

Celebrating a Tradition of Service

WESTOVER DAY 2024

We celebrate Westover Day in April, the month when Westover opened its doors in 1909. As we prepare for Westover Day this year, I am reminded of the incredible tradition of service that has been an integral part of the community since its founding. The spirit of service runs deep within the Westover community, guiding our students, alums, and faculty and staff, as they explore ways to make a positive difference in the world around them.

Community support plays a vital role in nurturing this tradition of service and empowering our students to become leaders who are committed to making a meaningful impact in their communities. Through your generous support on Westover Day, you can demonstrate your belief in the power of education to inspire change and create a better world for all.

There are several ways that you can be a part of Westover Day; make a donation, share and comment on Westover social media about this important Giving Day, and encourage your friends to donate. Your involvement is appreciated and makes a meaningful difference. Together, let's embrace the tradition of service that sets Westover apart and empowers our students to become leaders who change the world.

With joyful gratitude,

Polly Oppmann Fredlund
Head of School

As we approach the 115th anniversary of Westover's founding in April 1909, it's time to give back and celebrate the legacy of service that has been an essential part of our School's identity since its inception.

Through your generosity, you can help ensure that Westover will continue to make a difference in the lives of students — and that they, in turn, will make a difference in our world for decades to come. They are the change makers and compassionate leaders of tomorrow.

Your individual support by April 9th —whether through a financial contribution or by spreading the word — will help make Westover Day a resounding success and a tribute to the enduring spirit of service that defines Westover.

With gratitude,

Mara Keggi Ford
Director of the Westover Fund

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(203) 577-4646

WESTOVER DAY 4·9·24

Join us
in honoring our past,
celebrating our present,
and shaping our future.

The first 100 donors
on Westover Day will receive a limited edition print from the Agere Printing Press Collective.

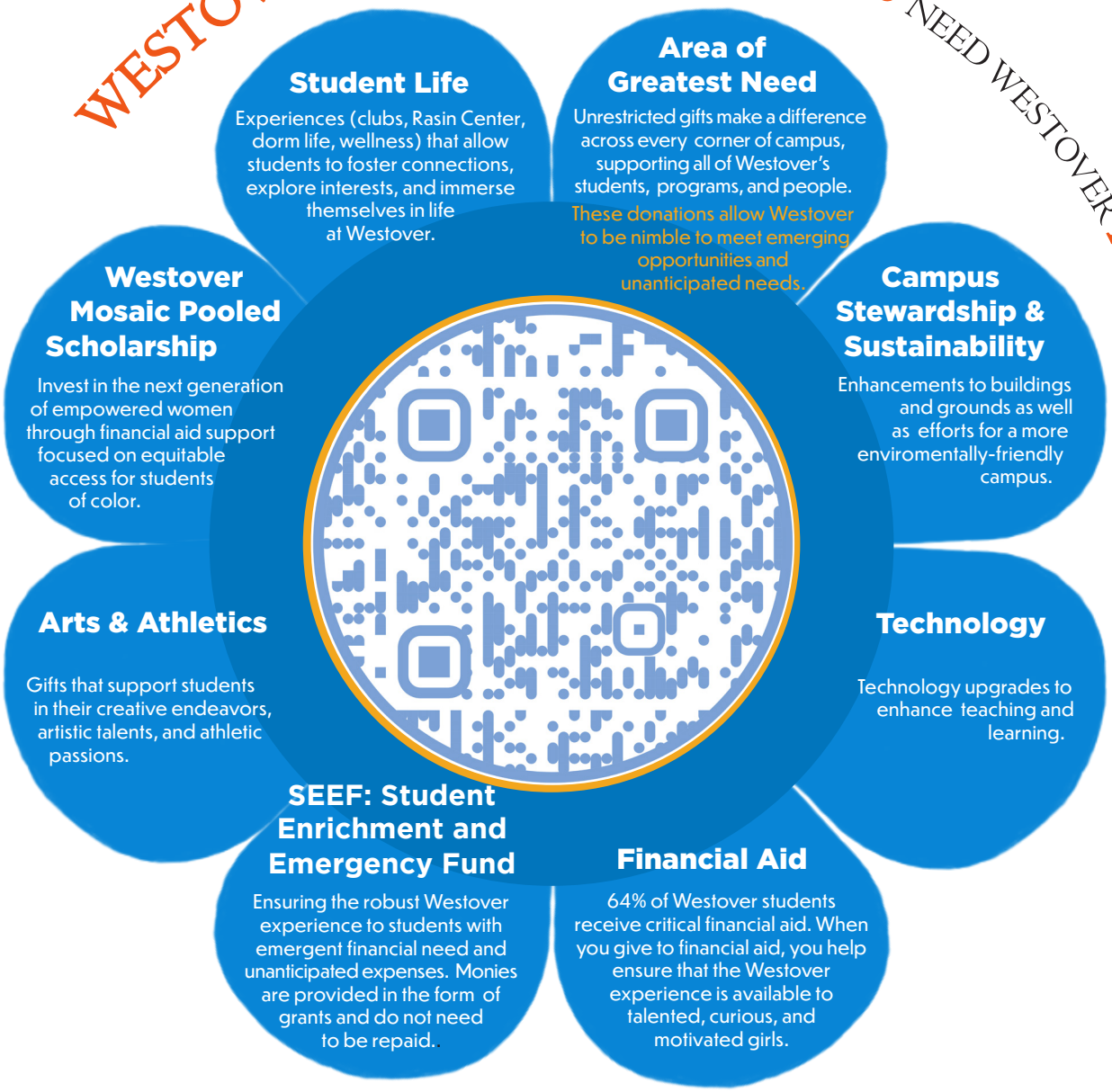
Make your gift
April 1st through 8th
and receive a
Westover charm
as our gift to you!



