

wits

BLACKBOARD AFFAIR PRESENTS

Mirror Ball

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 11 2023

THE GERAGHTY | CHICAGO IL

HONORING 2023 ALTER & STONE AWARDEE 



wits BLACKBOARD AFFAIR PRESENTS

Mirror Ball

PROGRAM

5:30 PM COCKTAIL HOUR

7:00 PM DINNER & PROGRAM

OPENING REMARKS

2023 ALTER & STONE AWARD

MISSION SPEAKER

FUND THE MISSION

9:00 PM STUDIO WITS

WITH D.J. MAJOR TAYLOR

DESSERTS & LATE NIGHT BITES

MENU

FIRST COURSE

RED WINE POACHED PEARS

herb crusted chevre medallion, pomegranate seeds, roasted delicata squash, grilled baguette, champagne vinaigrette

MAIN COURSE

ROASTED CHICKEN SOUBISE

purple pommes puree, lemon broccolini, grilled lemon garnish

**vegetarian option by request*

2023 ALTER & STONE AWARDEE



WITS is proud to honor Cboe Global Markets with the 2023 Alter & Stone Award for years of volunteerism in Chicago Public Schools (CPS). In 1999, WITS launched its first-ever Workplace Mentoring program in partnership with Cboe. Over the years, Cboe mentors have spent 165,000 hours reading and mentoring students at John B. Drake Elementary School in Bronzeville.

John B. Drake Elementary School

Principal Christopher Robbins | Assistant Principal Adrienne A. Head



Dear Distinguished Guest,

It is with great pleasure and gratitude that I write to you today on behalf of John B. Drake Elementary School. As the principal of this remarkable institution, I want to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt appreciation for the invaluable partnership we have had with Working In The Schools (WITS) over the years.

The WITS partnership with Drake has been nothing short of transformative. It is a partnership that we have come to rely on year after year, and its impact on our students and the school community as a whole has been immeasurable. What is even more remarkable is that this partnership comes to us free of cost, thanks to the dedication and generosity of WITS and its volunteers.

One of the most significant benefits of this partnership is the educational value it brings to our students. The reading program implemented by WITS, where our students engage with their mentors, has yielded remarkable results. Year after year, we have witnessed a substantial increase in growth rates on reading assessments. The individualized attention and support our students receive from their WITS mentors contribute to their improved reading skills, comprehension, and overall literacy development. This progress in literacy is not only reflected in test scores but also in the increased confidence and enthusiasm our students have for reading and learning.

Another critical aspect of this partnership is the exposure it provides to our students. Many of our students come from diverse backgrounds, and the mentors from WITS not only serve as reading partners but also as positive role models. The mentorship offers our students an opportunity to engage with individuals from various professions, broadening their horizons and helping them envision their own potential. The positive relationships formed with these mentors go beyond the classroom, and our students have had the privilege of learning important life skills and gaining insights into future career possibilities.

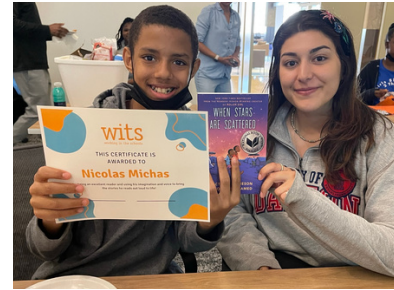


John B. Drake Elementary School

Principal Christopher Robbins | Assistant Principal Adrienne A. Head



What makes this partnership even more exceptional is how the volunteers from WITS have seamlessly become a part of the Drake family. Their dedication, commitment, and genuine care for our students have created a sense of belonging and community that is truly heartwarming. We genuinely cannot imagine our school without their presence and the positive impact they have had on our students and the entire school community.



In conclusion, the partnership between John B. Drake Elementary School and Working In The Schools (WITS) has been a beacon of hope, learning, and support for our students. We are deeply grateful for the continued collaboration that has enriched the educational experience of our students and reinforced the sense of belonging and community within our school.

