



FRIENDSHIP PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

*Teacher
of the
Year*

2025 AWARDS GALA



Thank you

to our Chairman Circle Sponsor

Desi Bernard

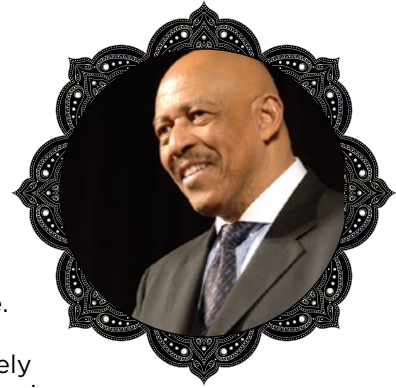
Busy Bee Environmental Services

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 the gorgeous National Building Museum. Look at this architecture! It's remarkable. Tonight, marks our seventeenth 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.

Friendship is D.C.'s fastest growing public charter 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.

Thank you and enjoy the celebration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donald L. Hense".

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. Nearly three decades of excellence in teaching, building exceptional schools, and preparing students for college, and positively impacting our community, among other achievements.

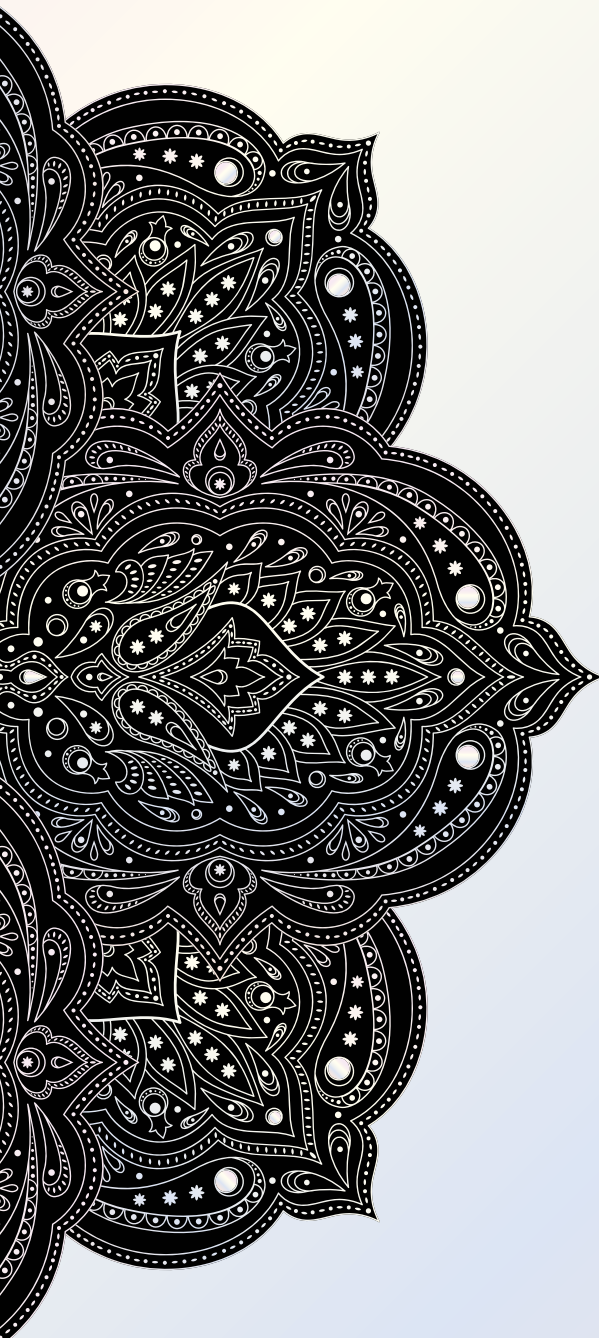
At Friendship, our work is propelled by a powerful mission, fueled by the love in our hearts, and guided by high expectations that have positioned us as one of the leading public education providers in this city and nation. Our 2025 TOYs exemplify the best of us! They are not just outstanding teachers; 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 nominees 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,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read 'Patricia', is placed above the printed name and title.

