

Dear Watershed Community,

Last night many friends of Watershed gathered for our Gala celebrating our new campus. What a wonderful time! It was the most successful fundraising event in Watershed's history, but more importantly, it was a time to bring the community together for connection, conversation, and fun. It was truly a joy to see parents of current and former students mixing with current and former staff. What a special community we have!

I know that not everyone in our community was able to join us last night, so I want to share two things from the event.

First, we showed a [wonderful video about Watershed and the new campus](#) at the event. This was made by Ben Sisenwein (class of '24) and Jon Sisenwein (P '24 and '26). I am so grateful for the fabulous job they did on this!

Second, I include the welcome remarks I made at the event (below).

Thanks for reading!

Warmly,

Tim

Welcome Remarks

Welcome. We are so glad that you all are here tonight – a night to celebrate Watershed, our past, our present, and our bold vision for the future.

As I look around the room, I see a remarkable community. You are the bold ones. The ones who have taken a leap of faith, sending your children to a school that dares to be different. You are the ones who have invested, year after year, because you believe in the transformative power of education and the potential of young people to drive positive change. You are the educators who have devoted your professional lives to teaching in a way that breaks the mold. You are the visionaries who understand that school should be more than just preparation for the status quo – it should be a catalyst for building a better future. A future that is brighter not only for our students but for our communities and our world.

In a world that can be uncertain, you know that the conventional educational choice, the safe choice, won't get our young people and our world where we need to go. You know we need to do education differently. Thank you for helping to build a new model of education. One that engages students in real learning, not just school learning – real learning that explores real-world challenges, and makes real contributions to society.

Tonight is a particularly special night. Tonight, we are here to invest in the future.

Jonas Salk, best known as the leader of the team that developed the polio vaccine, once said, "The most important question we must ask ourselves is, 'Are we being good ancestors?'"

At Watershed, we know what this means, because we stand on the shoulders of many "good ancestors" who came before us. Jason and Sumaya, who dreamed, developed, and founded our school. The early educators and students who poured their time, expertise, and passion into bringing our vision to life. The families and friends who have supported us throughout our first twenty years with their time, talent, and treasure. We are the heirs of their remarkable legacy.

And tonight, it's our turn. It's our opportunity to be good ancestors. I ask you to pause right now. Indulge me – close your eyes – and imagine a gathering 20, or 50 years in the future, A gathering like tonight, a gathering of the Watershed Community. As they look back to our time, what will they be grateful to us for? What legacy will we leave for them? Will our actions tonight inspire them to make a difference for the generations that follow?

Many in our community have already stepped forward to be counted as good ancestors in this next phase of Watershed's legacy, collectively giving \$5.1M toward our \$6M capital campaign goal to support our new campus. Tonight, we have the opportunity to expand that circle and make a dent in what's still needed.

As people who work in and who support education, we rarely see the full fruits of our labor, because they blossom far in the future. We may not witness the graduate who becomes a groundbreaking researcher, The graduate who is an ethical business leader making tough decisions with integrity, or the graduate who is a community organizer working tirelessly to improve the lives of others. As educators and supporters, we till the soil and we plant seeds, nurturing the potential we may never see fully realized. Our work is an act of faith, a gift to the future.

And this is what we are all called to do this evening. To till the soil, to plant the seeds for Watershed's future. Our new campus will be the fertile ground where generations of ethical, engaged changemakers will grow, empowered to make our world more just, more sustainable, and more compassionate.

Tonight, we are called to be good ancestors for future Watershed students, families, and educators. We are called to create a legacy that is worthy of future generations. Together, let's answer that call.

Thank you for being here.