We look forward to many more years of this outstanding partnership and the positive impact it brings to our school. Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment to our students' success. We hope you will continue to be a part of our journey as we strive to provide the best possible education for the children at John B. Drake Elementary School.

Sincerely,

Christopher Robbins

Principal

John B. Drake Elementary School





WITS believes that literacy is the foundation on which all other learning develops. Our mission is to empower Chicago elementary students to discover themselves through reading while developing foundational literacy skills. We do this by creating community through **literacy-based mentorship**, enabling **teachers** to build diverse classroom libraries, and promoting **book ownership at home**.

OUR OUTCOMES

64%

64% of WITS students met or exceeded the national average for reading level growth in one year.

83%

At the end of the school year 83% of WITS students said they like reading books for fun, up from 65% at the beginning of the year.

93%

93% of WITS students reported feeling good or very good about spending time with their mentors

100%

100% of our partner teachers are satisfied with student participation in WITS.



Craig Close

Senior Vice President
Portfolio Services, PPM
America, Inc.

Diane Graham-Henry

Owner, DGH Photography

Crystal Reynolds

Director of Marketing, The
Family Institute at
Northwestern University

Carolyn Goldhaber

President, CI SBH Asset
Management

Walt Hughes

Chief Executive Officer,
Quant16

Eveart Foster

Integrations, Subject Matter
Expert, Autodesk

Jennifer Alter Warden

Committee Advisor
Senior Advisor,
Baird & Warner Real Estate

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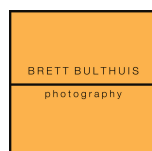
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IN-KIND SUPPORT



**CRUM
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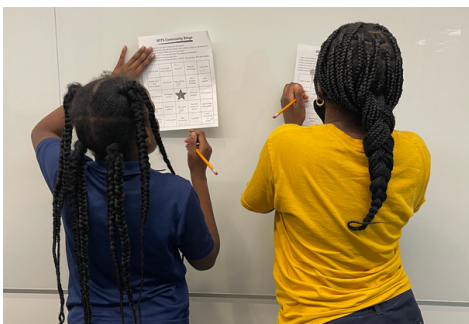
\$10,000

supports students in our Mid-day Mentoring and Workplace Mentoring programs.



\$5,000

supports students in our WITS Kindergarten programs.



\$2,500

funds our new evaluation initiative to better understand our impact.



\$1,000

provides an entire classroom of students with books to take home for the summer.

SUPPORT CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS & TEACHERS



\$500

builds a classroom library for a teacher.



\$250

adds books to the WITS Program Library so students can read high-interest books all school year.



\$100

funds our mission at WITS: we believe that literacy is the foundation on which all other learning develops.

**WITS IS 100% PRIVATELY FUNDED, AND
PROGRAM DELIVERY IS NOT RELIANT
ON SCHOOL OR CITY BUDGETS.**



We Share Your Dream for the Future

Powering our communities is just the beginning. At Exelon, we consider it our responsibility to improve the quality of life for people in the communities where we live, work and serve. Participation in good corporate citizenship is an integral part of our culture and we inspire our employees to help everyone succeed.



WHAT TEACHERS SAY ABOUT WETS

“

Our students really need this 1:1 opportunity to speak, talk, and read with an adult other than a family member. While our students like reading during school, this program gives them a new, authentic way to share books and have discussions with others about books.





WE ARE PROUD TO SUPPORT THE

2023 WITS Blackboard Affair

GCM Grosvenor has volunteered with WITS since 2010,
and we thank them for their continued inspiring work.

