



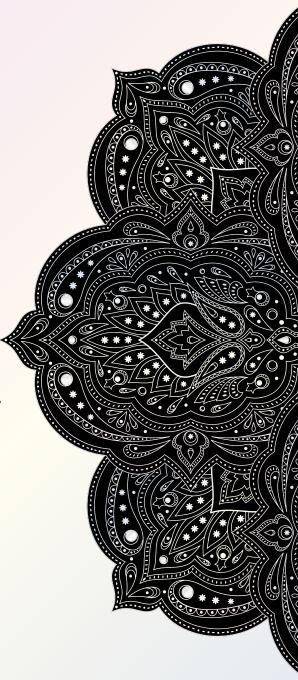
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Your gracious support of Friendship Public Charter School Network has helped to make our Annual Teacher of the Year Awards Gala a resounding success.





Chairman's Welcome Donald L. Hense

Welcome Dear Friends,

I'm thrilled to be with you in this gorgeous Mellon
Auditorium. It has been a prominent gathering place in the
city since 1935. Look at this architecture! It's remarkable.
Tonight marks our sixteenth year celebrating the W. Edward
Walter Excellence in Teaching Awards, affectionately known as our
Teacher of the Year (TOY) Gala.

So, we're here in this great space because you deserve the exceptional. You've proven your excellence in extraordinary ways this year. Friendship has shined as the best of the best across the board. The PARCC results show that Friendship is leading the way in student academic recovery post-pandemic. And Friendship is D.C.'s fastest growing public school network.

As we celebrate our success, it's important to acknowledge that being a teacher has never been more challenging than it is today. That has long been true inside the classroom, but we now live in an era where the outside pressures on teachers are every bit as demanding. That is one reason that it is good to step back and reflect on the efforts and achievements of those men and women who have chosen this glorious profession.

We couldn't have done any of this without all of you. I want to thank you for encouraging your students every day. Now more than ever, Friendship shines as a light that illuminates the way toward accelerating achievement and sending students to college prepared to succeed. Please give yourselves a round of applause.

Thanks and enjoy.

Donald L. Hense

Founder and Chairman of the Board

CEO's Welcome Patricia A. Brantley

Dear Friendship Family,

I am thrilled to celebrate our annual tradition, the Teacher of the Year awards. Our Gala is an opportunity to gather the individuals who truly embody the spirit of Friendship. Tonight, we pay tribute to the shining stars of Friendship—our teachers. It's remarkable to reflect on our journey as ONE Friendship for over a quarter of a century. Twenty-six years of excellence in teaching, building exceptional schools, preparing students for college, and positively impacting our community, among other achievements.

At Friendship, our work is propelled by a powerful mission, fueled by the love in our hearts, and guided by high expectations that have positioned us as one of the leading public education providers in this city and nation.

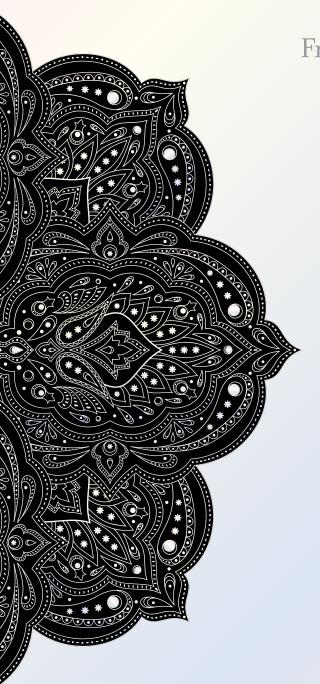
Our 2024 TOYs exemplify the best of us! They are not just outstanding teachers; they are visionaries, creatives, advocates, and mentors. They serve as brilliant points of light, illuminating the path for our students, schools, families, peers in education, and our entire city. Their students' results are accelerating our impact and represent some of the District's highest academic growth and achievement post-pandemic. Our TOY nominees don't merely meet the standard; they set the bar.

Congratulations to our TOY finalists and every Friendship teacher. You are the eternal flame that keeps Friendship shining brightly. Your dedication, love, and soulful commitment to our mission and students create a school community where students feel safe, respected, and empowered. Thank you for all that you do.

Yours in service,

Patricia A. Brantley Chief Executive Officer





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Master of Ceremonies Roland S. Martin

Throughout his illustrious journalistic career, Roland S. Martin has interviewed multiple U.S. presidents and top athletes and entertainers in Hollywood. Known as "The Voice of Black America," Martin has consistently stayed true to his calling.

