



FAMILY & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Dear Jowonio Families,

It always takes me by surprise how quickly this time of year arrives! It seems like the school year just began, but we are already winding down to the end.

There is much to celebrate at this time of year – new growth abounds, in nature and in the children. We are so grateful for the relationships that have developed over the course of the year, and all of the ways the children have blossomed and grown. While we are sad to see them go, we celebrate the time we've had with them, and the new steps we've seen them take. Your classroom team will be reaching out to you with the date and time for your child's classroom celebration, and I encourage you to attend. These are always emotional but rewarding times of cherishing one another, the community we've created, and all the ways we've changed. Our lives are all enriched by all that we've shared.

For some families, there is larger change happening, as children transition to kindergarten or other new school settings. This can bring many mixed emotions, for little people and big people alike. You can help your child to prepare for the transition by ensuring:

No Surprises – For all of us, knowing what to expect and being prepared helps. You may want to set up visits to new classrooms/school buildings and playgrounds, and take pictures so that children can revisit their experiences and anticipate. It may also help to have a calendar to show and mark off summer adventures and days when the new school year starts.

Talk – It is important to talk with children about the feelings the upcoming changes bring. Sharing your own feelings and resilience can be helpful ("I'm sad that we won't be seeing the Waterfall kids every day, but I will look forward to play dates together.") Focusing on the positives, such as what is exciting about the new classroom, can also be helpful.

Support Connections and Cherish Memories – Setting up play dates with children who will be in your child's new classroom, as well as finding ways to stay connected with current friends, can help children feel a sense of belonging. Remembering the year by reviewing photographs, stopping by the playground and Trike Town to play, and stopping by to visit also reinforces and celebrates connection, and we are always happy to welcome you.

Know that we share in your mixed emotions at this time of year. We have loved getting to know you and your child(ren), and sharing the year together. You have become part of us, as we have become part of you. We hope you will stay in touch and let us know how you are doing.



In the meantime, we hope you have a wonderful summer of adventures and play. For those who will be staying for the summer, look forward to discovering the possibilities together. And we will be excited to welcome those who are returning in the fall to new classrooms, groups of children, and experiences!

Lori

WHAT'S NEW!

What do we do on Wednesday?

On a recent Wednesday afternoon, Jowonio staff engaged in learning about PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance or Persistent Desire for Autonomy) lead by Kendahl Damashek, Director of Content and Curriculum and parent coach with At Peace Parents.



While PDA is most commonly associated with Autism, there is increasing evidence that PDA may be a profile on its own. Either way, kids who have PDA experience true survival threats due to a perceived lack of autonomy or equality that can result in escalating behaviors, shutdown, regression or burnout. These kids need connection, lots of undivided attention, safe adults to support coregulation and opportunities for autonomy. Kendahl talked through the brain science behind PDA, as well as many characteristics and tips to try. We just scratched the surface on this very timely and important topic and hope to dig in deeper as time goes on.

If you are interested in learning more about PDA, check out At Peace Parents on the web or social media!

Classroom Showcases!

At Jowonio, we believe some of our best learning comes from within our own community. On select Wednesday afternoons, instead of hosting an outside speaker, we hold what we call Classroom Showcases. A recent session took place on May 21st. During a Classroom Showcase, each team prepares a learning center, activity, or group experience in their classroom that connects to our schoolwide learning goals. Teachers also create a display that explains the purpose of the activity and highlights how it was adapted and differentiated to support the needs of every student. It's a chance to see Access for All in action. Since classroom staff rarely have time to visit other rooms during the day, this is a valuable opportunity to see how colleagues approach teaching and learning. We always walk away with new ideas—ready to try them out, all without ever leaving the building.

ACCESS FOR ALL

University Students Study Play Spaces & Collaborate with Classroom Teams

Jowonio is fortunate to have nine indoor and outdoor gross motor play spaces for classrooms to share. Our teachers and therapists are constantly brainstorming to make sure that all students have access to and are included in play that builds relationships and develops skills. It can be tricky to make this happen on the playground or in the gym. This spring we partnered with students from Syracuse University School of Design's students in the Collaborative Design elective to develop solutions to ensure access to play for every child. The course is taught by Professor James Fathers and Jowonio occupational therapist Lisa Neville, members and originators of the adaptive design program now housed at ARISE Adaptive Design.