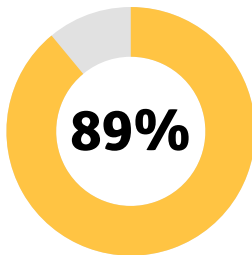
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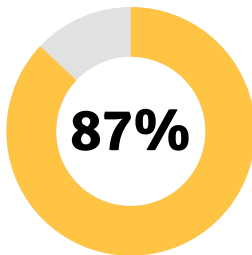
gcmgrosvgenor.com

HAVING A WELL-DESIGNED CORPORATE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MATTERS

According to *The Harvard Business Review*, "The benefits of well-designed corporate volunteer programs have been clearly established: They **boost productivity, increase employee engagement, and improve hiring and retention.**"

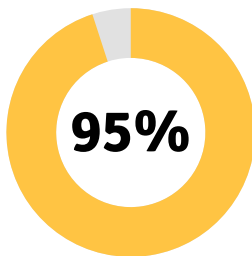


Eighty-nine percent of employees report increased job satisfaction when allowed to participate in a well-designed volunteer program.*



Eighty-seven percent of employees report greater pride in their company when allowed to participate in a well-designed volunteer program.*

*<https://www.accenture.com/us-en>



95% of volunteers recommend WITS to their colleagues.

For more information, email WITS Development Director, Marc Escobedo, at marc@witschicago.org.



Cboe[®]



GCM GROSVENOR



exelonSM

YOU'LL BE IN GOOD COMPANY

WITS partners with Chicago's leading corporations to build critical literacy skills serving Chicago Public Schools elementary students.

For more information, email WITS Development Director, Marc Escobedo, at marc@witschicago.org.





Segall Bryant & Hamill
is a proud supporter
of WITS and its
commitment to being
a source of opportunity, growth,
and positivity for Chicago public
school students.



SEGALL BRYANT & HAMILL
ASSET MANAGEMENT

CORPORATE MATCHING GIFTS

Your gift to WITS may be eligible for a double or triple match by your employer. Many companies have matching gift programs to encourage philanthropy among their employees.

Donations of any amount help WITS create opportunities for every student in Chicago to be literate.

Please visit witschicago.org/matching-gifts or contact Marc Escobedo, marc@witschicago.org with questions.





Making a lasting impact through education

We believe we are only as good as the good we do. Deloitte is dedicated to advancing the mission of education to achieve lasting, impactful results.

Deloitte is proud to support WITS for the Blackboard Affair Gala 2023.

www.deloitte.com

WHAT STUDENTS SAY ABOUT WITS



One of my favorite parts about WITS is reading books. You get to choose which books you read and they are really fun and interesting. You also get to make new friends and see new people.

[Click here to email Daphne and volunteer at WITS.](#)



Financial well-being begins at home.

- At Jackson, our strength lies in community—from the associates we employ to the people we serve. That's why we invest in communities where we live and work each day. Through partnerships with nonprofits and the generous giving of our associates, we're committed to helping build the foundation for all people to achieve financial freedom for life.

Jackson.com



Jackson® is the marketing name for Jackson Financial Inc., Jackson National Life Insurance Company® (Home Office: Lansing, Michigan), and Jackson National Life Insurance Company of New York® (Home Office: Purchase, New York).
CMC26555 02/23

WITS SUMMER BOOKS

According to the US Department of Education, **61 percent** of low-income families have no age-appropriate children's books at home.

[Click here to email Marc for more information on giving books to students.](#)



WITS provides new, engaging, and culturally diverse books to Chicago Public Schools students every spring. The WITS approach supports students' literacy development by providing Chicago's elementary students with ample opportunity to read for enjoyment.

WHAT TEACHERS SAY ABOUT THE WITS ROCHELLE LEE TEACHER AWARD

“ The WITS Rochelle Lee Teacher Award has molded my classroom library from a small bookshelf of unorganized books to a sprawling classroom library organized by genre and interest.

[Click here to email Daphne and learn more about this program.](#)



Jenner & Block proudly supports
WITS and congratulates Cboe
on being the 2023 Alter &
Stone Awardee, recognizing
your years of volunteerism
in Chicago Public Schools.

JENNER & BLOCK LLP

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WITS KINDERGARTEN

Started in 2005, [WITS Kindergarten](#) (WITSK), serves Chicago Public Schools kindergartners. Students spend fifteen-twenty minutes once a week reading aloud one-on-one with the same mentor, practicing skills, and enjoying stories. WITSK helps students build book and print awareness as well as letter and sound recognition skills. WITSK encourages students to love reading.