Martin serves as the host and managing editor of the pioneering daily online show #RolandMartinUnfiltered dedicated to news and analysis from an African American perspective. Launched on Sept. 4, 2018, the show covers politics, entertainment, sports, and culture. On Sept. 4, 2021, Martin expanded his reach with the launch of the Black Star Network (BSN), an OTT network offering a range of shows focusing on news, culture, finance, wellness, history, and more. Additionally, for the past two years, Martin has produced twice-daily commentaries for iHeartRadio's Black Information Network, broadcasted on nearly 40 stations nationwide.

An accomplished author, Martin has penned four books, including his latest work, "White Fear: How the Browning of America Is Making White Folks Lose Their Minds."

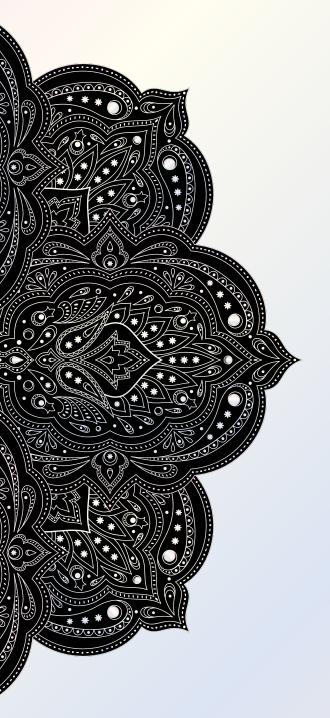
Martin is a highly sought-after international speaker, captivating audiences with his profound insights into history, politics, and culture. His influence is widely recognized, having been named four times by Ebony Magazine as one of the 150 Most Influential African Americans in the United States. In addition, Martin topped Jet Magazine's "King of the Hill" poll in 2012, and he has been hailed as the number one Black pundit by NewsOne.com.

In 2022, Martin was honored as a Fellow of the Society of Professional Journalists, and in 2021, he was inducted into the National Association of Black Journalists Hall of Fame, becoming its youngest living member. He was inducted into the Texas A&M University Journalism Hall of Honor in 2008. Martin has received over 40 awards for journalistic excellence, including the National Association of Black Journalists' Journalist of the Year award in 2013 for his extensive coverage of voter suppression during the 2012 election.

As a media personality, Martin has made significant contributions, earning four NAACP Image Awards, including Best Host. He spent six years as a contributor for CNN and served as a senior analyst for the Tom Joyner Morning Show from 2008 to 2019.

Martin's influence extends beyond U.S. borders, as he has been recognized as one of the top 50 political pundits by the Daily Telegraph in the United Kingdom. He has made appearances on various American and international networks, showcasing his global impact. From his role as a radio talk show host to his tenure as the executive editor/general manager of the Chicago Defender, Martin has continually broken new ground in digital media, solidifying his legacy as a trailblazer in the industry.





Teacher of the Year 2024 Program

Introduction of Master of Ceremonies

Desi Bernard Event Chair Busy Bee Environmental Services

Master of Ceremonies

Roland S. Martin

Award-winning journalist and author

Welcome and the Occasion

Donald L. Hense, Chairman Friendship Public Charter School

Patricia A. Brantley, Chief Executive Officer Friendship Public Charter School

Video Presentations I

Dinner

Video Presentations II

W. Edward Walter Excellence in Teaching Award Presentation

2024 TOY Winner Remarks

Closing

Teacher of the Year 2024 Nominees

Shonté Tulloss

Friendship Armstrong

Dominique Johnson Friendship Blow Pierce

Jessica Puyo Friendship Chamberlain

Jennifer Thompson Friendship Collegiate Academy

Brandon McCoy

Friendship Ideal

DeYeasa Traore

Friendship Online

Yashika Whitmyer

Friendship Southeast

William Kelley

Friendship Technology Preparatory

Jamila Henry

Friendship Woodridge International





Teacher of the Year Nominee

Shonté Tulloss | Friendship Armstrong

Teaching is a profound choice, rooted in a belief in the potential of every child and the responsibility to nurture their growth and development. My daily interactions in classrooms, meetings, and field experiences reflect my unwavering belief that children deserve opportunities to be heard. Children are inherently competent, capable, and curious beings. Grounded in the Reggio Emilia Philosophy, my approach to teaching emphasizes respect for children as active participants in their own learning journey.

