A Community of Giving

Lab's Mission

The Laboratory Schools are home to the youngest members of the University of Chicago's academic community. We ignite and nurture an enduring spirit of scholarship, curiosity, creativity, and confidence. We value learning experientially, exhibiting kindness, and honoring diversity.
Dear Lab Community

The importance of our donors and volunteers cannot be overstated, especially at this juncture. Here in Hyde Park, and throughout the global network of Lab alumni and friends, we are moving through challenging times. Throughout the Lab’s history, our schools have remained remarkably resilient. Our commitment to scholarship, honoring creative, independent thinkers; and Lab’s commitment to activism, and professional excellence by fostering a spirit of community and in support of the Director’s Impact (DAI), has helped see Lab through the first 125 years of our history and will propel us into our next chapter.

Our extraordinary students saw an exciting year of growth and received both national and regional accolades for their scholarship, activism, and professional pursuits. We’ve listed a few of our students’ many accomplishments below:

- The Gunvor Refetoff Memorial Fund, a special fund dedicated to the arts at Lab, enabled teachers across grade levels to engage students in meaningful projects, including the new butterfly mural at Earl Shapiro Hall and an identity mural in Gordon Parks Arts Hall that was created as part of the BRAVE Conference.
- Several high school students made up the team that won first place in this year’s Envirothon state championship. In July, the team competed at the National Envirothon Competition—North American Envirothon competition—held at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.
- Nicola Halsall Idehen. The evening laid a strong foundation for future fundraising—raising over $2.5 million for financial aid and in support of the Director’s Impact Fund.
- The Parents’ Association, as always, plays a critical role in the Lab community. Alumni and friends have helped Lab through the first 125 years of our history and will propel us into our next chapter.

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With your generosity and support, we feel that the future is indeed bright at Lab. Come see what we do, work toward advancing Lab’s cutting-edge academic programs, and help see Lab through the next 125 years.

Thank you for giving and giving in giving.

With gratitude,

Jason Tyler, ’89, MBA’99, University Trustee, Lab Board Chair
Victoria Juels, Director
The Way We Help One Another

Philanthropy and volunteerism in action

Cultivating Cultural Diversity
Building on a tradition of inclusivity

There are currently 36 classes with endowed scholarship funds, and that number continues to grow every year. These funds, donated through annual and reunion gifts, provide critical support to ensure that Lab remains accessible and welcoming to students from all backgrounds. "I always identified with the Lab community. Staying involved allowed me to keep relationships with friends and mentors beyond my time at school. I also felt united to the Laboratory Schools, both for my education and for the incredible amount of work and time I shared as a Lab parent," Ger said. "When our kids look back at their Lab experience, I want them to feel a greater sense of community because of Grant and Chase's dedication and contributions to Lab. I can only hope that my two boys will view Lab as a warm, welcoming and memorable place throughout their adult lives."

A Lab Family Affair
Where parenthood, friendship, and community meet

There is nothing that feels as good as the privilege of giving to a cause you believe in. And at Lab, the giving opportunities are endless. Whether through an endowed scholarship fund, a memorial gift, or a one-time donation, Lab remains accessible and welcoming to students from all backgrounds. "I always identified with the Lab community. Staying involved allowed me to keep relationships with friends and mentors beyond my time at school. I also felt united to the Laboratory Schools, both for my education and for the incredible amount of work and time I shared as a Lab parent," Ger said. "When our kids look back at their Lab experience, I want them to feel a greater sense of community because of Grant and Chase's dedication and contributions to Lab. I can only hope that my two boys will view Lab as a warm, welcoming and memorable place throughout their adult lives."

Gratitude and a Giving Attitude
Paying it forward to future generations

Stu has fond memories of the Lab teachers who challenged him, supported his intellectual growth, and made Lab a home. As a former student of Lab, he has always made time to be present for Lab and to support its mission. He not only feels that education is the great equalizer, but he also believes in the importance of giving back. "I have always felt that education is the great equalizer. There is nothing you can do for 18 years that is more important than giving them an educational opportunity in order to help them succeed," Stu said.

Margo Wolf O'Donnell has volunteered at Lab since her oldest child, Amanda, ‘97, started in nursery school. "As a working parent and someone not originally from Chicago, volunteering enabled me to have a connection to my children and to make lasting friendships with other parents," she said. "It was started with holiday celebrations in the classroom led to fundraising with the Parent Development Committee and eventually a seat on Lab's Board of Directors. Despite a busy career, Margo always made time to be present for Lab activities. "These were activities I would never have gotten to do in my day job as a lawyer!"