Westover Day is Tuesday, April 9, 2024

GIVE ONLINE! www.WestoverDay.WestoverSchool.org

WESTOVER NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT. GIRLS NEED WESTOVER MORE THAN EVER.



Gifts to the Westover Fund help cover the 39% gap between the revenue received from tuition and the full cost of educating a Westover student. There is strength in numbers – many gifts add up and make a difference. Westover Day is a great day to give and select the gift designation that is meaningful for you!

Westover Day is April 9th. GIVE TODAY!

LOG-ON
www.WestoverDay.WestoverSchool.org

SCAN
the QR code above

CALL
(203) 577-4646

MAIL
Note "Westover Day" on your check & mail it to Westover School
1237 Whittemore Road, Middlebury, CT 06762

A HISTORY of Service

By Rich Beebe P'10

Since Westover School was first opened in 1909 by Mary R. Hillard, the school community has fostered a commitment to service learning and community service — teaching its students that they are part of a larger world and that they had a responsibility to find ways to make it a better place for everyone.

From Westover's earliest days, the Dorcas Society has played an evolving role in encouraging students to help others. In its first decades, students in Dorcas gathered to sew and knit clothes for those in need and undertook work in the greater Waterbury community. Even in the earliest years of the School, their efforts extended to the wider world, from raising funds and sending supplies to support Sir Wilfred Grenfell's mission for the native populations of Labrador to taking part in World War I relief efforts by knitting clothes, making bandages, and raising money for war orphans in Europe.

Across the course of the School's history, Westover's service learning and community service have grown and expanded — fundraising efforts for a range of charitable organizations, students participating in dozens of hands-on activities off campus, from visiting residents of local convalescent homes to service trips helping disadvantaged communities in New York City, Kentucky, Louisiana, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico.

As a result of those opportunities, Westover graduates have pursued community service and philanthropic efforts in their day-to-day lives for more than a century — this mailing features examples of just a handful of those alumnae, ranging from members of the classes of 1960 to 2018, and how they reflect the words of the late Head of School Ann Pollina in their daily lives: "We need to send out a phalanx of girls who are going to do what the world needs, which is to embody those qualities of care and nurture and community that our culture is desperate for right now. The culture needs our girls."

> "[Mary Hillard's] girls were told all the time that she expected them to use their privileges and expanding opportunities for the betterment of all."
>
> — *Laurie Lisle '61, Author of Westover: Giving Girls a Place of Their Own*

Meet six grads living the Westover tradition of service

Tonia Lapham Wheeler '60
Lifelong Educator & Advocate for Women

For a decade starting in 2007, Tonia offered home stays to women judges from Afghanistan visiting the U.S. for judicial training. After Afghanistan fell to the Taliban in 2021, Tonia raised funds through Westover classmates to help pay travel expenses for one judge's family to come to the U.S.



Tonia and her husband Whit continue to provide one-on-one assistance to refugees from Afghanistan and other countries in resettlement programs.

"What I learned from Westover is how to work and live together."
— Tonia



Beverly Cutler '67 — A Judge Shares Her Legal Expertise

After she retired in 2009 following 32 years as a judge in Alaskan state courts, Beverly undertook pro bono work, helping approximately 300 individuals in the U.S. military retain their immigration status or complete their naturalization applications so they would have a chance at American citizenship.

