



## **Acera Annual Fund Frequently Asked Questions 2022-2023**

As we know, Acera is a unique school—the pivot to remote and hybrid schooling during Covid, individualized learning plans, inquiry-based learning, innovative teachers, staff and collaborators. We rely on the Acera community—current parents, alumni, alumni parents, grandparents, faculty, staff, and friends—through our annual fund campaign to ensure that we offer an extraordinary education to our students. Donations to the Annual Fund impact every aspect of the school, from retirement for staff to professional development, technology to the arts, science to our facilities.

Your participation ensures the school's solid financial future and inspires outside financial institutions with the confidence to invest in Acera. Below are common questions and answers about our annual fund campaign. If you have further questions, feel free to email Trent at [trent@aceraschool.org](mailto:trent@aceraschool.org).

### **What is the Annual Fund Annual Fund?**

Acera is a financially stable school, now in its 13th year of operation. The culture of giving at Acera is strong and the community is generous. Acera relies on contributions to the Annual Fund to fund the portion of the operating budget that is not covered by tuition. Acera's Annual Fund campaign is Acera's top annual fundraising priority. Each year, all members of our community (parents, faculty, staff, trustees, alumni, grandparents, and friends) are asked to make a tax-deductible gift to Acera. The 8 to 10 percent of our budget revenues raised through the Annual Fund ensures our school has all the necessary resources (faculty, facilities, technology, and program support) to provide each student with an individualized Acera education. **This year's Annual Fund Annual Fund Campaign is October 3, 2022 to January 6, 2023.**

*In 2022-2023, Acera's Annual Fund is focused on a part of the school utilized by every single student: Acera's Adventure Playground.*

### **I gave last year. What did those funds go towards?**

Like all independent schools, Acera relies on families to give above and beyond their tuition every year. Donations made to Annual Fund in previous years made the following possible for our students and teachers:

#### **Science Lab & Innovation Lab:**

- Woodshop supplies (raw consumable materials, tools, lathe)
- Labor to reconfigure Innovation Lab and classroom storage, build tables, re-organize materials.
- \$20,000 worth of science lab equipment and supplies

#### **Staffing & Infrastructure:**

- Increase in school match for staff retirement
- Upgraded infrastructure for bookkeeping, front desk coverage, condo office park management
- Ongoing updates to data cabling and network backup power supply
- Additional laptops and projectors

#### **Tech, IT, Creativity Morning & SEEDS:**

- Specialized, individual student electronics toolkits for making, fixing, taking things apart for Tech Hub
- New ipads and styluses. Hardware and RAM updates for shared laptops
- Additional new, highly versatile and high caliber sewing machines for creativity morning as well as creativity morning supplies

- New tables and additional seating in Commons
- Painting updates in lobby, several classrooms and Innovation lab
- Playground updates include additional soil, retaining walls to offset soil erosion, create new platforms for play, new stumps and boulders for play zones
- A new classroom behind the front desk--now Anastasia's classroom

This is just a small sample of what your generous donations allows us to do for each student, from our youngest learners to our graduates.

**Do all independent schools fundraise? Why not just raise tuition?**

Yes, all independent schools fundraise. Tuition covers about 90 percent of the school's annual budget. Acera's Annual Fund traditionally pays for the essentials needed. If we were to raise our tuition to cover the true cost of an Acera education, we would no longer remain competitive with other local independent schools. In addition, gifts to the Annual Fund are tax deductible.

**Why am I asked to increase my gift each year?**

Each year, as insurance costs and human resources costs rise across the country, it also costs more to run the school, particularly to attract and retain Acera's outstanding faculty and staff. Acera's Annual Fund donations traditionally represent a set percentage of the budget, so they must increase, as well.

**How much am I expected to give?**

Our request is that you make Acera your primary or one of your top giving priorities. We ask that you contribute at a level that is personally meaningful and that makes sense for your family, keeping in mind the number of children you have at Acera. Gifts range from \$20 to \$75,000 and sometimes more or less. For some of our families, the price of tuition is already stretching their family budget to the limit. To these families, we ask that you give whatever you can so that we can achieve our 100% participation rate. Some of our families can give above and beyond and for those donations we are all grateful. A majority of our families give \$1000-\$5000. Every gift is valued, deeply appreciated, and truly does make a difference. Small gifts can make a big collective impact and can inspire much larger gifts. For example, when 20 alumni give \$250 each, it totals \$5000 towards our goal!

**Is my gift tax-deductible?**

All donations to Acera are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Our Tax ID Number is 32-0303877.

**If I make a pledge by January 6, may I pay later? May I make pledge payments over time to maximize my family's gift?**

Absolutely. You have until May 1 to make your pledge payment. Please contact Trent Ramsey ([trent@aceraschool.org](mailto:trent@aceraschool.org)) to inform us of your preferred payment schedule.

**Why is 100% participation so important?**

It is a vote of confidence in our school, our faculty, and our educational mission. 100% participation is evidence that everyone in our community shares in the effort. This supports our philosophy that we must all work together to provide our children and the future generations of Acera graduates with the best possible education. Further, high annual giving participation is a benchmark used by foundations and outside funders when deciding which of the many worthwhile schools will receive their financial support. *Over the past three years, our highest participation has been 80%; we need every family to give to attract outside funders.*

**We feel that we give to Acera in so many ways; can your gift of time count towards participation?**

Acera values the incredible gift of time and skills from our parent community however Acera relies on monetary support from the Acera community to achieve our goals and keep tuition as low as possible. A participatory gift of any amount is appreciated.

**Do you accept matching gifts from employers?**

Yes! Matching gifts from your employer are an excellent way to increase your support to Acera's Annual Fund Annual Fund! To see if your company matches contributions, email Trent and he will find out the necessary information.

**Do you accept gifts of securities?**

Yes! If you choose to make a stock gift to Acera, please contact Trent to let us know of your intentions to transfer stock or for any assistance. You will need to let us know the number and issuer of shares donated and the date of the transfer. Please instruct your broker/banker to transfer the securities to the school's brokerage account using the information below:

- Acera's Broker is: Charles Schwab & Co. Inc., DTC Clearing 0164, Code 40, Client Name: Acera School, Account #: 8145-9513
- Please notify Trent Ramsey at Acera **prior** to donating stock. This will ensure proper tracking, receipt, and acknowledgment of your generous gift: [trent@aceraschool.org](mailto:trent@aceraschool.org) or 781.558.4509 (cell).
- **We need you to let us know the following so that we can be sure to credit your gift properly:** Name of stock to be donated; Number of Shares; Date of the transfer; Estimated value.

*Thank you for reading and please, if you have any questions or comments, please email Trent at [trent@aceraschool.org](mailto:trent@aceraschool.org) or call at 781-558-4509.*