I prioritize active listening, observation, reflection, and responsive engagement, recognizing that teaching and learning are intertwined. In my classroom, the child and the teacher are partners in a collaborative journey to infuse our lives with meaning. Every moment is an opportunity for connection and exploration.

From morning arrivals to outdoor adventures and classroom discussions, I cultivate an environment that sparks curiosity and fosters inquiry. Whether pondering the origin of milk carton designs or observing the intricate lives of spiders, I slow down to honor the richness of children's experiences and insights. The learning environment I create is intentionally designed to provoke thoughtful interactions among adults, children, and materials. Through careful consideration of color, furniture arrangement, lighting, and the incorporation of natural materials, the classroom becomes a space that ignites the senses and fosters creativity.

I trust children to communicate their thoughts and ideas through a diverse array of materials at their disposal, from glass vessels to mosaic tiles. Together with the children, I embark on a journey of exploration, documenting our educational experiences as they unfold. Through documentation, we celebrate children's achievements, reflect on their progress, and honor the diversity of their learning paths. Each piece of documentation serves as a testament to the dynamic, collaborative process of teaching and learning, as we navigate the ever-changing landscape of ideas and theories together.



Teacher of the Gear Naminee Dominique Johnson | Friendship Blow Pierce

In my classroom, mindfulness is not just a practice; it's a cornerstone of my teaching philosophy. With a firm belief in nurturing scholars holistically, I integrate mindfulness to equip them with resilience, compassion, and clarity for navigating life's challenges.

Recognizing the profound impact of mindfulness, I've made it an integral part of our daily routine, fostering a safe and nurturing environment where scholars can thrive authentically. Through practices like meditation and deep breathing, I empower students to quiet their minds and

manage stress and distractions effectively. Engagement in learning takes on unconventional forms in my classroom, such as "learning walks," where scholars explore literature and delve into discussions while incorporating movement. This innovative approach underscores the idea that learning can happen anywhere and promotes freedom of thought and expression.

I initiated a "Mindfulness Club" for eighth-grade scholars, providing them with a safe space to enhance self-awareness. The club's positive impact is evident in the remarkable academic progress and confidence demonstrated by its members. Prior to state assessments, my seventh-grade class engaged in mindfulness practices, leading to exceptional performance gains, especially among students with learning disabilities. In my classroom, scholars are encouraged to freely express ideas, engage in challenging discussions, and reflect on their learning experiences. Mindfulness fosters a deeper connection between scholars and the material, promoting active listening, critical thinking, and retention. It also provides valuable insights into students' well-being and readiness to learn, supporting data-driven instruction and interventions.

Ultimately, the integration of mindfulness enhances scholars' learning experiences and contributes to their sustained success over the years. With mindfulness as a guiding principle, I'm committed to nurturing resilient, compassionate, and engaged learners prepared for life beyond the classroom.



Teacher of the Gear Naminee Jessica Puyo | Friendship Chamberlain

Reflecting on my journey, I trace the roots of my teaching philosophy back to my childhood, where I discovered my passion for education through playful interactions and early aspirations to become a teacher. From makeshift classrooms in my basement to high school Cadet Teaching experiences, each step reinforced my commitment to fostering joyful, inclusive learning environments. My formal training in Early Childhood Education and my service in the Peace Corps further solidified my belief in the transformative power of education.

Whether teaching English in Samoa or navigating the challenges of COVID-19, I found purpose and community at Friendship Chamberlain School, where colleagues and families invested in my growth. Central to my philosophy is the belief that education should empower individuals to make choices and seize opportunities, regardless of background or circumstance. I strive to cultivate respectful, nurturing relationships with my students, mirroring the mentorship I received from educators like Mrs. Ward, who believed in me and challenged me to reach my potential.

In my classroom, representation and joy are paramount. I aim to create a space where students feel seen, valued, and inspired to explore their interests and identities. By connecting learning to their lived experiences and fostering a sense of wonder, I aim to cultivate lifelong learners who are confident, curious, and compassionate. My teaching philosophy is a culmination of lived experiences and the mentorship of those who have invested in me.

I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the vibrant learning community at Friendship Chamberlain School, where excellence is not just encouraged but expected. As I continue this journey, I am committed to nurturing a love for learning and fostering success in every student who walks through my classroom door.



