECT

STUDIO



In Project Studio, students delved into inquiry-based learning in this open space, conducive to workshop-style learning and collaboration in social studies and next generation STEM standards. On any given day, you may have found students reimagining Native American tools, using cardboard boxes to build room-sized arches based in Sumerian Architecture, or designing uniquely challenging games based on the novel, *Alice in Wonderland*. Utilizing the Project

Studio workshop, students produced machines for this year's Odyssey of the Mind tech challenge and received first place at the State Tournament. **As part of our first ever Family STEM Night, Project Studio hosted a workshop** that challenged students and their families to create Rube Goldberg machines that perform simple tasks through chain reactions. Project Studio is a hub of creativity and innovative learning.



ATHLETICS

Supported by our generous Coaches' Circle, our Wildcat athletes completed another successful year. **We celebrated two San Fernando Valley League championships** along with five finalist teams! We are also proud of the 131 4th–6th grade students who demonstrated outstanding sportsmanship while competing for the Wildcats against our independent school rivals. Almost 92% of our 4th–6th grade students participated in our competitive athletic program, which contributed to their development of mind, body and soul. We enjoy having our beautiful pool as we continue to expand our aquatics program, with 3rd–6th grade students having the opportunity to swim as part of their PE instructional day. In addition, we have a vibrant after school swim program.



DEBATE



Wise School is excited to have launched a debate team this year for our 5th–6th grade students. We participated in the middle school debate league, the only Jewish day school to compete against neighboring private schools such as Mirman, Curtis, John Thomas Dye and the Center for Early Education. In teams of three, students debated topics like drone warfare,

compulsory service, school uniforms, abolishing homework, marine animal parks, and many other current topics. The important skills of research, critical thinking and listening, argumentation/refutation/evidence, and self-confidence were developed throughout the year. We are so proud of our students for successfully competing and winning individual and team trophies at every tournament.

In recognition of our cutting-edge approach instructional approach that brings gifted educational standards to every student in every subject, every day, we were awarded the coveted 5-Star Award by the independent California Association for the Gifted. Our Wise Learning Process, developed through our exclusive partnership with USC's Rossier School of Education, is at the core of our academic excellence and continues to develop in its fifth year. Our teachers receive high-level professional develop-

ment while incorporating the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) standards as defined by the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC). We believe that learning the skills of critical and creative thinking and applying them across the disciplines is essential to success for the unknown jobs of the future. Our students learn to identify discrepancies, problems, and ethical dilemmas as they build confidence in these essential skills. **We organize units and lessons around Big Ideas in order to provide a more global perspective** on the content and to allow for interdisciplinary connections. Students are encouraged to prove Big Ideas with examples from their own lives, from current events and from core content.

WISE LEARNING PROCESS



Wise School's Early Childhood Department is in the second year of a three-year roll-out of a ground-breaking scope and sequence developed in partnership with USC's Rossier School of Education. Building on years of research in early childhood, this innovative curriculum (written exclusively for our Early Childhood department) **strengthens the educational bridge to kindergarten with sound social, emotional, and academic foundations** for confidence and success. It teaches invaluable behaviors such as perseverance, curiosity, academic risk-taking, and practice, while bringing developmentally appropriate critical and creative thinking skills to the forefront.

USC

EARLY CHILDHOOD

CURRICULUM



HEBREW

IMMERSION



Wise School Early Childhood continued our unique Hebrew Immersion Program in both the Explorer (N2) and Pre-K (N3) classes this year. Scientific research in early childhood brain development indicates that children who are exposed to learning a second language between the ages of three to five are more successful in learning and internalizing that language, as well as other languages, mathematics, and music. Students enrolled in this program attend five days per week for a five-hour day. To maintain the integrity of the program, **all content is taught exclusively in Hebrew by native, Hebrew speaking, Early Childhood teachers.** We continue to enjoy their progress as we embark with two full classes in the 2015-16 school year.



UPGRADES

CAMPUS



Before, this was classroom space for our 1st graders. Today, it has been transformed!

