

THE
ONENESS-FAMILY
SCHOOL
CONSTITUTION

**Drafted 2005-2007 by the
Oneness-Family School
Community**

Published June, 2007

Revised February 11, 2009

INTRODUCTION

The idea of writing a school constitution originated from my mentor and former boss, Tim Seldin. He had helped several schools go through the process, and when he told me about it, I knew it was something I wanted to do at Oneness-Family School. The idea of putting the fundamental principles and values of our school into writing was very inspiring to me. I had a strong feeling that the process of creating a school constitution would help our school come to greater clarity about who are and what we wanted to achieve.

During the 2005-2006 school year, led by Oneness-Family School parents Seth Kahan and Raj Chawla, the parents, teachers, administration and students engaged in a process of inquiry and dialogue. This process took place over the course of several community gatherings, which also included interludes of music, physical activity, art, eating and just sharing. Over 60% of school parents participated in some part of the constitution process. The “inner result” was a deep feeling of community and common purpose among the participation. The “outer result” was a draft of the document presented here.

During the process of discussing and drafting the constitution, considerable emphasis was put on the idea that we were not aiming to create a mere piece of paper. Rather, it was the intention of the drafters that the constitution be a “living document”. After further exploration we identified what a “living document” means for us.

First, this document is alive by virtue of its relevancy to the growth and development of the School. The constitution is intended to serve as a guide for future school decisions and activities related to development, administration, curriculum or other facets of the School’s evolution.

Second, a living document means that it embodies the practices we want to engage

in. Who we are is largely defined by how we act and interact. The constitution will serve as a reminder of the ideals we individually aspire to and the ways we seek to conduct ourselves as a community to further the School's mission.

Finally, this document, while serving as a beacon along the pathway to our future, also continually engages and challenges us to continually answer the question, "for the sake of what?" As we seek to undertake activities large and small, within the classroom or outside the walls of the School, the constitution helps us frame the kinds of questions we should be asking of ourselves.

In conclusion, it is not the intention of the drafters that this constitution is set in stone forever. Like our country's constitution, it will need to be refined and amended over time to meet the changing needs of the times. However, the constitution does embody the highest aspirations of our communal spirit and the best thinking of the individuals who committed themselves to drafting it. As such we hope that it will live on to serve and guide future generations of Oneness-Family parents, staff, and students.

VISION AND MISSION

Our Vision: Our vision is to empower a new generation of leaders to become meaningful contributors to the world by expanding their consciousness, realizing their fullest potential as human beings, and growing into partnership with the whole global family.

Our Mission: Our mission is to provide a learning environment that fosters integral human growth, encompassing physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual development.

Our Vision and Mission rest on five core principles:

* The world is one family. All nations and all religions have something unique and significant to contribute to the world.

* Education is a vehicle to enhance humanity's evolution toward greater harmony and partnership on earth.

* The School is a place of learning not just for students, but also for parents and teachers as well. All members of community learn, work and play together cooperatively.

* The curriculum is based on self-transcendence – the idea of continual improvement and personal growth – not on competition with others.

* The child is at the heart of the School’s program. We nurture the students’ dreams and empower them to find success and fulfillment.

COMMUNITY

The Oneness-Family School Community

In visualizing and describing our community, we have chosen the symbol or the chambered nautilus shell as a symbol and a metaphor. Community – or the child’s – and our - sense of connectedness with the world begins within the center of the nautilus. This is the spirit of each child and within each one of us. The expanding spirals on the outside of the shell symbolize the expanding world of the child as he/she grows, which includes larger and larger spheres of community and widening circles of knowledge.

We recognize that our school is more than a place of learning; it is a community of individuals of all ages who are learning, growing, creating and developing peaceful relationships with each other and the rest of the world.

Our community is based upon shared principles. One of our first principles is oneness. Our School believes in the essential unity, shared heritage and common destiny of humanity. Further we believe that this essential unity is both the foundation and the goal of learning.

The Oneness-Family School embraces diversity as a central aspect of who we are. We celebrate our differences as they provide us with opportunities for new ways of seeing and experiencing the world.

Our School believes in practicing inclusion in our attitudes, in our actions, in how we think about others and how we organize activities from birthday parties to special events. We believe that those designated to make decisions on behalf of the School should honor the input of all members of the School community.