Patricia A. Brantley
Chief Executive Officer



Friendship Public Charter School

Board of Trustees

Donald L. Hense

Founder & Chairman

Dr. Gregory S. Prince, Jr.

Vice Chairman

Victor E. Long, Esq.

Secretary

Darrin L. Glymph, Esq.

Treasurer

Patricia A. Brantley

Chief Executive Officer

Carol Thompson Cole

Unique Fullmore

Parent Representative

Eric McKinley King

Dr. Deborah M. McGriff

Jeanette Mendes

Parent Representative

Anise Walker

Chris White

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 2025 Program

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

2025 TOY Winner Remarks

Closing

Teacher of the Year

2025 Nominees

LaKeema Moore

Friendship Armstrong

Raquel Preau

Friendship Blow Pierce

Kenneel Cyrus-Delves

Friendship Chamberlain

Tiffany Creagh Lee

Friendship Collegiate Academy

Everton Nelson

Friendship Ideal

Arnissia Middleton

Friendship Online

Caleb Franklin

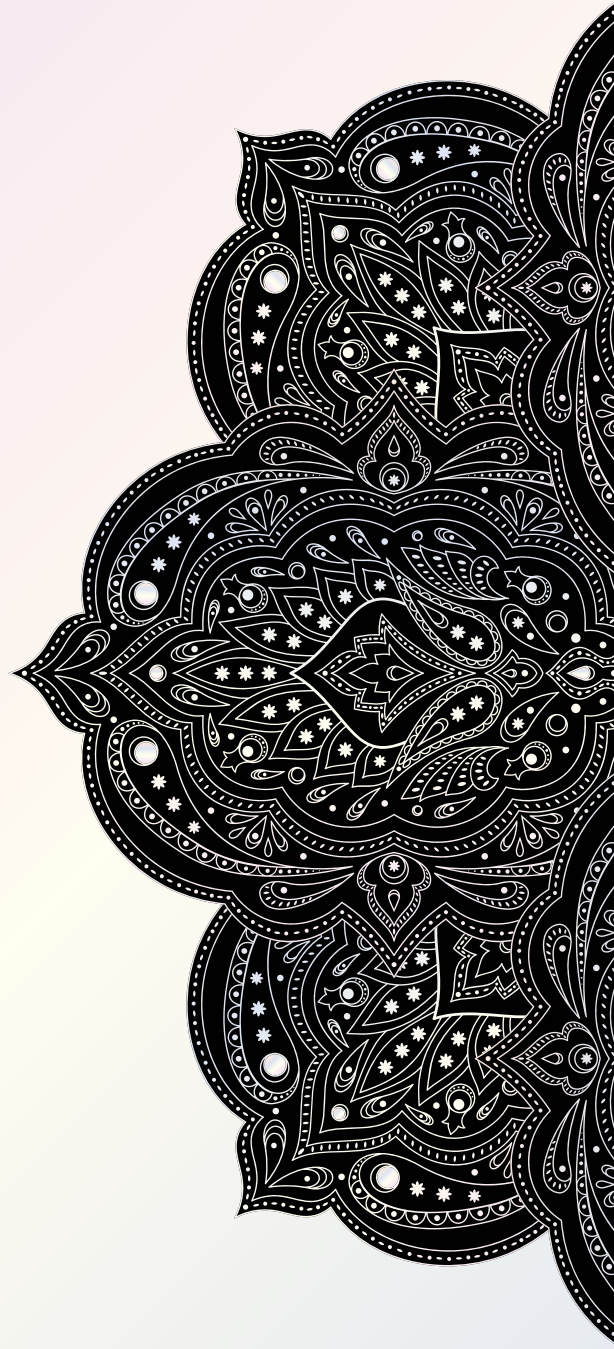
Friendship Southeast

Cara Schiavone

Friendship Technology Preparatory

James Davis

Friendship Woodridge International



Teacher of the Year Nominee

LaKeema Moore | Friendship Armstrong

With over 21 years in education, I've dedicated my career to fostering student success, building strong relationships, and cultivating a culture of excellence at Friendship Armstrong. My impact reaches beyond the classroom—I mentor, support, and advocate for students, helping them realize their full potential.