[Click here to email Daphne and volunteer at WITS.](#)



WHY WITS KINDERGARTEN MATTERS

1

Our partner educators believe that consistent one-on-one support will not only help students academically, but will also fulfill a need for social interaction.

2

Reading aloud evokes the powers of imagination while also making visual associations that help children to transition more quickly to independent reading.

[Click here to email Daphne and volunteer at WITS.](#)





Let's change our communities for the better

We are committed to lending a helping hand for the causes that are important to our community. That's why CIBC is proud to support Working in the Schools (WITS).

To learn more about CIBC, visit cibc.com/US

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Invested in our community

William Blair is proud to support Working In The Schools and their mission to strengthen the literacy skills of youth. The organization's commitment to children is an inspiration to us all.

williamblair.com

William Blair



WITS MID-DAY MENTORING

Started in 2005, [Mid-Day Mentoring](#) is a year-long literacy mentorship program for second through fourth grade Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students. Once a week, mentors are transported from their workplaces to a neighborhood school where they meet with their student each week for forty-five minutes, enjoying shared reading, conversation, and relationship building activities.

[Click here to email Daphne and volunteer at WITS.](#)



WHY WITS MID-DAY MENTORING MATTERS

1

According to a September 2023 Chalkbeat analysis of CPS test scores, only 26% of students met or exceeded reading standards, down slightly from 2019.

2

84% of students agreed that participating in WITS made them want to read for fun more often. Reading for fun leads to more reading engagement and better reading comprehension.

[Click here to email Daphne and volunteer at WITS.](#)



ABOUT OUR VENDORS



🌟 OUR COMMITMENT TO CHICAGO 🌟

At WITS we build community and empower readers. We are excited to build on that commitment by supporting locally-owned businesses for this event.

- **Twisted Egg Rolls** was one of sixty Community Development Grant finalists to receive funding as a part of Mayor Lori Lightfoot's Chicago Recovery Plan. These grants funded businesses as they recovered from the pandemic. After this event, visit twisted egg rolls' new store front and get more of these twisted creations at 657 E 75th St in Greater Grand Crossing.
- **VietFive Coffee** located at 1116 West Madison is one man's effort to connect his Vietnamese roots to his adopted home in Chicago. The beans are harvested in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, roasted in Bridgeport, and end up in your highly caffeinated cup of delicious coffee in the West Loop.
- **Justice of the Pies** was #1 in *Chicago Magazine's* October list of "The 10 Hottest Restaurants in Chicago Right Now." These pies with a social justice mission can be found in the Chatham neighborhood at 8655 S Blackstone Ave.

WHAT MENTORS SAY ABOUT WITS

“ Working with the students was very fun and rewarding. It's great to see them excited to show up and hang with their mentors, whether just catching up, reading or doing homework.

[Click here to email Daphne and volunteer at WITS.](#)





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DINING**



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WITS WORKPLACE MENTORING

Started in 1999, [Workplace Mentoring](#) is a year-long literacy mentorship program for fourth - eighth grade Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students. Once a week after school, students are transported to a corporate office to meet one-on-one with their mentor for shared reading and homework support.

[Click here to email Daphne and volunteer at WITS.](#)



WHY WITS WORKPLACE MENTORING MATTERS

1

Research emphasizes the need for resources and programs that support students' emotional well-being, which plays a critical role in their academic success.

2

100% of our partner teachers are satisfied with student participation in WITS. Teachers value that our programs promote a love of reading and support social-emotional development in students.

[Click here to email Daphne and volunteer at WITS.](#)



BRETT BULTHUIS

photography

WITS ROCHELLE LEE TEACHER AWARD

The [WITS Rochelle Lee Teacher Award](#) is an award-based grant for Chicago Public Schools (CPS) pre-kindergarten to eighth grade teachers to help them add brand new books to their classroom libraries. CPS teachers apply for the grant and select books to enhance their libraries and receive books that their students may borrow.