Teacher of the Gear Naminee Jennifer Thompson | Friendship Collegiate Academy

My philosophy as a music arts educator centers on cultivating excellence and leadership while fostering transformative learning experiences. I prioritize exceptional teaching, recognizing music education as a journey encompassing creativity, expression, and emotional intelligence. I aim to engage students in meaningful musical experiences that spark curiosity, cultivate critical thinking, and nurture a lifelong passion for music. Exemplary leadership is crucial in the music arts.

I lead by example, embodying integrity, enthusiasm, and a commitment to excellence. I foster a collaborative and inclusive culture where every voice is valued, and each student is supported. Creating a nurturing learning environment is essential for musical growth. I cultivate a safe, supportive, and inclusive space where students feel empowered to take risks, express themselves authentically, and explore their musicality. I believe in collaboration, inquiry-based learning, and experiential opportunities to deepen students' understanding of music. By providing diverse musical experiences and resources, I seek to ignite imaginations, broaden horizons, and cultivate lifelong passion. Recognizing the importance of organizational strength, I collaborate with stakeholders to foster innovation and accountability.

My philosophy is rooted in the power of music to enrich lives, cultivate creativity, and build communities. Through excellent teaching, exemplary leadership, a nurturing environment, and organizational strength, I empower students to discover their musical voices and leave a lasting impact.



Teacher of the Year Naminee Brandon McCoy | Friendship Ideal

Education is not merely the acquisition of knowledge but the cultivation of the soul and the empowerment of individuals to contribute meaningfully to society. As an educator for more than a decade, I see my role extending far beyond the confines of the classroom; it's a lifelong journey fueled by passion and commitment to excellence, encouragement, and leadership. Ellin Nordegren's words, "Education is the one thing that no one can take away from you," resonate deeply with me.

Growing up in the inner city of Rochester, New York, amidst poverty and limited opportunities, I witnessed firsthand the transformative power of education. Raised by a single mother with an intellectual disability, and with an older brother facing similar challenges, I defied the odds to become the first high school graduate in my family. From a young age, I felt a calling to uplift the less fortunate and reshape the narrative in the African American community. Graduating high school was a monumental achievement, but it was only the beginning.

With unwavering support from my family, church, and dedicated teachers, I pursued higher education, currently on the brink of completing my Masters in Educational Administration and Leadership. My journey is a testament to the impact of mentorship and supportive communities. Now, as an educator, I strive to pay it forward. My mission is to provide shelter and support to those in need, instilling hope and a sense of possibility in my students. I've witnessed remarkable academic growth among my students, surpassing district and city standards.

At Friendship Southeast Academy and now at Friendship Ideal Campus, where I serve as the Afterschool Club Coordinator, excellence is not just a goal but a way of life. Our commitment to nurturing well-rounded scholars extends beyond academics to encompass social, emotional, and mental well-being. Through afterschool programs and community engagement, we foster equity and inclusivity, creating a supportive environment where every student feels valued and empowered. As a leader, I lead by example, embodying professionalism and integrity, while inspiring my students to strive for greatness. In the end, education is not confined to the walls of a classroom; it's a holistic journey of growth and empowerment. By embracing excellence, compassion, and leadership, we can transform lives and build a brighter future for generations to come.



Teacher of the Year Naminee DeYeasa Traore | Friendship Online

As an educator, I believe learning is as essential as shelter, food, and clothing, and it's my duty to fulfill this primal need by crafting engaging and relevant lessons. With nearly five years of experience teaching in the online classroom, I've found it incredibly rewarding. My commitment is to prepare students to be confident, active learners, ready for both college and career paths.

My ongoing mission is to empower scholars to author their futures by fostering positive thinking, self-confidence, and envisioning their aspirations as present realities. I strive to create a safe and welcoming learning environment, connect scholars with the best resources, and uphold the mission and vision of Friendship Public Charter Schools Network.

In the online classroom, I leverage technology to cater to diverse learning needs and preferences, ensuring every child has access to tailored instruction. Through virtual field trips, simulations, and digital tools, scholars engage with historical materials, developing critical thinking skills and making real-world connections. I prioritize inclusivity, providing access to diverse perspectives and backgrounds.

Assessment in my online history class is both individualized and collaborative, allowing scholars to develop historical thinking skills and engage in meaningful discourse. I value their perspectives and encourage civil discourse, fostering critical thinking and communication skills. By facilitating peer relationships and guiding them to lead discussions, I empower scholars to take ownership of their learning. I recognize the importance of parental involvement and continually strive to forge strong connections between home and school. Through ongoing reflection and improvement, I aim to motivate scholars to strive for academic excellence and become self-sufficient agents of change.