Teams of design students were paired with a classroom team and assigned a play space to study. Through field visits, conversations with our educators, research into accessible play spaces around the world, design briefs, and feedback from Jowonio collaborators, students developed recommendations for one of five play areas; Gym and Enchanted Forest indoors, and Trike Town, Playground, and Sarah's Path outside.



Teachers in the Star, Sunflower, Waterfall, Kangaroo, and Butterfly rooms were pivotal members of design teams, sharing their knowledge about early childhood development, the importance of gross motor play, and the uniqueness of our spaces. Their expertise helped the design students develop an understanding of how young children move and play and how disability can impact access to available play activities. This was the first time many of our designers considered that people with differences in sensory processing and motor skills might need accommodations to participate in the usual activities of school.

In final project presentations April 28, teams shared their observations and recommendations for improving access to play for each space and received feedback from their collaborators. Ideas ranged from things we can do right away at little to no cost to elaborate rethinking that could be used to seek grant funding. Look for more information and opportunities to help as we plan to bring these new ideas to life.



Staff *SPOTLIGHT*

Chris Blanchard

Years at Jowonio: 18 years

Classrooms (current): Star Room

Hometown: Syracuse, NY

Favorite Quote:

"Maybe that's what life is...a wink of the eye and winking stars." Jack Kerouac

There's more to life than Jowonio!

I have many little hobbies, too many to list but to get to know me better, here are some of them: listening to music and discovering new artists, reading books on a range of topics from quantum physics to utilitarian pottery of the 19th century, writing poetry and short stories, practicing mindfulness, yoga, mediating, spending time with my niece and nephew (both are at Jowonio currently), photographing mushrooms, visiting family cottage, freshwater fishing, frequency sound therapy, Daydreaming, trying to find various stars on clear night, practicing other languages, which is a work in progress.

