



A New Year, a New Start for Better Discussions

**WE DID
IT!**

**WE REACHED OUR
\$250,000
FUNDRAISING
CHALLENGE GOAL
FROM THE STILL
WATER FOUNDATION!**

**TOUCHSTONES®
DISCUSSION PROJECT**

Touchstones Meets Matching-Funds Challenge

The Touchstones Board of Directors and staff are thrilled to announce that, thanks to your amazing support this year, we reached our \$250,000 fundraising goal!

Meeting this significant challenge from The Still Water Foundation of Texas means Touchstones will receive the full matching funds from the Foundation in 2026.

Thank you again to the donors who helped ensure this tremendous success.

Together, we are changing the world through transformational education!

Kindergarten Pilot Expands to 5 School Sites

*By Sharon Thomas
Director of K-12 and Family Engagement
Programs*

Our new kindergarten program, ***Touchpebbles Wonderstones, vol. A***, is now fully drafted and in a multi-school pilot phase designed to ensure that the materials are appropriate for kindergarten students, address the developmental needs of those learners, and are as teacher-friendly as possible.

Wonderstones, vol. A focuses on listening and cooperation skills as foundational building blocks for young learners that support later learning in how to collaborate with others and engage in civil discourse. The program involves a variety of print and nonprint texts from cultures around globe that teachers use as "touchstones" to spark student discussion and to practice cooperation.

During the first semester of the current school year, our sole pilot teacher was **Guiliana de Grazia** at International

pilot program to four additional school sites and their generous teachers:

- **Sandy Bracy**, Alcuin School (Dallas TX), a independent toddler-12 Montessori + IB school
- **Heather Campos**, St. Jerome Academy (Hyattsville MD), an independent toddler-8 Montessori + classical curriculum Catholic school
- **Elizabeth Wiegand**, Esperanza Academy Charter School (Philadelphia PA), a K-12 public charter school
- **The Kindergarten Team at Learning Community Charter School** (Jersey City NJ), a preK-8 public charter school

During this semester, these teachers will use the materials at their own pace to provide feedback and suggestions for

Montessori Schools--West Chester (PA), who undertook the challenge of implementing the lessons as we were writing them in real time. Her flexibility, experience, and feedback were extraordinarily helpful for us in shaping each lesson according to the specific needs of kindergarteners.

For the second semester, with the volumette fully drafted, we expanded our

improvement before the full launch of the program in the fall.

Touchstones is incredibly excited about the kindergarten program and has begun drafting the first-grade volumette as well. We thank all of our pilot teachers for their enthusiasm, feedback, and ideas in making our K-2 programs as engaging, inspiring, and helpful to our youngest learners as possible!

TOUCHSTONES[®]
DISCUSSION PROJECT

Kindergarten Program Pilot Teachers

Sandy Bracy Alcuin School Dallas TX	The Kindergarten Team Learning Community Charter School Jersey City NJ
Heather Campos St. Jerome Academy Hyattsville MD	
Guiliana de Grazia International Montessori Schools West Chester PA	
Elizabeth Wiegand Esperanza Academy Charter School Philadelphia PA	





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