Whether making latkes for a classroom celebration, raising financial support for a school initiative, or participating in high school level strategy discussions during the pandemic, Margo and her family have found joy, friendship, and community by engaging as volunteers. "Our advice is to get involved early at Lab and to get to know other parents. We have met some of our closest friends through our volunteer work at Lab," Ger said. "Volunteering is exciting because you live in an important lesson that we hope our kids will carry with them. Being a part of the Lab experience as a volunteer has been an honor."
Fundraising and Finances at Lab:
Frequently asked questions

Why does Lab have a fundraising program?
Generous and thoughtful support from parents, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends helps Lab close the gap between tuition and expenses and allows the Schools to meet additionally goals that enhance the educational experience for all students.

Connecting passionate philanthropists to programs and projects, fundraising allows Lab to realize activities that further support our vision and mission and to open doors to students in need of financial assistance.

Without these additional resources from dedicated supporters, Lab would be forced to make difficult choices between tuition levels, financial aid budgets, and programmatic activities. The Schools count on the participation of every member of the community who is able to ensure that students have access to exceptional faculty, opportunities, and resources.

How does Lab support students who need financial assistance beyond tuition?
Lab strives to ensure that all students are able to fully access everything the Lab experience offers. To this end, Lab aims to provide families who receive financial aid, and exhibit a high commitment to education, additional support services and materials not covered by tuition such as Extended Day, Bus Service, and supplies, field trips, extracurriculars, and other expenses. This support is funded annually, in part, through the endowed Karen Polonsky Memorial Student Assistance Fund, to which key families contribute. Connections 2022 also highlighted this need and raised funds to support current and future Lab families with expenses beyond tuition. Families may access this support by contacting the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid.

How is Lab funded?
In FY22, Lab’s annual budget was funded by the following sources:

- **Tuition:** 44.3%
- **Annual Giving:** 1.7%
- **Endowment:** 29.3%
- **Fee-based:** 3.3%
- **Payout:** 4.9%
- **Tuition & fees–other:** 9.8%
- **UChicago**

What is the scope of Lab’s fundraising program?
Lab’s Alumna Relations and Development Office works with hundreds of alumni and parent volunteers to facilitate all major fundraising efforts for the school.

- During the 2021-2022 school year, 4.9% of alumni made a gift to Lab.
- Lab’s philanthropy program consists of several giving opportunities, including the Fund for Lab and the Spring Teacher Appreciation Drive, special events, such as Connections and Dewey Days; the senior class gift; major gifts in support of specific programs, activities, and interests; and bequests and planned giving.

What would a substantially larger endowment do for Lab?
A robust endowment provides Lab with the foundation needed to grow existing programs, develop new ones, open doors to students, and support our excellent faculty and staff. Revenue from our endowment currently provides critical support for our financial aid program. These funds are also used to support a variety of programs and initiatives including: professional development for our teachers and staff; Model United Nations; the Summer Link Program; the Zena Sutherland Awards for Children’s Literature Program; and faculty, staff, and student award programs. Starting in the 2022-2023 school year, the newly-funded Asian Culture Fund will begin distributing awards to support curriculum, extracurricular activities, and social events that elevate any and all aspects of Asian or Asian American culture and heritage and/or that challenge and combat anti-Asian hate.

Growing Lab’s endowment remains a primary focus of our fundraising program and a long-term philanthropy priority for Lab.

How does Lab’s financial aid program work?
Securing financial aid support has long been a focus of Lab’s development efforts. All of Lab’s awards are based on demonstrated need. Lab does not give merit-based aid. In 2021-2022, 9.9% of families received aid—separate from any tuition benefit a family might receive through a parent’s full-time employment with the University.

Aid monies are distributed through two paths:
1. Financial aid awards subsidize family tuition obligations and are awarded at any grade level.
2. A Scholarship is a formally designated award—that funded by an endowment fund or private gift—is assigned to a particular student.

What are the goals of Lab’s financial aid program?
Lab’s financial aid program seeks to remove financial barriers for students who contribute to, and benefit from, a Lab education. Lab’s financial aid staff serves our community of parents, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends who have contributed to Lab’s financial aid program and a long-term philanthropy priority for Lab.

In 2021–2022, Lab awarded more need-based financial aid (not including University tuition remission) than ever before—$4 million. In 2022–2023, Lab has budgeted to award up to $4.92 million in financial aid.

Continued increases in Lab’s financial aid budget, mainly achieved through philanthropy, are critical to sustaining the Schools’ commitment to strengthening socioeconomic diversity and ensuring full access to the transformative educational experiences at Lab.