I believe in reflection, collaboration, and empowering students to find their voice. Initiatives like the Busboys and Poets poetry slam invite students to step outside their comfort zones and embrace self-expression. I root my work in equity, leadership, and student-centered growth, always striving to uplift the next generation through academic achievement and personal empowerment.

Education is more than a profession—it is my purpose. I am proud to serve not only as an educator but also as a leader and advocate for students, families, and colleagues.



Teacher of the Year Nominee

Raquel Preau | Friendship Blow Pierce

Teaching was not my original path, but it's undeniably my calling. I was chosen to educate, and I embrace that responsibility with passion. Shaped by both challenges and support as a student, I now strive to offer that same guidance to my own students.

My philosophy centers on teaching each child as if I'll never get another chance, staying consistent, and always reflecting. I create a structured, engaging, student-centered classroom that encourages curiosity and confidence.

Relationships are foundational to my work. I learn each student's strengths, support their growth, and connect with families as true partners. I prioritize literacy—my students publish books, compete in fluency contests, and collaborate in dynamic learning experiences that foster both skill and joy.

I reflect daily, adjusting lessons to meet diverse needs, seeking feedback, and improving my practice. Teaching with urgency and heart, I aim to ignite a lifelong love for learning in every child I serve.



Teacher of the Year Nominee

Kenneel Cyrus-Delves | Friendship Chamberlain

I am deeply passionate about early childhood education and committed to creating classrooms where curiosity, confidence, and a love for learning flourish. My philosophy is grounded in research and developmentally appropriate practices, informed by years of experience. I believe every child deserves a nurturing environment that builds essential cognitive, social-emotional, and problem-solving skills.



Inspired by Rita Pierson's belief that every child deserves a champion, I work to be that person—setting high expectations while offering compassion and support. More than 90% of my students consistently exceed PK4 requirements, often entering kindergarten already reading.

Beyond the classroom, I founded WEE Champs Camp, a school readiness program that improves academic preparedness and strengthens family engagement. I've designed ECE literacy curricula for the Summer Learning Academy, piloted new reporting systems, and led professional development for new teachers. I've also reimagined school events—turning Orientation Day into an interactive, joyful family experience.

My strength and purpose are rooted in faith. Being named Chamberlain's Teacher of the Year and a finalist for Friendship Teacher of the Year is a reflection of my unwavering commitment to students, families, and colleagues. Teaching is not just my profession—it is my calling.

Teacher of the Year Nominee

Tiffany Creagh Lee | Friendship Collegiate Academy

I became an educator because I believe in education's power to transform lives. My journey is fueled by a passion for nurturing a love of learning, creating inclusive spaces, and ensuring every student feels valued, seen, and heard. Education is more than academics—it's about shaping the whole child and building confidence.



My teaching philosophy centers on engagement, connection, and empowerment. I design a safe, student-centered classroom where learners explore their potential and develop critical thinking skills. By tailoring instruction to meet diverse needs, I ensure every student receives the support they need to thrive.

Beyond the classroom, I lead and advocate for schoolwide progress. I mentor teachers, collaborate on initiatives, and partner with families to bridge home and school—ensuring students have strong, consistent support systems.

Reflection is key to my growth. I continuously assess my methods, seek feedback, and embrace innovation. Education evolves, and I evolve with it—always striving to better serve my students.