Through a generous donation from the Tyberg Family, **Wise School started construction this year on the state-of-the-art Tyberg Arts & Innovation Lab.** This lab, located on Faber Field, will house our art and technology departments. A large space was created with open doors and walls, so that integrated lessons can be taught at all grade levels. Architects designed an amazing concept, the construction crew began demolition and building, and the grand opening for our lab is scheduled for Fall of 2015. Inside the walls, students will experience robotics, 3D printing, a new iPad cart, creative art projects, ceramics/sculpture, and a gallery space to exhibit their work. We thank the Tyberg family for their inspirational gift. The lab is now complete and the children love it!

Our strong sense of community is the heart of our school, and the connections formed at an early age truly last a lifetime. Through Shabbat dinners, grade-level coffees and socials, and party book events, our families have opportunities to come together both on and off campus. **These connections go deep, including multigenerational programs** such as M'dor L'dor, where grandparents and family members share



our sense of community. Our dedicated parent body, teachers, and administrators form **the bonds that make great happen.** These connections to community and Judaism, formed at an early age in our Parenting Center and Early Childhood classes, and deepened through shared experiences in the upper grades, truly last a lifetime.

COMMUNITY



The Wise Parents Association Executive Board kicked off the 2014-2015 school year with one objective in mind:

to build community around celebrated school events. With the help of dedicated committee chairs and countless committee members, we started the year off by revamping events such as Back to Wise, Mitzvah Day, the Book Fair, and the Holiday Boutique.

The community responded favorably to the changes, and attended socials and party book events in numbers that haven't been seen for several years. They also proudly purchased Wise Style items throughout the school year. The Executive Board continued efforts to create special events for our parent body by putting together a guest speaker series which included lectures by Stanford Senior Educator Denise Clark Pope, acclaimed author Sonia Levitan, and Samantha Snowden from the UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center.

The success of these events and many others did more than lead to record number of sign-ups to chair and be members of 2015-16 WPA committees, and to more than simply create a greater sense of community at Wise. In May, the WPA was thrilled to present Wise School with a gift of nearly \$175,000, far exceeding our goal of \$100,000. Our gift was allocated to multiple departments of the school, including athletics, arts, science, and technology. We are most proud of the gift of \$50,000 to the newly established Wise School Endowment Fund, reinforcing the WPA's commitment not only to the present, but also to our future.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Evelyn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Evelyn Shooshani
WPA PRESIDENT

WISE SCHOOL BY THE NUMBERS

90% Family Participation and **100%**
Teacher participation in our successful
annual giving campaign

315

students exploring nature
in celebration of Tu B'Shvat
in Camp Alonim

24

new laptops
for fourth grade

300

yoga mats used by moms (and Rabbi Stern!)
in their Pilates class at Wise

Over **1,000**
books purchased for
students in Guatemala
through our Light Up
Literacy donations

2,592

Shabbat candles lit
throughout Wise School

60 trophies put in
our trophy case from
Odyssey and Debate
tournaments

5,400

minutes of
Mindful meditation
during the year

2

sixth grade girls league
championships—soccer
and basketball

WISE SCHOOL YEAR



2



3



4



1

1 What a blessing it was to have Rabbi Zeldin, along with founding families of Stephen Wise Temple, join us to honor their vision.

2 Kabbalat Shabbat is a special time of the week to joyously celebrate with our school community.

3 Our kindergartners enjoying Super Hero Day, one of many spirit days organized by our Student Council.

4 First grade students are excited to celebrate the 100th day of School!

IN REVIEW



5

5 Congratulations to our Odyssey of the Mind team for an amazing year culminating in participation at the World Finals tournament.

6 History comes alive as our fifth grade students experience the challenges and achievements new immigrants faced while entering Ellis Island.

7 Early Childhood students enjoy exploring and reaching developmental milestones on our age-appropriate EC yards.

8 Wise School families actively participated in Mitzvah Day, helping raise money for Beit Issie Shapiro.

9 The Wise School community came together to raise funds and celebrate the \$1 million mark as Dylan and Jonah make a phone call to the research team at the University of Florida.