Please explain the tuition benefit for University of Chicago employees
The University’s Lab Tuition Assistance Program is available to full-time employees of the University of Chicago (and certain affiliated units). At minimum, this benefit pays 50% of Lab tuition for children of these employees. Qualifying employees whose adjusted gross income (AGI) falls below $220,000 are eligible for additional support based on a formula that takes into account their expected tuition contribution per child and the percentage of their AGI.

Employee families with multiple children attending Lab at the same time are eligible for an additional $3,000 discount for each child beyond the oldest. Importantly, non-University families do not subsidize this benefit and Lab does not lose any tuition income by accepting this benefit offered by the University of Chicago; the University makes a direct transfer of funds into Lab’s accounts to cover this benefit. That transfer constitutes around $3% of Lab’s total budgeted revenue.

What do the Lab community’s donations support?
Lab is grateful for the support of its community of parents, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends who have donated to a number of critical areas. In 2021–2022, donors made gifts to the following areas:

- **Endowment**
- **Art Fund for Lab**
- **Other Annual Giving**
- **Scholarship/Granting Organizations**
- **Events**

- **Alumni, Faculty, and Staff**
- **Parents**
- **Students**
- **Others**

- **Individual Giving**
- **Corporate Giving**
- **Foundation Support**
- **Government Support**
- **Laboratory**
- **Other Giving**

In 2021–2022, Lab’s annual giving provided $4.2 million in financial aid (not including University tuition remission) that otherwise would have been $4 million. In 2022–2023, Lab has budgeted to award up to $4.92 million in financial aid.

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How much financial aid does Lab provide annually?
In 2021–2022, Lab awarded more need-based financial aid (not including University tuition remission) than ever before—$4 million. In 2022–203, Lab has budgeted to award up to $4.92 million in financial aid.

Continued increases in Lab’s financial aid budget, mainly achieved through philanthropy, are critical to sustaining the Schools’ commitment to strengthening socioeconomic diversity and ensuring full access to the transformative educational experiences at Lab.

How does Lab’s annual giving program support the school?
Lab’s annual giving program, the Fund for Lab, makes it possible for Lab to invest in the people and programs that are the heart of the Lab experience. Annual giving supports all of Lab’s core programs, making an immediate and critical difference in the lives of students, families, and teachers.

Annual giving provides flexibility that allows for up-to-the-minute innovations and access to the latest opportunities for students and faculty. A gift to the Fund for Lab is a gift that has the potential to bolster the Schools’ mission to strengthen socioeconomic diversity and ensuring full access to the transformative educational experiences at Lab.

- **Annual Giving**
- **Tuition–University**
- **Student Aid**
- **Endowment Trust**
- **Fee-based**
- **Payout**
- **Tuition & fees–other

> *Revenue from tuition subtracts from the University of Chicago's Tuition Assistance Program*

- **100%** Philanthropy
- **99%** Annual Giving
- **98%** Endowment Trust

**Endowment**

- **97%** Other Annual Giving
- **8%** Art Fund for Lab
- **4%** Scholarship/Granting Organizations
- **2%** Events

**Annual Giving**

- **11%** Alumni, Faculty, and Staff
- **10%** Parents
- **8%** Students
- **8%** Others

**Corporate Giving**

- **10%** Individual Giving
- **8%** Corporate Giving
- **8%** Foundation Support
- **8%** Government Support
- **7%** Laboratory
- **6%** Other Giving

**Philanthropy by Source**

- **57%** Individual Giving
- **7%** Corporate Giving
- **6%** Foundation Support
- **4%** Government Support
- **2%** Laboratory
- **1%** Other Giving

**Philanthropy by Source**

- **6%** Individual Giving
- **2%** Corporate Giving
- **2%** Foundation Support
- **2%** Government Support
- **1%** Laboratory
- **1%** Other Giving

**Philanthropy by Source**

- **4%** Individual Giving
- **3%** Corporate Giving
- **3%** Foundation Support
- **3%** Government Support
- **2%** Laboratory
- **2%** Other Giving

**Philanthropy by Source**

- **2%** Individual Giving
- **2%** Corporate Giving
- **2%** Foundation Support
- **2%** Government Support
- **2%** Laboratory
- **2%** Other Giving

**Philanthropy by Source**

- **1%** Individual Giving
- **1%** Corporate Giving
- **1%** Foundation Support
- **1%** Government Support
- **1%** Laboratory
- **1%** Other Giving