At heart, I am a teacher, mentor, and lifelong learner. My mission is to uplift, challenge, and inspire every student who walks into my classroom. Teaching isn't just my career—it's my calling.

Teacher of the Year Nominee

Everton Nelson | Friendship Ideal

When I transitioned from Jamaica to teaching in the U.S., I faced challenges in classroom management and cultural adaptation. But I embraced feedback, refined my strategies, and stayed committed to ensuring behavior never obstructed learning. Today, I am a highly effective educator, known for creating a structured, inclusive, and engaging classroom where every student feels valued.

I build strong relationships with students, offering both support and high expectations. I am proud to be a teacher students seek out each morning—a trusted adult in their educational journey. Being part of transforming one of DC's lowest-performing schools into its highest-performing middle school has been deeply rewarding.

My classroom is a place where students are challenged, encouraged, and empowered to succeed. Teaching is more than a job—it is my purpose. I'm honored to make a lasting impact on the lives of the students I serve.



Teacher of the Year Nominee

Arnessia Middleton | [Friendship Online](#)

Teaching is more than delivering lessons—it's about building an environment where students feel safe, valued, and inspired to learn. I connect with my students on a personal level, knowing true learning begins when their hearts and minds are engaged. I aim to spark curiosity and empower them to become lifelong learners.



Teaching and learning are intertwined. I adapt my methods based on student feedback, engagement, and growth. By embracing innovation and integrating technology, I ensure a relevant, meaningful, student-centered education that fosters critical thinking and creativity.

Beyond the classroom, I lead and advocate for educational excellence. I collaborate with colleagues, mentor educators, and build systems that center student success. I believe in fostering professional learning communities and embracing change to drive positive outcomes.

My classroom is a space of collaboration, inclusivity, and emotional support. I promote a growth mindset, helping students see challenges as opportunities. By prioritizing both academic and social-emotional growth, I prepare students for success in school and life.

As a special educator, I draw on my personal experiences and evidence-based practices to meet diverse needs. Education is a deeply human endeavor, and my passion for teaching drives me to serve with empathy, adaptability, and a commitment to excellence.

Teacher of the Year Nominee

Caleb Franklin | Friendship Southeast

Education is more than knowledge—it's a bridge to opportunity. As a Black male educator, I know the power of representation, affirmation, and high expectations. Raised in Atlanta, I was shaped by teachers who saw my potential. Their belief in me inspired my mission to mentor and uplift students in underserved communities.



At Friendship Southeast, I create a classroom where students feel empowered and seen. Through culturally responsive teaching, I help them connect history to their lives and embrace their roles as change agents. One student, once two grade levels behind, confidently presented an analysis of Frederick Douglass' autobiography—a moment that confirmed my purpose.

I champion inclusion, ensuring all students thrive, including those with exceptional needs. By integrating technology and differentiating instruction, I spotlight student strengths and foster engagement.

My vision is to lead with equity and cultural responsiveness. Through mentoring, professional development, and community partnerships, I work to transform systems and amplify student voices. Teaching is my calling, and I'm committed to shaping a future where every learner can succeed.

Teacher of the Year Nominee

Cara Schiavone | Friendship Technology Preparatory

My journey as an educator began with my love for reading. Raised by a school librarian, I learned that books expand our world and that literacy empowers us to think critically and communicate effectively. I now strive to instill that same sense of agency in my students.



In my classroom, I set high expectations within a warm and welcoming environment. I understand that many students face systemic barriers and work to nurture their resilience while holding them to rigorous academic standards. Teaching English requires vulnerability, and I model that by drafting in front of my students and embracing the writing process alongside them.

Daily writing, peer reviews, and targeted feedback build their stamina and confidence. Assessment results, including MAP and DC CAPE scores, reflect their growth—but more importantly, they leave with greater self-belief and skill.

Beyond the classroom, I lead within my department, mentor new teachers, and support student success initiatives. Through our literary magazine and Friendship News Network, I create platforms for student voice and creativity.