6



7



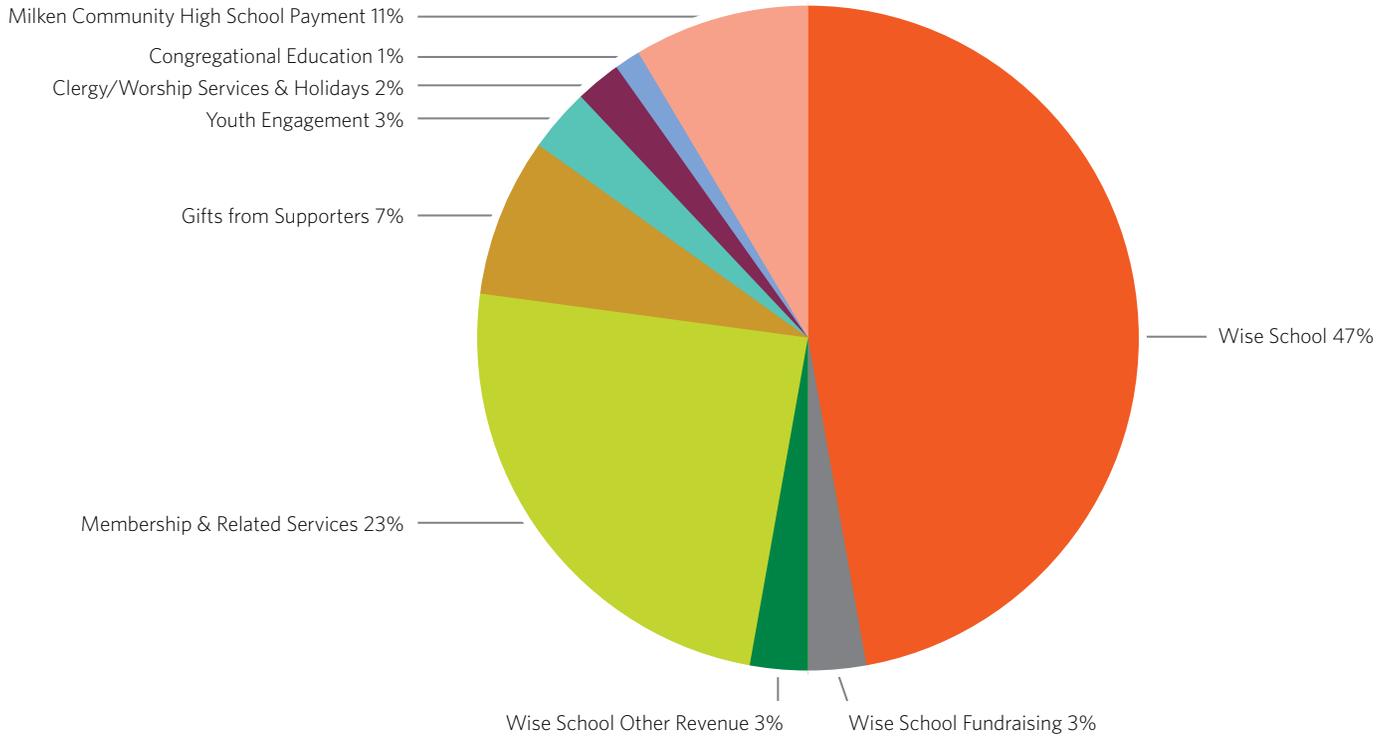
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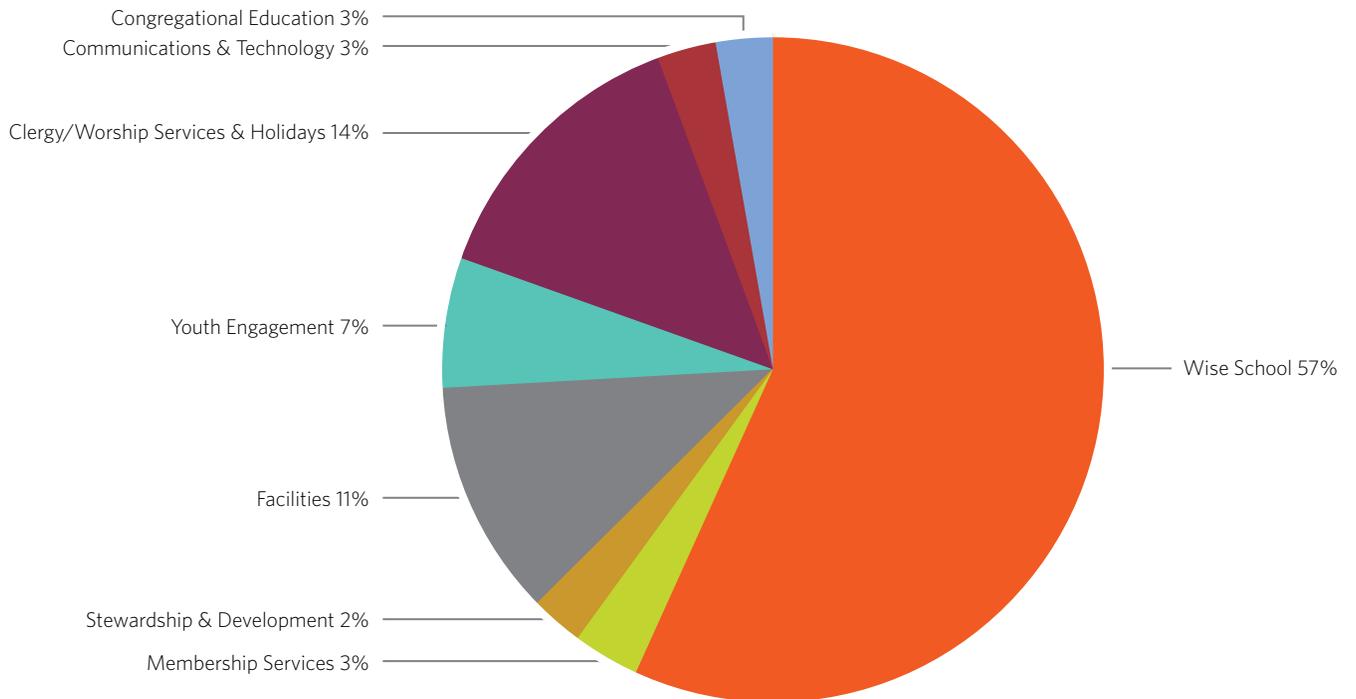
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2014/2015 Stephen Wise Temple