Since March 2022, Beverly has also been serving as a mentor and residential host for a special group of refugees from Afghanistan — former women judges seeking to rebuild their lives and find new careers in the U.S.

"The passion to correct wrongful action must be strong in me. I love helping people with civil rights and social justice issues." — Beverly

Akeema Anthony '06 —Artist, Film Educator, Board Chair of School of Making Thinking



As an independent artist, film educator and researcher, Akeema works across literature, sound design, music composition, film and moving image media. As an NY4CA Artist Advocate, Akeema supports New York City-based artists in a variety of ways, ranging from housing and healthcare needs to advocating for fair wages for artists. Professionally, Akeema goes by Akeema-Zane.

"I am inspired to think through ways to activate, challenge, and restructure how we practice care for and to our most vulnerable communities and can credit my time at Westover as a generative container for helping to launch some of my critical thinking in this area." — Akeema



Sophia Pellegrini '18 — From Westover Community Service to Americorps VISTA

Sophia was selected for service with the AmeriCorp VISTA program, June 2023 through June 2024. She is a member of a team at the Broome County Council of Churches, a community-focused non-profit in Binghamton, NY. Sophia is most involved with the program's Community Hunger Outreach Warehouse (CHOW) program and Greater Good Grocery Bus, both of which focus on fighting food insecurity and promoting food equity.

"At Westover I was able to join the Community Service Team and volunteer with the Kentucky Service Program Trip during two summers. These experiences shaped me deeply and, ultimately, inspired me to join AmeriCorps as a VISTA member once I graduated college." — Sophia

Ibukun Ogunwomoju '17 —Expanding Her World Through Teach for America

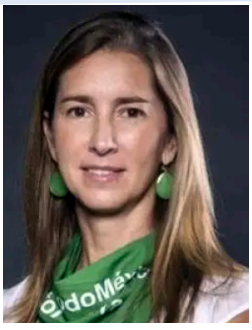
Ibukun worked for two years in Teach for America at a Title I middle school in the South Bronx, where glaring inequities confronted her every day. While continuing with her education to pursue a new career, Ibukun remains a member of the Teach for America Alumni Association Board to raise awareness about its efforts in support of excellent neighborhood schools and educational equity.

"My advice to current Westover students is this: Don't hesitate to embrace things that make you feel uncomfortable, but be mindful not to overwhelm yourself. Thinking back on my own experiences, there were times when I felt drawn to explore beyond the familiar boundaries of Westover. Service can serve as a powerful means of personal growth, so I encourage you to embrace it. You may find it to be a path towards liberation and self-discovery." — Ibukun



Regina Tamés '94 — A Women's Rights Activist

A lawyer with more than 25 years of experience on women's rights advocacy and litigation, Regina also has spent more than 10 years in management, fundraising, and leadership within women's rights organizations. Regina has taught undergraduate and master's-level courses on human rights and gender at universities in Mexico. She actively participates in several governing bodies of local organizations and has received awards for her outstanding work as a women's rights activist. She now serves as the deputy director of the Women's Rights Division at Human Rights Watch.



"My time at Westover is one of the most precious times I treasure from my youth. It was an opportunity to begin to be an autonomous person, with ideas and convictions of my own. The school environment was perfect for fostering those emotions and questions I had. It was extraordinary to share that time with so many women — classmates, but also teachers — and to learn values such as solidarity and empathy." — Regina

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Service Learning & Community Service 2024

Catherine Violet Hubbard Animal Sanctuary

On April 25, the entire Westover community — students, faculty, and staff — will take part in A Day of Service at the Catherine Violet Hubbard Animal Sanctuary in nearby Newtown, Connecticut. The Sanctuary was established by the Catherine Violet Hubbard Foundation, which promotes compassion and healing through human-animal connections.

The foundation was started in 2013 to commemorate and honor the life of Catherine Violet Hubbard, a six-year-old victim of the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy and passionate animal lover.

The sanctuary, located on 34 acres, offers programs that honor the human-animal connection, providing tools and skills that translate into compassionate and accepting human-human interactions. The sanctuary focuses on environmental stewardship, provides no-cost humane education curriculum and community workshops, aid for seniors to keep and care for their pets, and property revitalization efforts. Through caring, educating, and protecting animals, the sanctuary's programs have become a catalyst in cultivating human empathy.