We also believe in self-transcendence - the idea of continual self-improvement. Individually and collectively we strive to broaden our intellectual horizons, to deepen our spiritual understanding, and to expand our capacity for empathy and compassion. All of us are life-long learners.

We believe in peacefulness in our thoughts and actions. If thoughts and ideas create the world we live in, then thoughts and ideas that nurture and sustain life will engender a more peaceful world.

We believe in integrity - aligning our individual and collective choices with our principles. We believe that integrity also means adjusting ourselves when we fall out of alignment with our principles and holding each other to account with compassion and understanding.

We believe in conflict resolution through non-violence and compassionate means. We strive to see conflicts as opportunities for learning and growth.

We believe that dialogue and communication are integral to the health and growth of our community as a whole. We believe that communication is a day-to-day process that requires ongoing practice of openness, honesty, and listening to the feelings of others. We believe that regular communication between parents and teachers is at the heart of our success as an educational program.

The Oneness-Family School holds a special place for each individual in our community. Each person is valued for who he or she is. Each has a special contribution to make. We strive to support and help those in our community who are in need because we believe that their well-being will enhance our own.

We are a family friendly school. As much as possible we offer activities that can be shared by the whole family. We strive to develop, encourage, and support wholesome and edifying family activities both at School at and at home. We welcome parents to participate in school activities and to observe their children in class. We strive to understand and support the special needs of new families in our community.

We believe in creating and sustaining an emotionally safe and spiritually inspiring space in our school for the well-being of our community as well as for the inspiration of visitors. At Oneness-Family School, we believe in treating all students, families, teachers, and staff members with kindness, warmth, and respect.

In establishing policies and procedures about the School calendar we strive to be respectful of religious traditions represented by members of the School community.

Parent Involvement

As responsible and committed members of the community, each of us is committed to deepening our own understanding of the School's core principles and to practice these core values in our daily lives.

We expect all members of our community, students, parents, teachers and support staff to be committed, engaged and contributing members of the community and to show support for the rules, regulations and principles established by the community. We are prepared to support them in this effort.

We believe in the active engagement and participation of all members of the community. We believe that all viewpoints are important to hear, and that all members should be encouraged to speak their truth. Ultimately points of view should and will be weighed in balance with our established principles.

We believe that dialogue between all stakeholders in the School is the stitching that holds together the fabric of our community. In decision-making we entrust our appointed decision makers to ultimately make choices after digesting the input of all, in accordance with our principles, and with a view toward for the long-term mission of the School.

We believe in a constructive partnership between the family and School in support of each child's educational development. We believe that collaboration – or cooperation – is central to our approach to education – both as an operating principle and as a set of skills to be learned.

We believe in being good stewards of the planet and engaging in practices individually and collectively which support the environment and the sustainability of our naturally resources.

Service

Our school presents an opportunity to expand the web of inclusion in our local community and beyond. We believe in social responsibility, service and volunteerism. Teachers, administrators and staff shall strive to adopt the attitude of dedicated service to students and families. We believe all students should volunteer as a part of our world service and outreach curriculum. We expect all parents to volunteer at the School on an on-going basis each year.

We believe that our school is a living and continually evolving organism -- like an open system. As such we believe it is essential to not only take in new ideas and energy but to reach upward like a plant toward the sun by striving to meet our goals of outreach partnership and service.

We believe in curiosity about life, about each other, about the world and about our children. We believe in exploring life - its challenges and opportunities - individually and collectively.

We believe our school can be a microcosm of what the world could look like and be like - with individuals and families of all cultures sharing their talents and perspectives to make our organization a more beautiful, inspiring, and empowering place.

Our school believes that a central aspect of learning is the unfolding of compassion and empathy in the human heart and the development of connectedness and relationship with other people. While the first pillar of our curriculum, Academy, establishes the students' connection with the world, the second pillar of our curriculum, Self-Discovery, aims to develop that connectedness into compassion.

We believe that once students begin to feel connected with the world and to learn compassion for others, they must be given opportunities to practice, develop, and explore these essential components of character. The third pillar of our curriculum, Manifestation, is intended to allow this kind of practice and development by allowing students to become engaged in projects, festivals, performances, exhibits and other activities which give tangible expression to their dreams and aspirations for a better world.