SOURCES OF REVENUE – \$17 MILLION

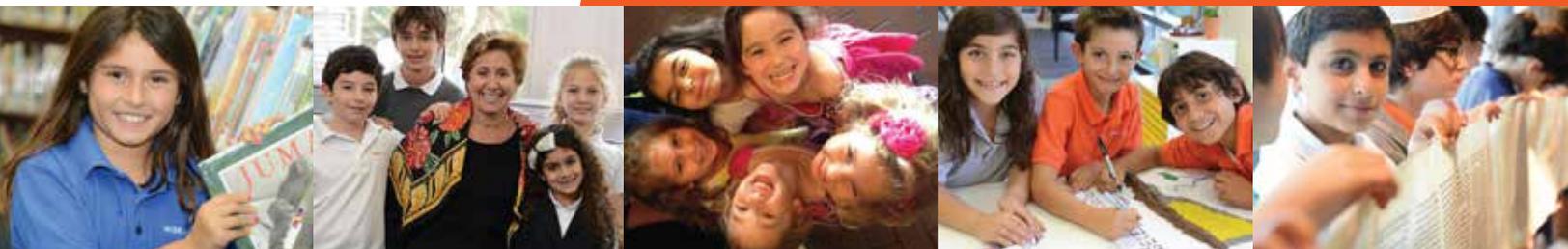


EXPENSES – \$17 MILLION



Thank you to our generous donors

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