My goal is simple: to help students become stronger readers, writers, and thinkers. With love, high expectations, and effective instruction, I support their growth every day.

Teacher of the Year Nominee

James Davis | Friendship Woodridge International

Physical education is more than a subject—it's a right. It empowers students with lifelong wellness habits, confidence, and leadership skills. In today's screen-driven world, I aim to help students take ownership of their health and well-being.

My gym is a safe, inclusive space where every child experiences the joy of movement, regardless of athletic ability. I teach the “why” behind physical activity so students can make informed, lasting choices. By using adaptive strategies and progressive learning, I ensure all students are engaged, successful, and challenged.

As an African American male educator, I understand the impact of representation. I set high expectations, provide support, and serve as a mentor. My relationships with students and families extend beyond the gym, promoting health and well-being in all areas of life.

Physical education enhances academics, builds resilience, and supports mental health. I strive to instill confidence and wellness habits that students will carry into adulthood. I may not change the world alone, but I know the values I teach will shape the future leaders who will.



Teacher of the Year

Past Recipients



Brandon McCoy
Friendship Ideal



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 2025 annual awards gala exceptional.

TOY Judges

Dr. Faith Gibson Hubbard
Eric McKinley King
Dr. Charlene Roach-Glymph

Thank You – Vendors & Consultants

Bash, LLC
Busy Bee Environmental Services
CEDC
Cyberstorm Digital
Imagine Photography
Sirius Company
Summit Print & Design, Inc.
Tilt Event Entertainment
Yes& Agency

TOY 2025 Committee

Candice Tolliver Burns
Morgan Syndor
David Lawery
Dr. Amber Mukasa
Dr. Marleen Greenleaf
Kimberly Campbell



Thank You to our...

2025 Sponsors

Chairman's Circle **Busy Bee Environmental Services**

Silver Sponsors

Hub International

Emerald Sponsors

CNB Bank

Amethyst Sponsors

Capitol Boiler Works

Castle Sprinkler and Alarm

Leonard Paper Company

Crystal Sponsors

USI Insurance

Steve Heger

Carol Seifert

UBS

Benefactors

4th Sector Solutions

Mylestone Plans

Robyn Silbey Consulting

FundEd Strategies

Contributors

The Mind Center


Study Smart Tutors


EmpowerK12

Maner Costerisan

Braintrust Tutors

Candice and Engel Burns





Janitorial &
Custodial Services

Handyman and Building
Engineering Services

HVAC / Boiler
Maintenance Services

Energy Management
Services

Construction
Project Management

Facilities Management
Services

Labor and
Moving Services



**Environmental
Services**



Busy Bee
Environmental Services

7826 Eastern Avenue, NW Suite 503
Washington, DC 20012
Office: 202-726-4256
Fax: 202-726-4236

Thrive with the Hive.

*Busy Bee is all you need to
keep your building humming!*





HUB International
proudly supports the
**Friendship Public
Charter School**
Teacher of the Year



Risk & Insurance | Employee Benefits | Retirement & Private Wealth

hubinternational.com (240) 403-2540



"Keeping The Heat and Air Conditioning On"

(800) 296-6881

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

THANKS FOR ALL THAT YOU DO.

City National® proudly supports
our communities.



Discover *The way up*® at cnb.com

City National Bank Member FDIC. City National Bank is a subsidiary of
Royal Bank of Canada. ©2023 City National Bank. All Rights Reserved.

1482531-02



All of us here at
Castle Sprinkler and Alarm, Inc.
thanks everyone at

Friendship Public Charter Schools

for allowing us to provide
sponsorship at your

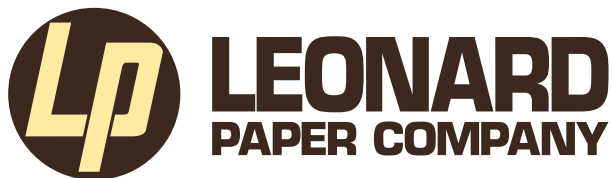
Teacher of the Year 2025!