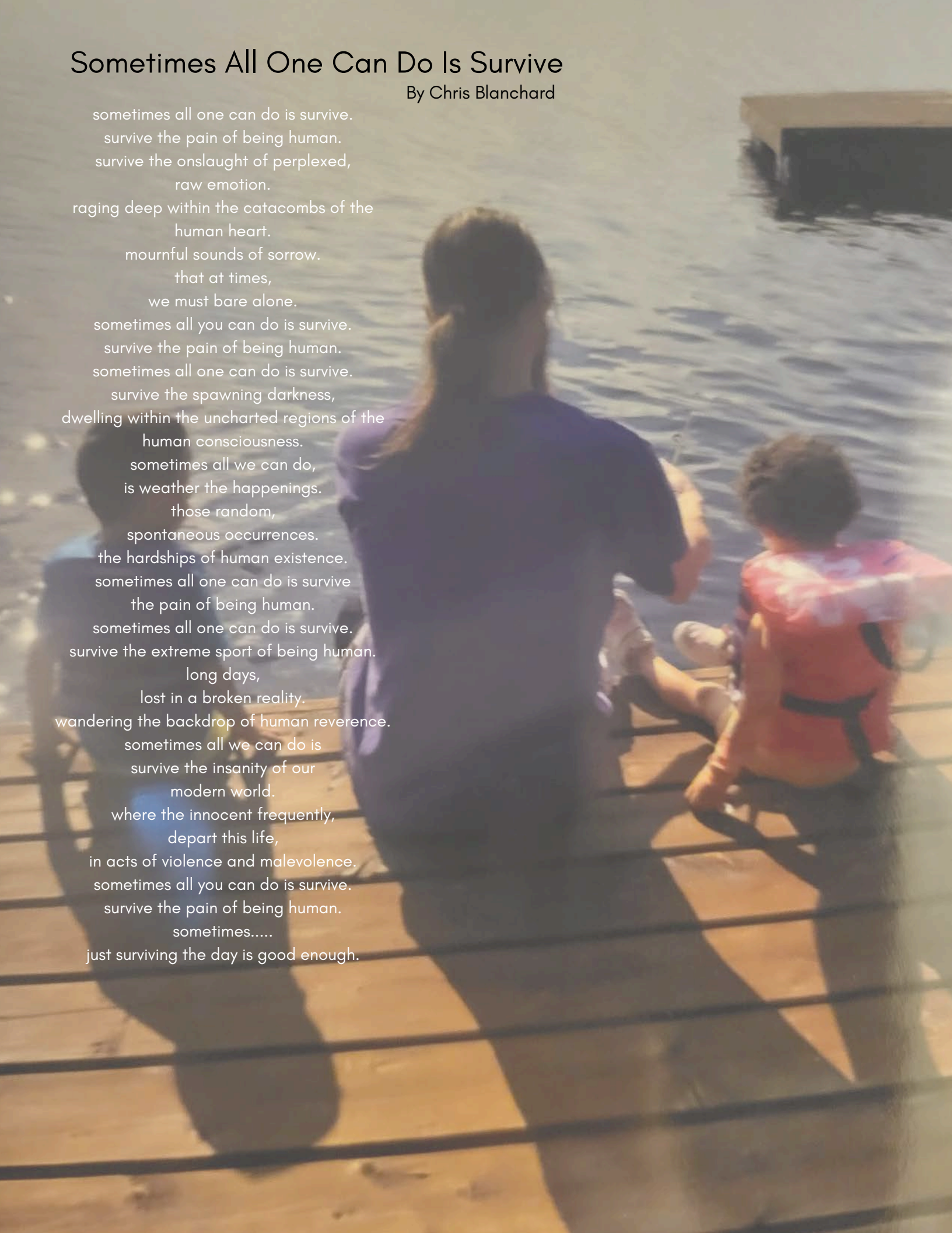
I really enjoy doing research and teaching myself various topics, currently: Alchemy, Cryptozoology, Exo Planets, and history of beat generation writers.)

I am trying to put together a book of poems and hopefully get published in the next couple years. That is a little bit about me...I also like dancing on the moon.



Sometimes All One Can Do Is Survive

By Chris Blanchard



sometimes all one can do is survive.
survive the pain of being human.
survive the onslaught of perplexed,
raw emotion.
raging deep within the catacombs of the
human heart.
mournful sounds of sorrow.
that at times,
we must bare alone.
sometimes all you can do is survive.
survive the pain of being human.
sometimes all one can do is survive.
survive the spawning darkness,
dwelling within the uncharted regions of the
human consciousness.
sometimes all we can do,
is weather the happenings.
those random,
spontaneous occurrences.
the hardships of human existence.
sometimes all one can do is survive
the pain of being human.
sometimes all one can do is survive.
survive the extreme sport of being human.
long days,
lost in a broken reality.
wandering the backdrop of human reverence.
sometimes all we can do is
survive the insanity of our
modern world.
where the innocent frequently,
depart this life,
in acts of violence and malevolence.
sometimes all you can do is survive.
survive the pain of being human.
sometimes.....
just surviving the day is good enough.

Family Events & Support Resources

What a wonderful year we've had together!

As we reflect on the year, we want to remind families that our Family Support Team is always here to assist with community resources or support you may need. Our door is always open.

One major resource available to families of children with developmental diagnoses is the **Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)**. This state-run organization provides valuable services, including support and funding for eligible individuals.

You may have heard about OPWDD but aren't sure where to begin—that's where we can help. Melissa Hyman and Emily Vercelloni are Service Access Assistants, are knowledgeable about OPWDD and would be happy to guide you or answer any questions you might have.

If you're curious about OPWDD or simply want to learn more, feel free to reach out—or stop by for a cup of tea or coffee. We're always happy to help.

Warmly,
The Family Support Team



Jowonio Families for
showing so much love and
appreciation to Jowonio Staff!



It takes a very large village to create the amazing outpouring of love and appreciation felt by staff during Staff Appreciation Week, May 5–May 9th.