Our students can and will become global citizens by gaining broader and deeper perspectives of the world through community service projects in their own community as well as world service projects elsewhere on the globe.

Our community service and world service projects have the intention of broadening our students' horizons and deepening their understanding, and enhancing their feeling of connectedness. We strive to avoid a feeling of separation between our students and those they are serving. Our aim is to go beyond fostering the attitude of mere charity; of giving to "those in need." Rather, we believe it is essential for our service projects to be viewed and organized holistically such that learning and sharing is taking place in both directions between those who are "serving" those being "served".

Our community and world service projects are intended to be positive learning experiences and should always be organized in age-appropriate ways. We should always avoid frightening or upsetting our students. We believe in introducing topics of global issues, problems and challenges using language that is emotionally safe for the age-level of students.

We believe our community service and world service projects should be selected and organized in keeping with our school's philosophy and mission. We will not engage in projects or partner with organizations whose practices are not in alignment with our school's goals.

We believe that our school's community service and world service projects are opportunities for all members of our community – both children and adults to come together in unity to work together. By doing this we believe we can deepen our appreciation of one another and deepen our bond of common experience and shared goals.

We believe that our school's manifestation curriculum and the service projects we engage in are powerful opportunities to build a community of partnership as well as a world of partnership – where all facets of society have equality, equal opportunity, equal human rights and equal access to adequate food, medical care, shelter, education etc.

OUR SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The Oneness-Family School curriculum is not a static inorganic thing – but an evolving and growing set of ideas and methodologies. There are however core principles, outlined below, which form the bedrock of the curriculum as it exists today as well as the blueprint for its ongoing development.

The foundation of our school’s curriculum lies in the educational concepts, materials, methodologies and practices developed by Maria Montessori. At the same time, in keeping with our ideal of self-transcendence as well as Montessori’s own tenet of continual innovation, we believe in continually researching new discoveries and exploring new educational ideas.

Our curriculum is comprised of three main elements: Academy or academic studies, Self-Discovery or personal development, and Manifestation or contributing to the world at large. The goals of these three areas is to provide the students with opportunities to explore the world, to learn about themselves, and to manifest the fruits of their expanding knowledge.

Academy

In Academy, we strive to make learning fun and meaningful so that students will become self-motivated learners. The students study the academic subjects in a thematic fashion using guiding questions, hands-on materials, projects, classroom presentations, and field trips. Our goal is to foster an understanding of how different subjects are related to each other and how our learning can be applied to be good citizens of the world. As students mature, they learn how to gather, organize, and present information gathered from multiple sources so that they develop the high level thinking skills necessary to be successful in our increasingly complex society.

Self -Discovery

Self-Discovery helps students move toward greater awareness, knowledge and mastery of themselves. Through the arts, athletics, nature, personal reflection, Socratic dialogue, and other activities, students develop a strong sense of identity and begin to imagine the possibilities of their life- journey. Self-Discovery also builds cooperation and conflict resolution skills, ethical understanding, creative thinking, and personal courage. Self-Discovery helps students to believe in their own unique capacities and to transcend themselves so they may begin to realize the fullness of their own potential.

Manifestation

Manifestation is the focused expression of the students' work in Academy and Self-Discovery. Performances, projects, festivals, classroom displays, school fairs, the School store, outreach programs and community service activities are some of the many ways students engage their skills, energies and insights to manifest their ideals. In the process, students gain social and emotional competencies as well as a sense of achievement. They learn to see themselves as valuable contributors to the community and to the world at large.

The Student

We believe the core of learning lies within each child. As the child grows the realm of child's awareness expands and the relationships he/she forms with others become more meaningful and more complex. The social world of the child moves beyond mommy and daddy and expands to the local community, the state, the country, the world and eventually the universe.

As this process of expansion occurs the child experiences a world of greater diversity and beauty and builds an awareness of his/her own values and principles. Guiding the child with care and compassion toward this process of self-expansion is the primary role of the caregivers – parents and teachers.

The goal of our educational process is an expanding spiral of awareness. When the social awareness of the child reaches the level of community, state, and world, he or she begins to learn of the interconnectedness between people and the roles of mutual support and interaction that humans play.

We believe in a child-centered educational process. We believe in learning about a student's aspirations and personal goals so that we can make the learning process relevant and meaningful.

