JOWONIO

FAMILY & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Dear Jowonio Families,

As we settle into the new school year, I'm glad to share a few updates from your Board of Directors.

We're happy to welcome Jowonio parent Will Staton to our team as Interim Director of Operations, working alongside Kate Smith, our Education Director, while we continue the Executive Director search. You'll get to know both of them better in the pages ahead.

I also want to take a moment to thank Jen Petrie for her support, commitment, and collaboration over the past few months and many years of service. We wish her all the best as she starts her next chapter, and we're grateful for everything she gave to our Jowonio community.

On the Executive Director search: it remains a top priority for the Board, and we're actively engaged in finding the right long-term leader for Jowonio. We will share news in communication once the Executive Director is selected.

We're also looking to grow our Board of Directors. If you're a Jowonio family member — or know someone in our community — with a passion for our mission and some time to give, we'd like to hear from you.

As always, we're here to support our families through this season of change — please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly at board.president@jowonio.org

Thank you, as always, for the trust you place in us and the community you help build every day at Jowonio.



Warmly,

Liz Dwyer
Board President, Jowonio



9/30	Open House (current families)
10/6	Community Gathering @ Harvey's Garden
10/12	School Closed
10/26-27	Picture Day(s)
10/28	Potluck (current families)
11/11	School Closed
11/18	Parent/Caregiver Conferences
11/26-27	School Closed

Stage Crew

At Jowonio we know that the kids & teachers are the stars of the show, and those of us in supporting roles relish the opportunity to do our work backstage and at our desks to let them shine bright!



Will Staton
Interim Director of Operations

Will Staton is a former Jowonio parent and career K-12 educator. Over his 18-year career, he has served as a teacher, school administrator, and dean of students. Will is excited to join the team at Jowonio and support the outstanding team and staff who gave his daughter such an amazing experience. In his role, Will is overseeing the school's day-to-day operations and assisting with leadership responsibilities.

Kate Smith
Education Director



Kate Smith has worked in special education and early childhood for 25 years, working as a special education teacher for Jowonio and other programs for a number of years before completing her Educational Leadership program and returning to Jowonio in 2018 as assistant director and UPK program director. As the school's education director, she loves supporting Jowonio's staff, developing meaningful professional learning opportunities, and fostering a positive, innovative work environment.



Adrian Bayardi
Operations & Systems Admin; "Stop & Go Man"



Olivia Kunze
Floating Substitute & Office Assistant



Cynthia Johnson
Office Manager



Kristen Johnson
Volunteer



Friends of Jowonio
Buildings & Grounds Maintenance Team



Rose (service animal)
Support Pawfessional



Zeke Smuckler
Volunteer

SEPTEMBER 2026

WHAT'S NEW!

What do we do on Wednesday?

Supporting staff capacity supports children's capacity.

Harvard Center on the Developing Child; SAMHSA trauma informed principles

Wednesday afternoons at Jowonio are for staff learning. We learn about kids and families through intensive team time, parent meetings and parent-teacher conferences. We learn about new and different ways to support our students by engaging in study groups, participating in training and inviting in outside speakers. Supporting our staff capacity is a priority because we know it supports children's capacity.

Through our grant with the John Ben Snow Foundation, we can collaborate with Nurturing Connections, a local child and family therapy practice. They provide targeted support for staff, kids, and families throughout the year in lots of different ways. This year we are working with them to provide professional development, including an excellent opener led by Tara Pienkowski entitled, "Building Nurturing Connections: Fostering communication, compassion, safety, and trust for the new school year". Team members engaged in reflection, completed True Colors personality tests and learned about how understanding each other's communication styles can strengthen their teams, which positively impacts Jowonio kids.





Parent Teacher Conferences on Wednesday November 18. You'll sign up with your child's teacher(s).

COMING SOON

Family Support News

Adventures in Parenting Workshops

October/November

Dates and registration details coming soon!

All families at Jowonio are invited to the Adventures in Parenting Workshop series! Join us for one session, or for all of them (approx. 5 sessions total).

Sessions will be weekly (9-10:30 am) and held in the Jowonio Community Room. Each topic is presented by a different staff member or community professional.
Topics including:

- Social skills and child development
- Sensory challenges and strategies
- Potty training
- A workshop by Niki Coller, our play therapist

CAITLIN SIMMONS, LCSW **MELISSA HYMAN, LMSW**



Call or stop by anytime! Our offices are located in the Support Staff Suite next to Nurse Jamie





Dozens of families joined us in August for our annual Ice Cream Social!

Skippy's Ice Cream





We hosted our annual **Dad's Night Out** event in August. Families receiving OPWDD services are invited to attend a Syracuse Mets game to connect and network.