Staff was treated to Salt City coffee, Honeycomb baked goods, and an exquisite all-school luncheon provided by Jowonio families and our friends at the Gardenview Diner, full of diverse flavors and culinary delights.

We are so grateful to parents, grandparents, caregivers, board members, and other members of our generous community who contributed time, money and creativity to make this week so successful.

Parent SPOTLIGHT

Thank you Leanne and Molly
– and the rest of the Parent Committee –
for your energy and creativity!

Thankful for the involved families of Jowonio, like these two, who have been integral in fundraising, organizing, implementing Staff Appreciation

My name is Leanne Sherwood. My husband and I have been Jowonio parents since the fall of 2021 when our oldest daughter got to be in the Wildflower room.

Our first experience was during Covid, and despite not getting to be in the school, I noticed the unique ways in which my daughter was taken care of. One day she got her hand stuck in a toy (what four year old hasn't?) and the teachers continued to check in with her for the next few days. It was the thoughtfulness of this staff member that really stood out. My now seven year old still talks about this teacher and that experience of feeling so cared for. Our three children, Olivia (7), Hannah (6) and Daniel (4) have gotten to be in the Wildflower, Kangaroo and Sea Turtle rooms. Daniel will get to spend next year at Jowonio as well.

I have been involved in Jowonio in any way that I can be and it has been a great way to get to know other parents and staff members. What continues to stand out to me is the way the staff is committed to caring for the kids that attend here. They are constantly coming up with creative strategies to help every kid be safe and included. I am blown away by many staff members who work long hours and do all of the behind the scenes work. As a parent volunteer and part time substitute I feel like I have gotten to see behind the scenes of all that makes a school day possible. This has motivated me more to get a team of parents organized to help care and celebrate the staff at Jowonio.



My name is Molly Anthony. We have been a Jowonio family since 2021. My daughter Grace was a student in the Kangaroo and Bumblebee rooms, and my daughter Taylor is a current student in the Butterfly room. In choosing a preschool for our girls, it was super important to us to find an environment that was inclusive, prioritized play, and would be patient and gentle with my tiny humans as they processed their big emotions. Jowonio surpassed our expectations, and we will forever be grateful!

I have had the opportunity to be part of the staff appreciation committee multiple times as well as join in on various field trips, ice cream socials, potlucks, and end of year celebrations!

Once a Jowonio family, always a Jowonio family.
It truly is a special place!

Learning About Plants

While Jowonio kids patiently waited for Spring to arrive, they embarked on a UPK learning domain program!



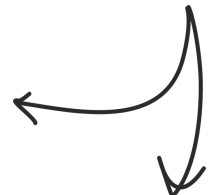
Waterfall kids
spent several
days working on a
3D garden



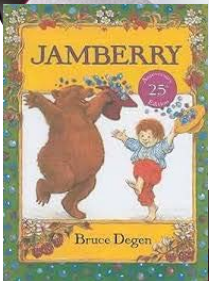
Kangaroo kids painted a
flower bouquet on a saran
wrap easel AND made
flower soup!

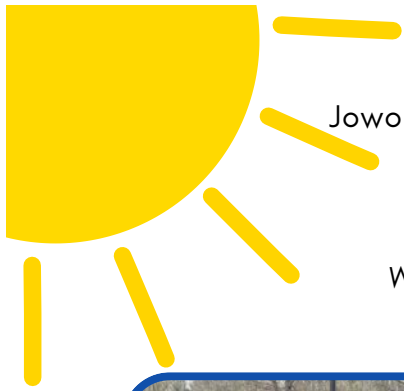


Rainforest friends
read Jamberry
and painted with
mushed berries



Butterfly kids examined cut flowers,
and Rainforest kids inspected
herbs!