The focus of activity in our educational setting is on children's ideas and interests. Each student is encouraged to follow his/her intellectual and artistic interests. Moreover our teachers strive as much as possible to integrate these interests into the larger framework of the curriculum goals of the class.

We believe that while the child lives within a larger community of children, each

student is viewed as a universe of one. We believe in a focus on individual progress and development. Our students should progress at the own pace, moving on to the next step in each area of learning, as they are ready.

We believe that students work best when they can work individually or in small groups, can work at their own pace, and can follow their own interests with curiosity. In this manner, positive relationships with their teachers, with their fellow students, and with themselves will be maximized in the learning process.

We believe in studying our students' individual learning styles and striving to adapt the classroom instruction accordingly to the degree possible.

We strive to awaken and nurture the human spirit of each child. We believe that inside each child lies the kernel of the adult man or woman she will become. We believe that even when very young, the child shares hopes, dreams, and aspirations with the rest of humanity. Therefore we believe that the educational process goes beyond intellectual learning and includes emotional and spiritual dimensions of learning.

We believe in teaching the universal values that form the basis for all the great religions and philosophies of humanity. We strive to teach our students not only appropriate patterns of polite behavior, but also basic universal values within the core of the student's self. These values include self-respect, acceptance of the uniqueness and dignity of each person we meet, kindness, peacefulness, compassion, empathy, honor, individual responsibility, and courage to speak from the heart.

The Classroom:

Our classrooms cultivate the child's sense of independence, self-respect, love of peace, passion for self-chosen work done well, and ability to respect and celebrate the individual spirit within people of all ages and the value of all life.

We uphold the value of a mixed age classroom setting, gathering together children of two, three, or more age levels into a "family" group. Children remain together for several years with only the oldest students moving on to the next class at the year's end. As students grow older and more capable, they assume a greater role in helping to care for the environment and meet the needs of the younger children in the class. Our focus is less on the teachers and more on the entire community of children and adults, much like one finds in a real family. Each classroom is a community of learners.

Our classrooms are places of beauty and order, which inspire our students to

think, learn and dream.

We believe in an intentionally designed educational environment: We strive to design classroom settings to meet the needs, interests, abilities, and development of the children in the class.

We believe that the teachers should design and adapt their environment with their community of learners in mind, modifying the selection of educational materials, physical space, and the tone of the class to best meet the needs of that group of students.

While we believe in the value of textbooks and workbooks to practice and reinforce skills and concepts, we believe that the most powerful learning occurs via direct personal hands-on contact with either real things under study or with concrete models that bring abstract concepts to life, allowing children to learn with an understanding that is deep and lasting.

We believe in fostering classrooms that cultivate the child's sense of independence, self-respect, love of peace, passion for self-chosen work done well, and ability to respect the individual spirit within people of all ages and celebrate the value of all life.

The Learning Process

We believe in a dynamic and hands on learning process. We believe students should learn by doing and speaking more than by listening. We believe that the meaningful learning occurs when the student is fully engaged with his/her own work. We believe that the most important learning occurs between the students and their own educational materials as well as via the interactions of the students with each other.

We believe in presenting big ideas and encouraging a process of deep inquiry. We believe in allowing students to explore subjects in depth to the greatest degree possible. We believe that students should be able to design their own projects in the context of the curriculum wherever possible.

We believe in the natural and spontaneous activity. We believe it is natural for children to wiggle, touch things, and explore the world around them. We believe in a learning environment that encourages children to move about freely, within reasonable limits of appropriate behavior.

While we believe in this atmosphere of spontaneous activity, we also expect students to master the basic skills of their culture, meeting curriculum goals and objectives according to agreed upon or expected timelines.

We believe that children have an inherent desire to become independent and competent beings in the world, to learn new things and master new skills. For this reason, we believe outside rewards intended to create external motivation are both unnecessary and counter-productive.

We believe that by virtue of making independent choices and building their own concepts, students will be better able to construct their own sense of individual identity and their own compass of right and wrong.

We believe in cooperation and collaboration, rather than competition. We believe children are capable of great fondness and appreciation for one another, and that interpersonal competition for attention and prestige are unnecessary and counterproductive.

We believe in the development of global understanding: We strive to be an international school not just in terms of the composition of our population but also in our approach to curriculum as well. The curriculum is international in its heritage and focus, and through it we consciously seek to promote a global perspective.

