



GOLDEN VALLEY  
CHARTER SCHOOLS

TK-8 Tuition-Free Public Waldorf Schools

## 2020 Annual Report



Serving Sacramento and Placer Counties since 1999

# Celebrating



## OUR VISION

*We are a leading network of Waldorf inspired public charter schools*

## OUR CORE VALUES

- Developmentally Appropriate Learning
- Respectful Relationships
- Joyful Service
- Cultivating Excellence
- Resilience



# A Message from the Executive Director



Caleb Buckley with Founding Principal, Debi Lenny

**2020 has not been the year that everyone expected.** Golden Valley Charter Schools is a highly adaptive organization that takes in new information, creates a community process to address it, and implements a new direction for student success. This has happened many times in our 20 year history. We opened the 2019-2020 school year by celebrating our 20 year anniversary. Every student and employee received a 20th year green t-shirt and we spent the Fall reaching back into our history to celebrate all the accomplishments and people who made it possible. The shirt quickly became the unofficial Friday shirt of unity across Golden Valley.

On the financial side, you will see that we had to dip into our reserves to balance our budgets this year but that our overall cash position is still strong. The Tahoe School continues to double in size each year while River and Orchard have added new programs to keep enrollment up. Our specialty program has centered around Music, Practical

Arts, and Cultural Studies. In March, because of COVID-19, the schools had to shift to distance learning. Teachers very quickly needed to become producers of online video content. One analogy is that Golden Valley set up over 30 YouTube-like channels in Google classroom on a Zoom platform to reach 700 students through the computer. What a huge task for a Waldorf program to make such a major curriculum shift during a pandemic.

Thank you for your support of this innovative education which is always adapting and growing to meet our changing needs. We celebrate this past year and all we have accomplished with this annual report. It is also our way of reporting back to our donors how your dollars were spent and the wonderful schools you support.

Sincerely,

**Caleb J. Buckley, EdD**  
Executive Director  
Golden Valley Charter Schools

## Leadership



**Susan Gutierrez**  
*Director, Education Support*



**Becky Page**  
*Orchard School Principal*



**Barbara Ames**  
*River School Principal*



**Bonnie River**  
*Tahoe School Principal*



**GOLDEN VALLEY**  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The stewardship of Golden Valley Charter Schools is held by the Board of Trustees.

The GVCS Board made the transition to greater transparency and participation through technology. We began to send all agendas and attachments through our schools' communication platform to every member of the parent body. Meetings are now recorded and posted on the website. Through Zoom, we have averaged 35 participants since March, including some town halls with over 100 people. After a few months revising the strategic plan, the community affirmed our values and core principles. The plan will be picked up again, once the schools are back to in-person learning. We said goodbye at the end of the year to John Hanafee, who had been our board chair. Heather Fraser-Hurtt completed her first year as chair and the board expanded its availability to meet the growing needs of Distance Learning.

### 2019-20 BOARD MEMBERS

**Heather Fraser-Hurtt**  
*Chair, River School Parent*  
Joined 2018

**John Hanafee**  
*River School Parent*  
Joined 2013

**G'anna Burke,**  
*Secretary,*  
*Orchard School Parent*  
Joined 2016

**Stephanie Parmely**  
*River School Parent*  
Joined 2018

**Jennifer Huetter**  
*Vice-chair*  
*Orchard School Parent*  
Joined 2018

**Stephen Quadro**  
*Orchard School Parent*  
Joined 2019

**Adrianna Wray**  
*Tahoe School Parent*  
Joined 2020

2020 teachers, staff, and principal pose in front of the new home for the school



The Tahoe School began its second year with 54 students in grades TK-4. Our dedicated group of teachers brought a rich Waldorf curriculum woven through outdoor experiences. Fridays were organized around an “eco-literacy” program whereby students have the entire day to bring nature studies and science from the classroom into the woods. Throughout the year, families brought harmony and social health to this new community of students. The Friends of Tahoe Truckee Waldorf purchased a site in Truckee that they will lease to the Tahoe School. Parents spent long hours bringing the site up to permit standards and transforming a 5,000 sq. foot log cabin style building into a school setting. FOTTW charged \$60,000 for rent in 2019-20 and raised \$89,000 from parent donation. In 2021, donations will come directly to GVTS from parents. When schools in California had to transition to distance learning, the Tahoe faculty lost no time in jumping into an on-line platform and providing education over the internet. We closed the year with over a hundred students enrolled for the following semester, doubling our enrollment.

Students explore Sugar Pine Point State Park during eco-literacy class





## Waldorf Schools celebrated a 100-Year Anniversary in 2019.

River School had just completed a yearlong self-study of the core principles put forth by the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education. By studying the seven core principles and asking several key questions about our school in relation to those principles, we were able to determine where our strengths and weaknesses lie. We found our school thriving and healthy in most principles. Where needed, we created goals for our school and are striving to meet them.

Our River Renewal Room got underway last year with the help of several parent volunteers who passionately want to help teachers and students cope with challenges. Although this was an entirely volunteer based effort, we made headway. Several children in the lower grades and kindergarten were successfully supported. Now, our dream is to fund the room and provide a full-time support person. Although several grants were written, none were approved. We are still seeking funding.