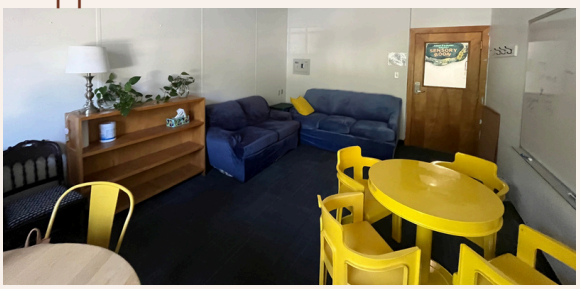


Hard Hats & Happenings

There were a lot of fun and exciting projects happening around the Jowonio building this summer!

We created a **staff lounge**! Staff now have a dedicated space to rest and take their break. The lounge is located on the second floor in the former Fund Development office (now located in the Support Staff Suite on the first floor)









Sign, sign, everywhere a sign

Thanks to a grant from the Literacy Coalition of Onondaga County we were able to install **three new AAC boards**: two at Jowonio and one at the Wegmans Boundless Playground at Onondaga Lake Park

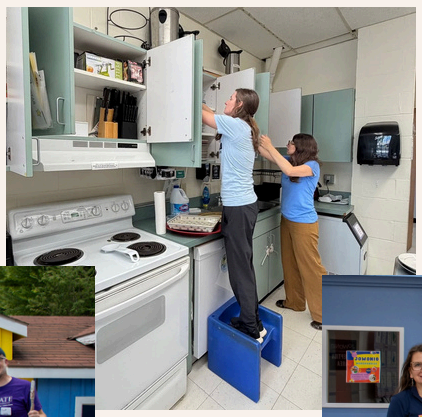






Name change! Hill & Dome (play area behind the playground) is now called **"The Backyard!"**





In August a group of volunteers from Upstate Emerging Leaders United came to Jowonio to volunteer for the day. They cleaned, organized, painted on Trike Town, and more. Thank you to these amazing volunteers and to United Way of CNY for organizing the **2026 Day of Caring**!







Nursing Newsletter

FLU AND RSV SEASON

Flu and RSV season is here, and we know this time of year can bring plenty of sniffles, coughs, and questions about when your child should stay home.

RSV can look a lot like a common cold for many children. For some children, though, RSV can lead to more serious illness. Symptoms often begin with cold-like symptoms and may become worse around days 3-5 of illness. Most symptoms last about 7-14 days.

The flu can also make children very sick, especially children with certain underlying medical conditions. Getting a flu vaccine is one way families can help protect their children and our school community. Flu vaccines are most effective when given in October, but they can be given throughout the flu season.

Most importantly, please give your child plenty of time to rest and recover when they are sick. Keeping sick children home helps them feel better and helps protect their classmates, teachers, and families.

WHEN TO STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL

Keeping sick children home helps your child recover and helps protect classmates, families, and staff from spreading illness.
Please keep your child home if they:

- Have a temperature of 100°F or higher.
- Your child may return after they have been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.
- Have vomiting or diarrhea.
- Your child may return after 24 hours have passed since the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea.
- Have “pink eye” or a draining eye. Please consult your child's healthcare provider.
- Have an unexplained rash. Please consult your child's healthcare provider.
- Have significant cold symptoms, such as substantial nasal or chest congestion, thick or colored mucus, or a deep cough.
- Have a contagious illness, such as flu, impetigo, chickenpox, head lice, or strep throat.
- Are too sick to participate in their normal school activities, or need more care than can safely be provided at school.

SHOE SAFETY

Crocs and loose-fitting slip-ons may be comfy, but they can increase the risk of tripping—especially on wet grass and leaves, stairs, and playground equipment. We’ve seen a few falls already this year related to footwear. For safety, please consider sending children in sneakers or well-fitted closed toe shoes on school days.

Fund Development & Communications



Jowonio School was awarded grant funding this summer! Funds will go towards a new Rifton Adaptive Tricycle for Trike Town, a fund for seating and mobility adaptations, and succession planning for our Finance team.

Auer Family Foundation

thank you

The Dorothy and Marshall M. REISMAN FOUNDATION

There are so many ways to join us in building a brighter future!

September 27, 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! Meet at Westcott Community Center at 11:30 am





October 6, 4:30-7:30pm (Tuesday):
Please join us on at Harvey's Garden for a fun night of food, drinks, and music! This community gathering will feature performances from Chris "Isto" White, Taylor Ricks, and Fred Hintz. Toss and Fire pizza will be open for food purchase and we will also have a small raffle.

While Harvey's Garden is a beer garden, it's also very kid-friendly and laid back - a great spot for families to gather and enjoy a casual evening together. This is an open-to-the-public community event, so no RSVP is needed. Feel free to stop by whenever you can!

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 "Give" page to make a secure online contribution or set up automatic donations.
- Check: checks can be made payable to "Jowonio School"

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

NY SEFA STATE EMPLOYEES FEDERATED APPEAL

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.

Community Gathering

@ Harvey's Garden

Note the new date!



October 6th | TUESDAY | 4:30 - 7:30 pm

FOOD . DRINK . MUSIC



Music performances by Jowonio community members:
Chris "Isto" White
Taylor Ricks
Fred & Josh Hintz

JOWONIO

harvey's garden