The Day of Service is being organized through Westover's Rasin Center for Global Justice under Alana Grainsky, the Center's director. Teams of the School's students and adults will be assigned to work on a range of projects at the Sanctuary

- Applying a water-based sealer to the inside and outside of small and large animal paddocks;
- Working with Real Food CT staff in the Sanctuary's Community Garden (which provides fresh produce for food-insecure families) by removing winter coverings from the garden, tilling its soil, and planting crops;
- Preparing the Sanctuary's Pollinator Garden, which provides a critical habitat for birds and beneficial insects, by mulching the garden in preparation for 7,000 emerging plants;
- Cutting back overgrowth and removing fallen limbs along the Sanctuary's 1.5 miles of trails.

Alana noted that this year's Day of Service reflects how "Service Learning, Diversity & Inclusion, Environmental Sustainability, and Global Programs have come together through the Rasin Center to collaborate with renewed energy, creativity, and purpose in support of our School's ideals of understanding and engagement."

"We partner with faculty to think about curriculum and other school programs," Alana explained, "and to provide opportunities to connect learning and action, including socially and environmentally responsible service and travel experiences."

"The Center's unique synergy," she added, "supports our School's motto — To Think, To Do, To Be — by inspiring our students: to believe that they, as individuals and in partnership with others, truly have the power to effect change; to respond to the complexities and challenges of our world with courage and creativity; to find joy and meaning in their efforts."

By incorporating a greater emphasis on Service Learning in conjunction with Community Service programs,"the learning piece becomes more central and predominant. We first learn about the world and ourselves in the context of service to others, rather than just going out to volunteer in a soup kitchen or some other community service program," Alana said. This allows the students to better understand how their individual service fits into the broader issues and problems that are being addressed through their volnteer efforts.

"These conversations are so important, and can help the students to better understand their own place in the issue and how they can serve a purpose," Alana said. "Service Learning encourages students to creatively think about ways to take action to bring about change in their own lives and in the lives of others. You start with the learning and then move on to action."



Jennifer Hubbard at a recent visit to Westover

At the same time, students taking part in the School's Community Service Team will continue to work with a number of local organizations — including the Middlebury Convalescent Home, the Greater Waterbury Boys & Girls Club, and Companion Pet Rescue — as they have in the past.

The 2024 Dorcas Fair

This year's successful Dorcas Fair on January 28th, organized by the Class of 2025 under its three Dorcas Heads, is another example of how Service Learning and Community Service were integrated to educate the community and create a successful event, Alana said.

"One of the goals of Dorcas this year," she said, "was to strengthen the relations between the organization chosen to benefit from the event and the students organizing the event." This year, the students chose Sandy Hook Promise, a non-profit organization which was established in 2013 in the aftermath of the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting to work for gun violence prevention programs and policy making.

Last fall, the founders of Sandy Hook Promise were invited to come and speak at a Lumina gathering of the community about the work of the organization. As a result, members of the Westover community were informed beforehand about how their support of this year's Dorcas Fair would benefit the work of Sandy Hook Promise.











The Empty Bowls Project

"One of the big steps forward that we have made this year," Alana said, "was to add an academic curriculum component to our Service Learning program."

Working with art teacher Sara Poskas, the Rasin Center has introduced the Empty Bowls program to Westover. Empty Bowls is a grassroots movement by artists and craftspeople around the world to raise money for food-related charities to care for and feed the hungry in their communities.

"The idea," Alana said, "is that groups of people create bowls and then share a community meal together, with the proceeds going to a local food pantry or food program." Over the course of the School year, the Rasin Center has partnered with Sara to have students and adults in the Westover community make 150 bowls in the school's ceramics studio. The students who made bowls included those in the Chemistry in the Arts elective taught by science teacher Maggie Nunez-Fernandez '98. The organization that will receive the proceeds from the School's community meal will be Real Food CT.

Alana noted how the Empty Bowls Project will cross over with the Westover Day of Service. "The forty students who will be working in the Community Garden during the Day of Service at the Catherine Violet Hubbard Animal Sanctuary will also be benefiting Real Food CT since the produce that grows in that garden will support that organization's programs."

"For the Empty Bowls project," Alana remarked, "members of the School community also learned about the issues involved in food insecurity, researched and reached out to local organizations trying to address the issues, and organized the event."

Alana is partnering with students to identify other community-based organizations working on service concerns, and identifying opportunities to benefit their work.



WESTOVER SCHOOL

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CONTACT US!

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