River School celebrated our 20th anniversary with an outdoor gathering. Students and teachers wore our green t-shirts and later we took a school-wide photo for the yearbook. It was an exciting time considering all our school has endured over the years to survive as a charter in California. Turns out, we hadn't faced a struggle like we would in the spring. On March 13, COVID-19 shut down our school and ALL schools in California for the rest of the school year. Teachers and students transitioned to distance learning for review and enrichment.



Second grade students tame the sixth graders' dragon during the Sir George play





## Orchard school continued the theme of unity this

**year** beginning with instilling our schoolwide norms: Be responsible, be respectful, be safe. The school environment was further enhanced by our School Climate Committee through the creation of a mindfulness room: a safe space where students can learn to decompress, reflect and engage in multiple mindful and sensory based activities. In addition, our peer helper program formed as students learned about managing conflict, problem solving and empathy to use these skills on the play yard.

Our Diversity Committee worked on creating a space to embrace diversity in all forms. To encourage opportunities for the students, the Committee worked collaboratively to advocate and support inclusiveness in our community allowing staff and faculty to grow in their own understanding of diversity, and to promote equality of opportunity for all. The committee expressed ideas to expand our outreach across various early childhood philosophies for informing more preschools and early childhood education students attending local colleges.

Orchard celebrated our first multicultural festival, Journey Around the World. Participants traveled through different classrooms to experience cultures from

our community through craft, stories and food. Additional activities included a curriculum booth to highlight work in our classrooms and our Specialty programs, a crafters bazaar and live music.



Eighth Grade Students placed third in an international German competition.

We ended the year focusing upon the essence of Waldorf education and reimagining ways to share our end of the year traditions, build connections and make our farewells special to our graduates. Our Zoom graduation followed by a drive through graduation "walk" was well received and appreciated by all.



Waldorf100 singing  
at the capital



World-wide Waldorf School  
postcard exchange



In the face of state-wide school closures affecting a full third of the school year, we stayed connected through celebrating milestones, deepening festival traditions, and honoring Waldorf Education. September of 2019 marked 100 years of Waldorf Education. All Waldorf Schools were invited to unite and participate in a post-card exchange with over 1000 Waldorf Schools world-wide. Locally, we gathered with the public and private Waldorf Schools from neighboring counties and sang together during the holiday concert series at the State Capital. Our Eighth graders came together to celebrate 100 years of Waldorf Education and the 20th Anniversary of our schools by showcasing



Eighth grade graduation



ChalkItUp! Sacramento Festival

chalk art in downtown Sacramento at the ChalkItUp! Sacramento Festival.

After state-wide school closures, the eighth graders received door-to-door visits from principals, teachers, and staff with May Day Festival remembrances and treats. Graduation was celebrated with posters made by loved ones, a drive through ceremony, and distanced, individualized handshakes with their teacher. The kindergarten students moving onto first grade were honored with a drive through Fly Away Ceremony. Their felted birds and butterflies visited the blossoming bouquet that their kindergarten teacher held as they drove off to wave hello to their new first grade teacher.



Kindergarten Fly Away Ceremony



Eighth grade graduation



First day of school Rose Ceremony



Second grade Santa Lucia Celebration



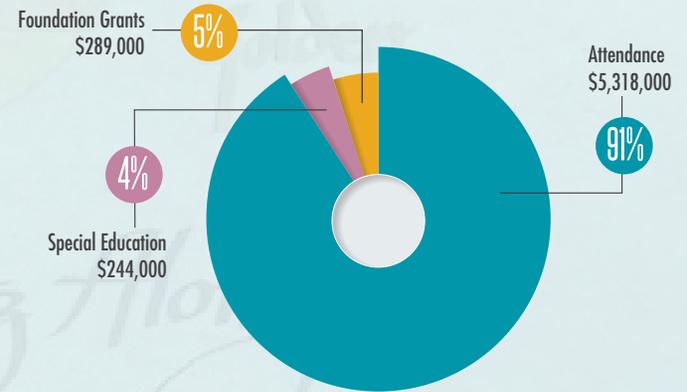
GOLDEN VALLEY  
CHARTER SCHOOLS

In a year with a lot of unknowns, GVCS was extremely close to its revenue target. With a \$5.8 million dollar budget, we came within \$15,900 of being balanced for the year. Donations from parents comprised 5% of our total revenues which was crucial to the success of the schools this year. Because of the COVID-19 closures, California fixed our attendance funding for the year at the end of February. The GVCS board made a commitment to keep paying all of our employees through the end of their contracts. A large cash balance at the River School will help weather the storm of deferred revenue from the state in 2021. Overall, despite a new school, the pandemic, and legislative threats to charters, Golden Valley retains a strong financial foundation.