We support your everlasting efforts in the
promotion of preparing all Students for
achieving higher education!

Your Friend In Fire Protection!

Ph# 301-927-7300
www.csafire.com

The Leonard
Paper Company
proudly supports
Friendship,
its teachers, and
their commitment
to world class
education.



A child's learning environment is a
teacher's working environment.

*Congratulations
& Thank You
to all Friendship Teachers*

Project Development Associates
Grant Writing | Fundraising

*Congratulations
to all of the
Teacher of the Year
Nominees*



UBS

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.

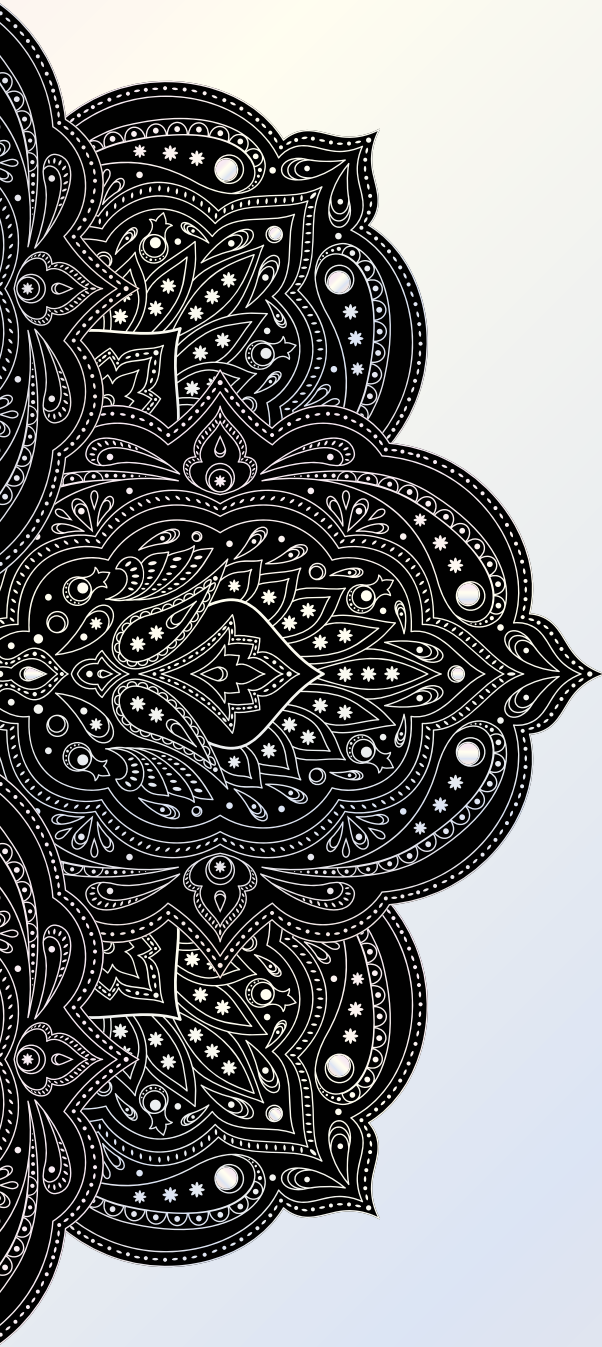


The road to college can be daunting. But thanks to nearly 30 years' experience guiding students to and through higher education, Friendship has developed one of the most comprehensive roadmaps for student success anywhere. Our culture is driven by great educators, academic rigors that cultivate curiosity and confidence, and the belief that every child can realize their greatest potential. Friendship empowers students to grow and thrive as scholars.

The Friendship system's knowledge-building approach to student instruction has produced remarkable results: Top-ranked 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 fast-paced 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.



Friendship Public
Charter School