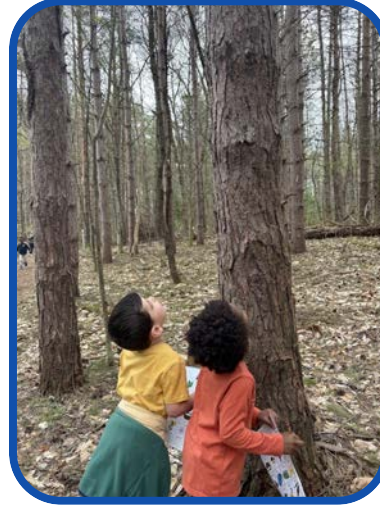




New Vans & More Field Trips!

Jowonio classrooms have been putting our new vans to use exploring different outdoor spots in our community

Waterfall kids visited Beaver Lake & used a scavenger hunt to find animals and plants in woodland and pond habitats



Star kids spent a crisp sunny day in nature at Labrador Pond



Butterfly kids visited Canal Landing Park, a Jowonio favorite!

Sea Turtle kids wore sunshine yellow shirts to make for easier safety and supervision while out and about in the community





Food Closet for Kids, Families & Staff

Thanks to one of our incredible Sea Turtle families and Chobani, our Food Closet is stocked with delicious yogurt at the beginning of May and June.

These donations help us offer support with dignity to staff and families facing food insecurity. We're so grateful for this nourishing partnership- and for families and staff who donate non-perishables to keep the closet filled every month.

The Food Closet is in the Family Support Lounge on the 1st floor next to the School Nurse, in the Bunny & Kangaroo wing of the school.

The yogurts are restocked the 1st of the month and are found in one of the 1st floor Kitchen refrigerators.

Enjoy!

THANK
YOU
Chobani.



For sponsoring food for all those in need in our community

JOWONIO BOARD CORNER – CELEBRATING PROGRESS & COMMUNITY

We are grateful to **Rotary Club of DeWitt** for awarding **\$1,000** towards a new automated external defibrillator (AED) to keep our kids and staff safe; to **Orange Theory & Sneakers4Good** for donating to Jowonio; to **Eastwood Rotary** for donating **\$3,500** for new computer equipment!



We welcome new board member, Sarah Longley!

Friends of Jowonio Board of Directors

Mike Rey, President
Jason Benedict
Jim D'Aloisio
Nicole Schuster
Kevin Tampone
Jaime Riley
Craig Holava, Facilities Director
Jen Petrie, Assistant Director
Lori Saile, Director

Jowonio Executive Board of Directors

President – Mike Rey
Vice President – Liz Dwyer
Treasurer – Michelle Hammerle
Secretary – Jakia Durham Kelly
contact the board: board.member@jowonio.org
to reach Mike Rey: board.president@jowonio.org

Join us in building a brighter future

Monthly or annual donations provide a sustainable way to support our mission and grow the educational experience.

Donations can be made in various ways:

- Online: Visit our website at www.jowonio.org and click on the "Culture of Giving" page to make a secure online contribution or set up automatic donations.
- Check: please make checks payable to "Jowonio School" and mail them to, or drop them off at, 3049 East Genesee Street, Syracuse, New York 13224

Employer Matching Programs: Many employers offer matching gift programs to support employees' philanthropic efforts. Matching donations double the impact of your contribution. To participate:

- Contact HR: Reach out to your Human Resources department about your company's matching gift program and fill out the necessary forms.



United Way
of Central New York



Birthday Fundraisers: Families and students have created beautiful birthday traditions where friends and family are asked to provide donations to Jowonio School in honor of a birthday. For every donation made in honor of your birthday or your child's birthday, we send a thank you note to those who donate, designed with love.

Volunteer

August 7, 3PM-5PM (Thursday): United Way Day of Caring at Jowonio School! Join a team or come by yourself to help Jowonio clear our nature paths and outdoor playspaces for a new school year!

September 28, 12pm (Sunday):
33rd Westcott Street Cultural Fair PARADE, RAIN or SHINE.

Join us to walk together as Jowonio Families & Staff in the Westcott Street Cultural Fair Parade at Noon.

Kids, scooters, strollers, sun hats, umbrellas, noise-cancelling headphones- all are welcomed!

Donate



United Way Day of Caring 2025

Day of Caring '25
UNITED WAY OF CENTRAL NEW YORK