[Click here to email Daphne and learn more about this program.](#)



WHY THE WITS ROCHELLE LEE TEACHER AWARD MATTERS

[Click here to email Daphne and learn more about this program.](#)

1

Educators agree that schools play an important role in expanding access to books at home, but many teachers have fewer than 150 books in their classroom libraries to serve all their students throughout the year—with 31% of teachers having fewer than fifty books.

2

According to the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development - ASCD, Children who have robust classroom libraries are more likely to be frequent readers. Classroom libraries allow students to value their decision-making ability, giving them confidence and a feeling of ownership.



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A Chicago Classic

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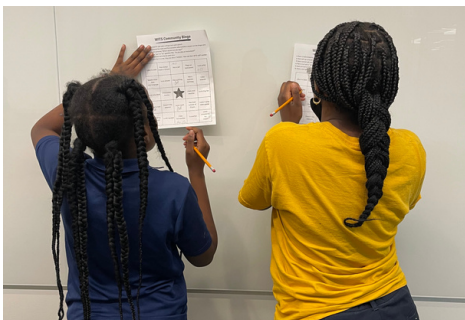
\$10,000

supports students in our Mid-day Mentoring and Workplace Mentoring programs.



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\$2,500

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\$1,000

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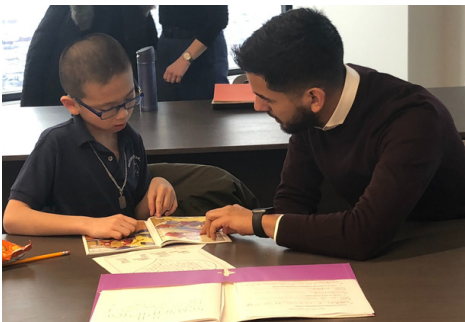
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\$100

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ON SCHOOL OR CITY BUDGETS.**

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Arriana Dawidziak
Angela Weisbart
Andrea Peterson
Emily Vandenhouten
Mark Donatelli
Thomas Cohen
Shirome Mehta

Lazaro Carranza
Tyler Lopez
Margot Wage
Thomas Cohen
Eduardo Salazar
John Kim
Will Cauthen
Nicholas McDonough

John Birney
Michael Achepohl
Patrick Chen
Arman Pegahi
Daniel Schwartz
Caroline Newman
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Kelsey Peregord
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Janene Sandifer
Kevin Trausch
Ana Aranda
Kelsey Sharp
Valerie Bates
Maricela Rodriguez
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Alexandra Moreno
Lisa Uzzardo

Bliss Muse
Jeremiah Ferentz
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Carmen Reyes-Garcia
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Rajkumari Chhatwani
Sabrina Araujo
Natasha Cooper

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Christen Foley

Hemini Patel
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Michael Levesque

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Jeffrey Danielsen
James Benjamin
Marleen Lopez
Caden Crandall

Tia Crowley-Medina
Hannah Collins
Veronica Gasparro
Jacquelyn Handzik
Emily Chermak

Holly Bachman
Nia Weems
Elizabeth Garvey
Janet Vander Kelen
Maria Canzoneri



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Kirsten Nelson
Brendan Lynch
Nicole Finn
Nicole Ger
Benjamin Krieger
Jazzmyne Washington
Brienne Mannell
Jeffery Beese

Anusha Gopali
James Nielsen
Andrea Allenson
Jacqueline Stratton
John Derwent
Alyson Sode
Johanna Medrano
Brendan Gray

Megan Korst
Leah McCormick
Nicole Finn
Brienne Mannell
Endia Irizarry
Gregory Hamilton
Eric Totaro
Nia Robinson



Olandreia Walton
Abby Bruno
Nora Shawki
Dima Abboud
Rebecca Tenuta
John Rittner

Andrew Fogelis
Cori Klott
Michael Hanline
Dan Sieracki
Emily Flanagan

Kyung Alvarez
Emily Flanagan
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Jeanene Isaac
Jamie Sowski