We teach and encourage service to others. We believe in organizing programs of community service, ranging from acknowledgements of our daily contributions to others within the class or school setting, to community outreach programs that allow children and adults to make a difference in the lives of others. The fundamental idea is one of stewardship.

We believe in a comprehensive, holistic, and multifaceted approach to student assessment, which includes but is not limited to: demonstrations of skill mastery by the student, portfolios of student work, quizzes, tests, standardized exams, exhibits, performances, and the responsibility of teaching of a skill or task to a younger students.

OPERATIONS - Administration, Finances, Facilities, Staffing

Administration

The School's administration strives to support the needs of all our constituencies by providing effective leadership, decision-making, communication, and personalized attention in a safe and caring environment.

The primary role of the Executive Director of our school is to provide leadership for the School. This includes: articulating the core values and vision, supervising the curriculum, coordinating marketing and admissions, recruiting and coaching faculty and staff, overseeing the financial health of the School, spearheading fundraising efforts, and implementing the School's strategic plan.

The Executive Director will strive to ensure that excellence and consistency with our values and vision permeate the School seamlessly from class to class, from level to level, and from one year to the next.

The Executive Director will base decisions on what is best for each individual child, what is consistent with the core values of the School, and what is feasible for the School and the families.

When conflicts arise within the School, whether they involve parents, staff members, students, or administrators, every attempt will be made to find the best and highest resolution of the issues under dispute, the resolution that is most consistent with the School's fundamental values and is most oriented to a win-win model.

The administration of the School should strive to ensure a smooth and timely flow of communication about important dates and information to parents, students, and staff.

We desire a collegial model of interaction between administration, faculty members and staff, inviting their input and participation whenever appropriate in facing questions and decisions pertinent to the development and growth of the School.

The Executive Director will encourage and support the open communication of ideas, concerns and problems by students, parents, faculty and staff in appropriate forums. The confidentiality of these communications must be respected at all times.

Finances

Oneness-Family School believes in sound financial management. We believe in using professional financial practices in a responsible, strategic and transparent manner. We are committed to operating on a balanced budget annually and continuously improving the fiscal health of the School.

We believe in providing accurate and appropriate information relevant to the financial state of the School to the School community on a regular (annual) basis.

The School honors its financial commitments to parents, staff, vendors, and others. We also expect all of our families, as members of our community, to honor their financial obligations to the School in a timely and responsible manner.

We believe in setting tuition with the intention to be as affordable as possible in order to create a community that is accessible to all. We are committed to making our school truly inclusive by pursuing funding sources beyond the tuition.

We believe in a financial aid program that is financially sustainable and allows support to the maximum number of families who need financial assistance in keeping with our goals of being a socio-economically diverse institution.

We are an institution committed to socially responsible investments that enable us to meet our goals, while upholding our values.

Excellent teaching is the foundation of our school's past, present, and future success. The compensation and benefits that we provide our teachers are a reflection of our value of them. As the School's financial wellbeing grows, we will strive to attract and retain the best possible staff in the field through compensation and benefits that reflect the value of their contributions.

We are committed to regular building maintenance as part of our capital operation to provide a safe, functional and nurturing environment for our community.

Facilities

We believe in facilities that are designed and maintained to support the implementation of the School's mission and our guiding philosophies. Our facility will be a nurturing environment that stimulates intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical growth and challenges the children in a setting that fosters a love of learning while providing a sense of safety and security.

We seek to create school facilities of beauty and function that strive toward an ideal child-centered environment consistent with our mission and educational programs. In particular, our facilities should be designed with the following key areas in mind: curriculum, technology, arts, sciences, as well as environmental issues, such as recycling, composting, energy conservation and ecological awareness.

We strive to create and sustain facilities that are aesthetically pleasing, uplifting and pleasant to be in, integrating ideas that support learning, spiritual awareness, and holistic health.

The facilities will be designed and furnished in order to reflect the comprehensive understanding of child development that is the core philosophy of the Oneness-Family School.

We endeavor to create an environment that stimulates curiosity and encourages interaction between students, faculty, staff and guests of the School.

We strive to ensure that our facilities honor the multicultural diversity of our community using various means such as artwork, sacred objects and physical structures that can change and evolve according to the School's cultural makeup.