Revenue

Average Daily Attendance	\$5,318,000
Special Education	\$ 244,000
Foundation Grants	\$ 289,000

Total \$5,851,000



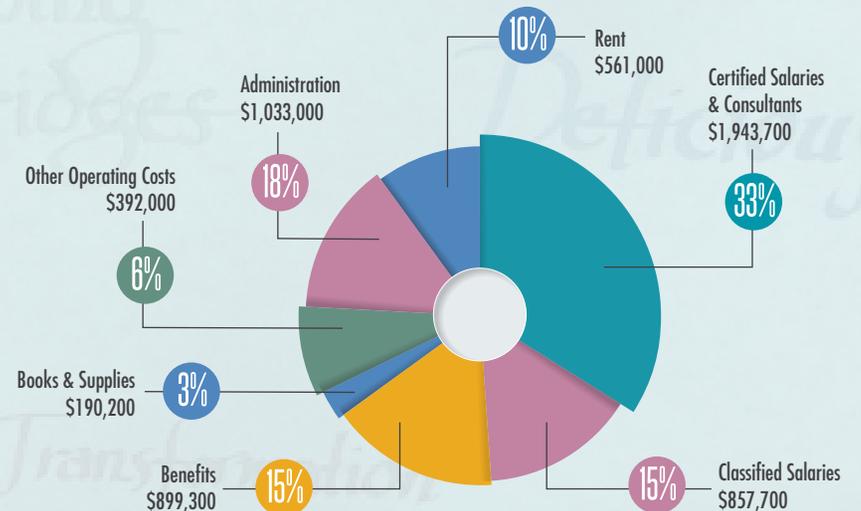
Operating deficit of \$15,900

Ending fund balance: \$1.2 million

Expenses

Certified Salaries & Consultants	\$ 1,943,700
Classified Salaries	\$ 857,700
Benefits	\$ 889,300
Books and Supplies	\$ 190,200
Other Operating Costs	\$ 392,000
Administration	\$ 1,033,000
Rent	\$ 561,000

Total \$5,866,900





The primary reason for the existence of charter schools is to make sure that every child has access to a quality education. Golden Valley Charter Schools (GVCS) gives the public an opportunity to experience Waldorf Education without the cost of private tuition. From the lively and colorful curriculum to the Waldorf training that enriches the teaching staff, this community is united in providing a creative, nurturing, and educational environment rich in Waldorf lessons.

Charter Schools receive less funding than public schools and therefore rely on the contributions of the community so that we may provide Waldorf inspiration to every class. If you and your family are drawn to Golden Valley Charter Schools and Waldorf Education, please remember how critical your support is to the goal. Check to see if your employer has a program that matches your non-profit contributions, link your Amazon purchases to our Smile Account, and volunteer! Interweaving our talents and gifts together is what makes our community connection so strong.

The Golden Valley Educational Foundation (GVEF) would like to thank all of the families that donated this year. You have helped us to afford these life-long experiences for our students. We hope to see you at one of our monthly GVEF Meetings.

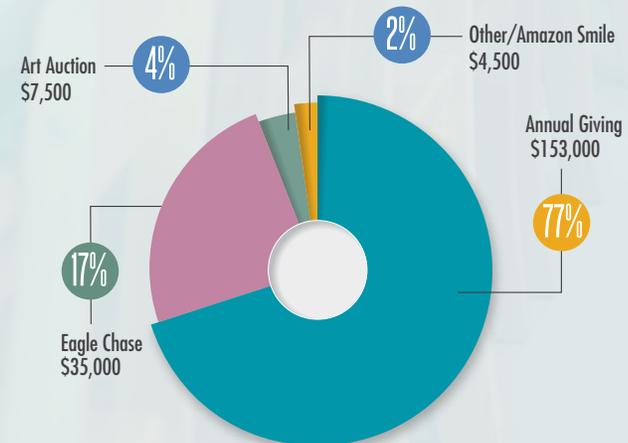
Carol Rocha-Elder  
President of GVEF 2019-2020



## Revenue

Annual Giving (AGC)	\$153,000
Eagle Chase	\$ 35,000
Art Auction	\$ 7,500
Other/Amazon Smile	\$ 4,500

**Total \$200,000**



Orchard School Principal, Ms. Page, runs during the Eagle Chase fundraiser



## IMPORTANT DATES 2020 - 2021

### River and Orchard Schools

**Dec 21 – Jan 1**  
Holiday Break

**Jan 18**  
Martin Luther King Day

**Feb 15 – 19**  
President's Day and Winter Break

**March 16 – March 18**  
Parent Teacher Conferences

**March 29 – April 5**  
Spring Break

**May 27**  
Last Day of School

### Tahoe School

**Dec 7**  
Local Holiday

**Dec 21 – Jan 1**  
Holiday Break

**Jan 18**  
Martin Luther King Day

**Feb 15 – 19**  
President's Day and Winter Break

**March 17 – March 19**  
Parent Teacher Conferences

**March 29 – April 5**  
Spring Break

**May 31**  
Memorial Day

**June 25 – 29**  
Last Day of School

Front cover Photography by Erin Glines-Foorman

Celebrating **20** YEARS  
of Public  
Waldorf Education



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**916 597-1478**



[www.goldenvalleycharter.org](http://www.goldenvalleycharter.org)