My goal aligns with Friendship Public Charter Schools' mission: to equip scholars with the skills and confidence to positively impact their communities and the world. Through practice, reflection, and classroom experiences, I'm confident my scholars will go on to effect meaningful change.



Teacher of the Gear Naminee Yashika Whitmyer | Friendship Southeast

As an early childhood educator, I embrace the profound responsibility of nurturing young minds and igniting their academic flame. With intentionality, creativity, and flexibility, I strive to cultivate curiosity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills in our scholars, serving as the catalyst for their intellectual growth. My commitment to education extends beyond the classroom, aiming to instill core values that shape well-rounded, lifelong learners who positively impact their communities and the world.

Drawing from my own experiences as a D.C. native, I aspire to create a learning environment where every scholar feels connected to their surroundings and empowered to pursue knowledge. Despite the inevitable challenges, I draw inspiration from the words of Harriet Tubman, reminding myself of the strength, patience, and passion needed to overcome obstacles and inspire greatness in my students. Through engaging lessons that foster creativity and critical thinking, I endeavor to prepare my scholars for a bright future, while also providing a nurturing environment where they feel safe and encouraged to take ownership of their learning.

Education, to me, is not just a tool for personal advancement; it's the key to freedom and the gateway to endless possibilities. As an early childhood educator, I embrace my role as the spark, the foundation, and the igniter of the academic fires that drive our scholars toward success. I am committed to fostering their self-confidence, self-awareness, and belief in their ability to achieve anything they set their minds to. In every interaction, I strive to embody the essence of an early childhood educator: a beacon of inspiration, a champion of learning, and a guide for the next generation.

Teacher of the Year Naminee William Kelley | Friendship Technology Preparatory

The role of a high school history teacher transcends mere recitation of dates and events; it involves nurturing students' critical thinking skills, fostering an appreciation for diverse perspectives, and connecting past events to their present lives. My objective daily is to deepen my students' understanding of history, empowering them to engage with the world around them.

Fostering a classroom environment conducive to growth and development is paramount, and I strive to cultivate my students' innate curiosity while building meaningful relationships based on trust and mutual respect. My guiding principle, "Treat others the way you want to be treated," instilled in me by my mother, underscores the importance of authentic connections in my teaching philosophy. Authenticity cultivates a culture of trust and mirrors the genuine learning experiences I aim to create. Embracing mistakes as part of the learning journey, I encourage my students to adopt a growth mindset, emphasizing the value of perseverance and effort in their pursuit of excellence. History serves as a powerful tool to instill a passion for learning and empower students to effect positive change.

By equipping students with historical thinking skills, I enable them to critically analyze the past and become informed, engaged citizens. Establishing clear routines and procedures fosters a structured learning environment, empowering students to take ownership of their education and pursue their aspirations with confidence. Teaching is more than imparting knowledge; it's about nurturing values, resilience, and a lifelong love for learning. Through lively discussions and critical inquiry, I strive to make history relevant and engaging, demonstrating its impact on our present-day realities.

By showing unwavering belief in my students and supporting their academic and personal growth, I empower them to strive for continuous improvement and eventual success. Success may not come overnight, but with dedication and perseverance, every step forward brings them closer to their goals.



Teacher of the Gear Naminee Jamila Henry | Friendship Woodridge International

"Every child is gifted. They just unwrap their packages at different times." This quote, though anonymous, encapsulates the essence of my teaching philosophy.

For 17 years, I've welcomed classrooms full of unique "presents," each awaiting the right moment to unlock their potential. As an early childhood educator (ECE) at Friendship Woodridge International Baccalaureate School, I view myself as the bedrock of learning, committed to providing high-quality, engaging experiences that ignite each child's educational journey. Developmentally appropriate practices form the backbone of my approach, ensuring that every child's current developmental stage and holistic needs are met.

I invest considerable time in crafting comprehensive learning experiences, tailored to both the class and individual students. By formally and informally observing their progress, I curate diverse experiences that allow students to unwrap their gifts at their own pace. My time at Friendship PCS (FPCS) has allowed me to fully implement and refine these practices. Collaborating with ECE leaders, I've translated theory into action, crafting a dynamic framework that brings my vision to life within the classroom. Ongoing training with the CLASS observation tool shapes my perspective, emphasizing essential elements in the Prekindergarten classroom.

As a pre-kindergarten teacher, I recognize the dynamic capabilities of each "little" learner in my classroom, challenging them academically while nurturing their social-emotional development. I believe in the power of play-based learning to engage students, laying the groundwork for a lifetime of curiosity and exploration.