We believe that, even as we grow, our facilities should retain a feeling of community and intimacy.

Our classrooms offer a cozy and warm environment that provides a safe haven, sense of security, and sense of home away from home for the children.

Our facilities should accommodate and support interaction among all the students across all grades.

We believe that the grounds of the facilities should include space for gardens in which the students can grow fruits, vegetables, and herbs and use these experiences in their lessons.

Until our facilities are located in a "green" space, we are committed to using other local green spaces as an integral part of our curriculum and activity.

Similarly, to the degree that our facilities do not allow for the full range of cultural activities and naturalist studies envisioned in our vision documents, we are committed to utilizing local centers of culture and science as an integral part of our curriculum and program.

We believe in honoring the environment through the choices we make in the physical infrastructure of the School, for example, choosing materials that do not harm the environment, insulating to conserve energy, etc.

The facilities should provide space to house all-school recycling and composting programs, and other environmental conservation programs, as appropriate.

Ideally our facilities will be equipped to accommodate children and adults with physical challenges.

Our facilities will be designed with a goal of implementing the best operational practices for schools in areas of health, safety, security, maintenance, physical plant, transportation, administration and communication.

Ideally, our facilities should accommodate outreach to the greater community and supports the spreading the vision of Oneness-Family School and collaborating with other like-minded organizations by having rooms to accommodate workshops, lectures, gatherings, performances, etc.

Our facilities should include space for indoor and outdoor recreational activities, including recreational aspects of the curriculum and team sports.

Our facilities offer spaces designed to support artistic expression, including but not limited to, performing arts.

We believe our facilities should support the School's intention to help students generate peace within themselves as well as in the outer world by including a quiet room(s) and/or designated areas where students can reflect, meditate, and center themselves.

The facilities should have adequate, safe and well-maintained parking, drop-off, and pick-up areas.

Our facility should have adequate and/or state-of-the art technology to support the mission of the School and provide a sense of partnership with and link to other communities around the world.

Ideally, our facilities should include the following staff rooms or designated areas:

- Medical Room: dedicated to addressing health concerns and medical events and housing a school nurse, if applicable.
- Teachers' lounge for resting, consulting each other about situations, etc.
- Office space for administrative staff.
- Adequate and efficient storage space
- Smaller meeting room(s) for private conferences, committee meetings, etc.

School facilities should include a designated library space or have sections of classrooms designated as library areas. The library should house books and other media that reflect and will support the breadth and depth of our curriculum. The library should be well organized and include quiet, cozy spaces for reading.

Our facilities should include a kitchen or cafeteria that can support the community's various needs for preparing food, including school-wide gatherings, workshops, and other events as well as provide a forum for learning about and understanding other cultures when students cook food from other cultures. Our cafeteria and other common and multi-purpose areas will be designed in such a way as to provide a rich medium for interaction between individuals and groups of various sizes.

Our facility should include science labs sufficient to accommodate the age groups who need it. For example, it may be divided into sections based on age-appropriate safety precautions. The lab allows for self-guided exploration as well as demonstrations of the scientific process.

Ongoing facilities management will be planned for and provided to ensure an effective and efficient manner consistent with the operational standards and core values of the School.

Staffing

We believe that the ideal teacher views teaching as a mission rather than a mere job; and as an ongoing practice that is always being mastered.

Our teachers are committed to empowering all students to advance to the next levels of the curriculum and to prepare to successfully meet the intellectual and social challenges they will face beyond the Oneness-Family School.

Our teachers are "firm at the edges and empathetic at the center"; the kind of adult who responds empathetically to children's feelings, while setting clear and consistent limits.

Our teachers are keen and compassionate observers of children's learning and development. The teachers' observations are the basis upon which the teacher makes choices regarding how to best support the students' intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth.

We believe that the teacher is an educational resource. Our teachers facilitate the

learning process by serving as a resource to whom the children can turn as they pull together information, impressions, and experiences.

Since the teacher's role is to inspire guide and encourage – not to be the provider of all information and knowledge – that students are encouraged to seek the information they need to find their own answers to questions and to pursue the new questions that their answers will generate.

