

Annual Appeal Q&A

What exactly is the Annual Appeal?

The Annual Appeal raises money each year for the Annual Fund, an unrestricted fund that supplements tuition revenue. We ask all parents, faculty, staff, the Board of Trustees, grandparents, and RVWS friends to participate. Gift amounts are kept strictly confidential and are tax-deductible. Whatever the amount of the gift, we are deeply grateful for each expression of support. Please help us continue the strong history of support that has made the River Valley Waldorf School the vital center for Waldorf education that it is today. Your gift before June 30, 2009 will help keep our school on a solid financial foundation.

What does the Annual Fund support?

The Annual Fund supports all of the programs at the school, as well as building and grounds maintenance and general operating expenses. Once the Annual Fund goal is exceeded, funds can be earmarked for enhancement of programs and facilities. The annual fund is used for teacher and staff salaries, building maintenance, program development, and other expenses related to the education of the students such as:

- Language programs
- Eurythmy
- Math and Science programs
- Practical Arts
- Sports and Games
- Music Program
- Dramatic Arts
- Campus beautification
- Faculty enrichment
- Technology

I already pay tuition. Why should I give to the annual fund?

The Annual Appeal is a vital supplement to tuition income. We make every effort to keep tuition as low as possible and for this reason, **tuition only covers approximately 60% of the actual costs** associated with educating our children. Contributions to the Annual Fund help bridge the gap between tuition and the actual costs and provide an opportunity to improve our school. As a donor, you receive a personal income tax deduction for your contribution.

What is the goal and how did you come up with that number?

We set our goal by looking at the upcoming budgeted expenses against what we expect to bring in through grants, other fundraisers, and tuition. We need the Annual Appeal to raise \$50,000 to bridge the gap between our projected income and expenses.

Equally important is our goal of 100% participation. We become an even stronger candidate for grants and donations when every single member of our community gives to our campaign – and more grants and donations means less financial burden for the school community.

\$50,000 seems like a lot. Why is there such a large gap between income and expenses?

Tuition only covers a little more than half of what it costs to educate a child at RVWS, as we try to keep tuition as low as possible to encourage enrollment of families from a diverse range of economic backgrounds. In 2008-09, 36 children received over \$113,000 in financial aid. The Annual Appeal affords each family in our community the opportunity to determine what each can contribute to help offset the cost of educating our children. Some can afford more, others less, but we need everyone to give something.

\$50,000 was our goal last year too. How did we do?

In 2007-08 we received support from 90% of our enrolled families. Our school benefits from such a high rate of participation from all of our constituencies. Such a high rate of participation raised approximately \$48,000, or 96% of our \$50,000 goal.

What payment options do I have?

You can pay your pledge in one single payment or in installments. Donations are accepted in the form of cash, checks, or credit cards, as well as through many other avenues – for example, gifts can be added to tuition payments, set up as an **auto-payment** from your credit card or bank account (please see enclosed form), or given in the form of stock. For additional information, please contact Renell Carpenter, Development Coordinator.

How can I make my donation go even further?

Many families double or even triple their Annual Fund contributions by participating in **Matching Gift** programs sponsored by their employer. Please check with the human resources department at your (or your spouse's or your parents....) company for specific policies.

You may also wish to pledge money in the form of a **Challenge** to encourage more participation. Please contact Renell Carpenter, Development Coordinator, to discuss this opportunity.

I'm not sure how to determine how much to give. Can you offer any guidelines?

One way we could reach our \$50,000 goal would be for each of the approximately 100 families in our school to give \$500 dollars, or about \$83 per month for the remainder of the school year. Undoubtedly this sounds like a lot to many families, and we depend on others who are able to give more, but this would be the "equal share" required for us to meet our goal. Gifts of all sizes make a tremendous difference to our school, and any gift given on a regularly, monthly basis through the auto-payment program really adds up.

Can I make a Restricted Gift?

Unrestricted gifts ensure that funds are available for the areas of highest priority and greatest need. On the other hand, restricted gifts are those in which the donor directs contributions to a specific fund or programs. Usually these gifts are of a size that covers most or all of the cost of the particular need or program. RVWS is able to accept restricted gifts that are consistent with the school's mission, goals and development priorities. All discussions regarding restricted gifts should begin with Renell Carpenter, Development Coordinator. Examples of current areas of priority:

- Scholarship/Tuition Assistance
- Campus Expansion: we will soon need more classrooms
- Science and Math Program: we currently have a grant which will match up to \$17,500 of gifts to this program
- Music Program: we will continue to develop our music and orchestra program
- Specific capital projects: such as additional HVAC updates, replacing the tile floors, repainting interior walls
- Endowment