Reflecting on my teaching journey, the transformative power of early education stands out. I'm dedicated to laying a robust foundation for young minds, nurturing a love for learning, and instilling values of kindness and compassion. Encouraging their advancement and building resilience, I aim to prepare them for a lifelong journey of learning, demonstrating that endless possibilities lie within even the smallest of packages.

Teacher of the Year Past Recipients



Carmielle Darden Friendship Collegiate



Garry Cameron Friendship Blow Pierce



Brittney Lott Friendship Tech Prep



Shante' Johnson Friendship Woodridge



Samantha Thompson Friendship Blow Pierce



Quianna Richburg Friendship Chamberlain



Joscelyn N. Reed Friendship Chamberlain



Carlos Richardson Friendship Collegiate



Jennifer Beckwith Friendship Woodridge



Daniel Moses Friendship Collegiate



Alexander Brown Friendship Southeast



Allison Crouch Friendship Collegiate



LaTanya Manning Friendship Woodridge



Marcella Windley Gibson Friendship Southeast

Thank You

We would like to thank the following people who helped make our 2024 annual awards gala exceptional.

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Dr. Faith Gibson Hubbard

Dr. Charlene Roach-Glymph

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Congratulations to all the wonderful teachers that were honored to be nominated for this prestigious award!

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of Friendship Public
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Lifetime Appreciator
of Teachers

Tom & Kathy Raffa
from Washington, DC

Congratulate
all Friendship Teachers
for their work!



On behalf of the entire Friendship Public Charter School Network

We applaud the 2024 Teacher of the Year Honorees

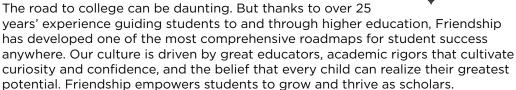
Thank you for believing our children can achieve anything!



Friendship Public Charter School

About Friendship

Beginning with just two locations in 1998, Friendship now spans 15 campuses, including online, for students in grades pre-K3 to 12. Our rigorous curriculum, exemplary instruction, resource-rich classrooms, and total commitment to student advancement have made Friendship one of D.C.'s top public charter school systems.



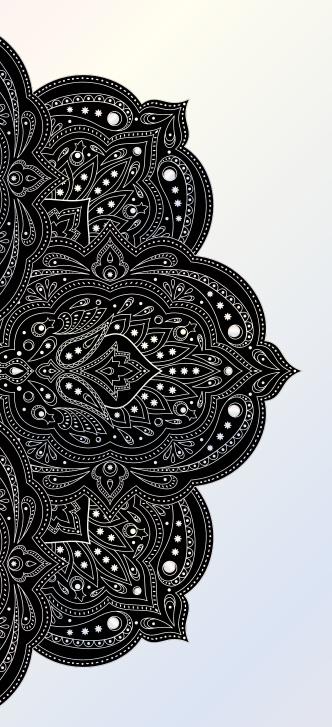
The Friendship system's knowledge-building approach to student instruction has produced remarkable results: Tier I elementary and middle schools. A robust Advanced Placement program. The district's first Early College charter high school. Graduation and college acceptance rates that are tough to top anywhere.

Beyond the classroom, extended learning and athletic programs round out the whole student. Friendship's award-winning teams know the tough and the technical, from resilience in robotics to grit on the gridiron. They will enter a fastpaced world with a running start.

With our deeply rooted commitment to the communities we serve, Friendship is uniquely equipped to take an extraordinary journey with students and their families. We are proud of our challenging approaches, insistence on accountability, high academic expectations, and relentless emphasis on college completion. That's because we've seen the results. We know what students can accomplish with the right opportunities and environment. But don't let us convince you. Let our growth, longevity and achievements tell the story. Our students' success shows what a world-class education looks like.









in appreciation of W. Edward Walter

The Friendship Teacher of the Year Awards Program was established in 2008 through the leadership of W. Edward Walter, long-time Friendship supporter and board member. As an international business leader and philanthropist, Mr. Walter understood that it is people who shape the lives and outcomes of others whether in business, education or community service. He sought to ensure that Friendship educators received the highest honors and recognition for their work on behalf of our children. As the founding chair of the TOY Gala, Mr. Walter was responsible for raising over two million dollars in support of exceptional teaching.

For all that W. Edward Walter has done for our teachers, our students and our school community, we say thank you.

