

ACHIEVING AFTERSCHOOL

RECORD-BREAKING ENROLLMENT



NEW AT ASPIRE

- Aspire is breaking student enrollment records in both our summer and afterschool programs - a 50% increase from just last year!
- Aspire launched a summer high school volunteer program, providing over 500 hours of service. Over half of the volunteers are former Aspire students.
- A record number of AmeriCorps members are serving students every day after school.
- Aspire launched a new three-year strategic plan and bold vision for our future.

Thanks to your support, more South Arlington students than ever are receiving high-quality, holistic afterschool and summer support.

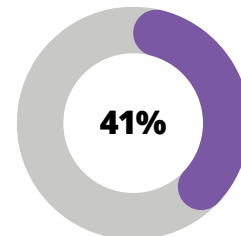
The long-term impact of pandemic-related school closures and virtual learning continues to disproportionately impact the students, families, and community we serve. In fact, 85% of Aspire students entered our daily afterschool program this fall testing two or more grade levels behind in reading.

Compared to pre-pandemic 2018-2019 data, when only 49% of students tested below grade level in reading, these numbers demonstrate the urgent need for expanded learning time, especially for historically underserved families. Your support has allowed Aspire to meet the increased need of the South Arlington community and offer our daily learning programs to 100+ students this past summer and 120+ students this school year at no cost to their families!

Your help ensures that these students are not left behind.

Aspire's new three-year strategic plan focuses on working with students to build thriving futures for themselves and the community. With your partnership, we can work to close the educational opportunity gap and create opportunities for all South Arlington students to succeed.

Every day we see our students making important academic and social-emotional gains after school, which builds their confidence to participate at school. Students are growing their love of learning through hands-on projects and focused literacy and math support. In the words of one of our students, "I have a very fun time and learn new stuff every day!"



Of Aspire students say that their parents often cannot help them with their homework.

In case you missed it!



Learn about Aspire's NEW bold vision for the future!





BOOK CLUB

To hone their reading skills and expand their vocabulary, our middle school students have enjoyed reading a variety of Roald Dahl books in book club this fall, including "James and the Giant Peach" and "Witches". Elementary school students loved reading the fun fantasy series "Amulet" by Kazu Kibuishi. A few new favorite titles in our library include "Zapato Power" and "Merci Suárez Changes Gears". Aspire is committed to expanding our diverse book selection with new authors and characters that represent the diverse cultures and communities of our students.



“I like Aspire because the teachers help me and I think I can be good at school and use my skills.”

HOLIDAYS AT ASPIRE

Holidays were well celebrated at Aspire with each of our students receiving a gift and a new book from their wish lists through collaborations with local organizations. Almost 400 presents were purchased this year for Aspire students (another new record!), and community volunteers generously helped our team wrap all of them. After opening her present, one of our students said "I really wanted this, but my parents wouldn't have been able to get it for me."

Special thanks to our community partners who helped our families this fall.

- Marymount University held a Halloween Fest for our students, including trick-or-treating, food, face painting, and crafts.
- The holidays can be a time of increased food insecurity. We are so grateful to Our Lady Queen of Peace for donating 100 large food boxes to our families.
- Bartaco Ballston catered the Virginia Gardens' holiday party, donating mini rice bowls, salsa, and chips, as well as fun swag to our families.



HANDS-ON LEARNING

Students come to Aspire after a long day of school, making it critical that our educational programs are fun and engaging. Beyond literacy support, students participate in STEAM lessons, special interest guilds (chess, art, and drama were popular this fall) and have time for movement, nutrition, and health lessons.



At Arlington Mill, students loved working on a Frida Kahlo puzzle during Hispanic Heritage Month that was made up of pieces that each student colored.



At Gilliam Place, the favorite project was the hands-on volcano activity, where they learned about the volcanoes of El Salvador and created their own volcanic explosion.



At Virginia Gardens, students enjoyed a "Walking Water" science experiment where they learned about capillary action using paper towels, water, and food coloring.