Alisha Alam
Shannon Burke
Olivia Duff
Taylor Edelchik
Madeleine Foutes

Nicholas Nasti
Michael Sisk
Daniel Thompson
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Lola Knight
Isabella Mika
Chloe Dluger
Hannah Klein

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January Gaspar
Walter Baker
Julia Perez
Haley Franti

Patrick Hatton
Kelsey Smith
Vincent Medrano
Danie Emanuel
Estefania Gomez

Rufino Alvarez
Lindsay Bolster
Lornell Grayson
Andrea Wells
Christian Virgini



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Graham Harboe
Madeline Glennon
Andrew Bohl
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Madeline Hamada
Michael Huff

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Nicholas Kapetan
Daniel Seguin
Elandra McConney
Megan Smithers
Alexandra Ibarra
Antonia Acuna
Colin McGauley

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Kyla Collins
Troy Williams
Jamie Bronska
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Hannah Causey
Makalyn Heaslett
Paige Turley
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Robert Chimis
Alexis Witkin
Nick Minear
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Lillian Janjic-Magana

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Mary Blankenheim
Viki Rivkin

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Tom Hillman
Liz Karnick
James Pheneger
Stephen Keefer

Mark Hoffmann
Jonathan Carson
Edward Ghislandi
Aarshiya Sachdeva
Art Gunther

Matthew Morgan
Angelo Policicchio
Steven Bock
Maxwell Bartuch



Nikolas Giese
Ravi Kumar Amaravadi
Dustin Birnbaum
Dana Plagenz
Joshua Figueroa
Casey Comings
Ethan Choe

Nicholas Smith
Maria Sohail
Jessica Amores
Gabby Knox
Martin Dargan
Vinee Rao

Bethany Jaworski
Marsha Leibundguth
Breanna Lucas
Isabela Valentin
Caroline Hsu
Meezan Mir



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Rosa Garcia
Maggie Bellavia
Devin Jones
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Jenna Ranieri

Samantha Kessler
Stephen Roach
Maureen Mikkelsen
Michelle McConnell
Lisa Dedina
Fahd Ganatra

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Janie Grigsby
Inna Yermolayeva
Ahide Michelle Gonzalez
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Harrison Meyer
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Briannah Them
McKenna Lahr
Dan Poll

Daniel Whisnant
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Daniel Murphy
Maria Vastardis
Monika Esser
Jana Ievins
Daniel Whisnant

Randall Batridge
Janet Griffin
Nolan Delaney
Brittany Gotts
Connor McFadden
Akanksha Singh
Alex Van Tiem

WETS THANKS OUR 2023-2024 MENTORS

*AS OF NOVEMBER 1

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Michael Bernard
Tovah Frockt
Maggie Szabo
Alexandra Steve
Maria Ekern
Victoria Teteak
Jennifer Plath

Daniel Whisnant
Peter Kirie
Daniel Murphy
Maria Vastardis
Monika Esser
Jana Ievins
Daniel Whisnant

Randall Batridge
Janet Griffin
Nolan Delaney
Brittany Gotts
Connor McFadden
Akanksha Singh
Alex Van Tiem

HARRISON STREET *Making an Impact.*

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Gwyneth Scrine
Emma Toppi
Addison Newsome
Alexandra Peyton
Kimberly Prokup
Kelsey Kucik
Sarah Spratt
Ellie Bidwell

Christine Milosevic
Jake Snead
Gabrielle Wihongi
Katelyn Burkhart
Jon Kraeuter
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Susie Mathews
Angel-Victoria Raymond
George Dawson
Erika Speth-Lekas
Alexander Johnson
Jacqueline Begley

Justin Taylor
Jared Bales
Gianna O'Connor
Hannah Gullberg
Kelsey Gordon
Eddie Hebert
Thomas Flavin
Jana Shipley
Nathan Young

WETS THANKS OUR 2023-2024 MENTORS

*AS OF NOVEMBER 1



Doreen Rondo
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