The best teachers are great role models who consciously and deliberately demonstrate the behaviors and attitudes that the teacher seeks to instill in the students. Oneness-Family School teachers are calm, kind, warm, and polite to each child. Moreover they are firm when necessary but always compassionate, conveying the message to the students that they are respected and appreciated even at the times when the student's behavior or effort is less than desirable.

We believe that the teacher should be collaboratively engaged with the learner. We believe the real work of learning belongs to the individual child. Our teachers are conscious of their role in helping children to fulfill their potential as human beings and strives to create an emotional environment for learning within which children will feel safe, cherished, and empowered.

Because children learn at their own pace, and we expect our teachers and parents to refrain from comparing students against one another. We are committed to teaching and encouraging our students to treat one another with kindness and respect.

Oneness-Family School teachers aim to facilitate an optimum match between the style and ability of the learner and the level and content of the knowledge being taught. Our teachers strive to identify the best response to the changing interests and needs of each child as a unique individual. Oneness-Family School teachers accept that children learn in many different ways and at their own pace, and they understand that “following the child” is the secret to good teaching.

We believe that the ideal teacher should be a conscientious environmental engineer, organizing appropriate social settings and academic programs to maximize the learning of children at their own level of development. The teacher accomplishes this primarily through the design of the classroom, selection and organization of learning activities, and structure of the day.

We are committed to the professional development of teachers and staff as well as the ongoing learning of parents, so that we all can be more informed, more skillful, and compassionate educators and caregivers.

DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING

We will actively encourage a commitment to fundraising and financial growth in alignment with our principles and values among parents and other stakeholders.

In the spirit of Oneness-Family School, all gifts will be accepted and acknowledged with gratitude and appreciation.

We commit to purposefully, systematically, creatively and proactively pursuing all sources of revenue in alignment with our principles.

We acknowledge that in order to achieve our vision of positive global change, we need to have a mindset and skill set that enable us to attract significant resources. Through our fundraising programs, fiscal management, and communication about money, we will learn and teach the skills necessary for strategic financial growth.

The School's leadership will clearly communicate the School's fundraising goals each year.

The School will endeavor to involve the entire community in the fundraising process and encourage everyone to participate to the best of their abilities and in a variety of ways.

As we face fundraising decisions, we will endeavor not to overemphasize consumerism and commercialism.

We believe in dedicating adequate financial resources to fundraising and specific events to ensure that a viable effort is undertaken.

We will strive to secure an underwriter for all major events to minimize the financial costs and risks to the School.

We believe that fundraising is best managed in a coordinated and deliberative manner to ensure maximum success, keep alignment with our principles and sustain the support of all constituents of the community.

The purpose of the School's fundraising effort is to raise funds to finance the School's needs and goals. Other types of fundraising done at the School – such as individual classroom fundraisers or world service fundraisers should be appropriately and explicitly delineated as separate from school fundraising.

We believe that we should be open to and actively foster alliances with other organizations for purpose of resource development. We also believe we should be explicit with all donors and funding sources in stating that the money received will be used in alignment with our principles and values. Furthermore, we will not accept funding for purposes that are not in alignment with our principles and values.

We believe that communication and discussion about our fundraising efforts should always be linked our school's mission. We strive to continually engage the community in the development of our mission and in the deepening of our collective experience. We aim to honor and appreciate all contributions, big and small – whether they are monetary contributions, in-kind contributions of goods and services, or contributions of time, advice, and other less measurable offerings.

CONCLUSION

This document is the product of the collective effort of a large number of members of the Oneness-Family School community during the years 2005-2007 – the eighteenth and nineteenth years of the School's existence. It was written with the intention of enshrining the School's fundamental principles and values as originally conceived by the School's founder and as they evolved up to the present time.

In reflecting upon the School's founding spirit and in searching our "institutional memory", the help of School "elders" including Andrew Kutt, Madhavi Ray, Debbie Kahn, and June Lang, as well as other longstanding faculty members and parents, was instrumental. Our intention was to encapsulate for future generations of Oneness-Family leaders and community members our most sincere and soulful expression of the highest ideals of the School's vision.

While we understand that this document will be augmented and amended in the future, we hope and expect that this will be undertaken with the same care and rigor with which the original document was drafted. Moreover we would expect that any such amendments would add to the manifestation of the spirit of the School, and not delete, detract from, or contravene the founding principles and values herein set forth.

The Oneness-Family School Community
June, 2007