



# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

**Building a World-Class  
School – Together**





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# A Letter From David Perry

Founder, Board Chair, and  
Interim Head of School

## Dear Gaia Community,

*It is with gratitude and excitement that I share with you Gaia School's first Annual Report. As one of the school's founders, and in my current role as both Board Chair and Interim Head of School, I've had the unique privilege of seeing Gaia evolve from a shared dream into a growing and purpose-driven school community.*

*This report is more than a summary of our year. It is our first full expression of who we are, why we exist, and how we are building for the future together.*

*From the beginning, Gaia School has been grounded in some simple but powerful ideas: that children flourish when they are connected to nature, challenged by meaningful academics, and nurtured by a caring and inclusive community. Our mission calls us to recognize each student's unique gifts, and to prepare them not just for academic success, but for a life of purpose, adaptability, and joy. That vision has never felt more important than it does today.*

*Over our first three and a half years, we've made demonstrable progress toward realizing this mission. We've grown our student body from zero to over 115 children, and our faculty to 31 teachers and administrators. We have launched a comprehensive Waldorf inspired curriculum, and expanded our physical campus, always guided by our core values of: building expertise, connection to nature, health, community, and inclusiveness.*

*These values live in our daily rhythms: in the laughter coming from forest classrooms, the bilingual conversations echoing across the campus, the farm-grown food from our kitchen, and the deep relationships shared among students, teachers, and families.*

*This year also marks the launch of our long-term Strategic Plan, a living document that charts our growth over the next 3 to 10 years. It documents our plans to expand to include a high school, a special education program, and specialized classrooms; to build inspiring new facilities grounded in sustainability and nature; and to become a beacon of holistic education not just for Costa Rica, but for the world.*

*I am deeply grateful to my fellow co-founders and board members, Georgi Maule-Ffinch, Thomas Hartland-Mackie, Nasiba Hartland-Mackie and Reese Langston for their passion, leadership, and unwavering commitment to this mission. Their vision, insight, and generosity have been instrumental to shaping Gaia's foundation and guiding its future.*

*Thank you for believing in Gaia. Thank you for walking this path with us. And thank you for helping us build a school that not only prepares students for the world as it is, but inspires them to imagine and build the world as it could be.*

*With appreciation and hope,  
David Perry*



## Mission

The Gaia School of Costa Rica is a community of people committed to fostering a joy of learning and a deep connection to Mother Nature. We offer a rigorous educational approach in which the unfolding of each student's unique gifts is recognized and developed through a holistic and developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Our graduates are inspired and empowered to pursue their passions and gain the skills needed to have a positive impact on the world.

# Founding Values

At Gaia School in Santa Teresa, Costa Rica, we are building a thriving educational community rooted in academic excellence, environmental responsibility, and personal growth. Located on 120 acres of jungle, our campus is more than a backdrop—it plays an active role in shaping how children learn, grow, and connect with the world.

Our approach is grounded in Waldorf-inspired principles that integrate intellectual, emotional, and practical learning. We believe education should unfold naturally, helping each student discover their own unique path in life. Our five core values guide this vision and inform our daily practices:

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- **Expertise**
  - **Connection to nature**
  - **Health**
  - **Community**
  - **Inclusiveness**

## **Expertise**

We believe that the greatest gift we can give students is a lifelong love of learning and the ability to develop expertise. Our rigorous academic standards provide students with the foundation to become experts in the fields that interest them so they have freedom in their adult lives to adapt to the changing world around them.

## **Connection to nature**

Environmental stewardship is a cornerstone of our curriculum and our impact in the local, regional and global community. We believe that we must have a healthy planet for our children to have a healthy future. We seek to foster an appreciation for nature and to help students build the skills necessary to protect it.

## **Health**

We recognize that the health of the planet and the health of people are inextricably connected. We provide a healthy environment free of toxins; we provide healthy, whole, unadulterated food; and we foster healthy relationships and emotional intelligence, all with the goal of creating graduates who know how to create healthy lives for themselves.

## Community

Recognizing our interconnectedness to all things, relationships are at the center of Gaia School. We believe that a healthy school requires the buy-in and contributions of the students, teachers, parents, and the broader community. We actively seek to foster that community.

## Inclusiveness

The greater Cóbano community reflects a wide diversity of nationalities and socioeconomic backgrounds. Gaia School is an inclusive space where all families are welcome.

To help sustain this diversity, we offer a scholarship program for students with financial need and a bilingual curriculum that supports fluency in both English and Spanish.



Our long-term vision is to graduate students who are confident, compassionate, and equipped to make a positive impact. Whether they become farmers restoring ecosystems, artists inspired by the land, or leaders advancing global solutions, Gaia graduates will be grounded in values and capable of navigating an evolving world.



## Strategic Vision & Growth

From the beginning, Gaia School of Costa Rica has been more than a school, it has been an experiment, and hopefully an example, of what education can be.

This past year, our Board has come together to define a strategic vision for Gaia's future, one that expands our reach and moves Gaia toward becoming a model for world-class education rooted in developmentally appropriate curriculum and the environment.

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## Our Vision

We envision Gaia School as a bilingual K-12 school of global caliber, serving a diverse student body in a learning environment grounded in Waldorf-inspired pedagogy, sustainability, social equity, and academic rigor.

We aim to graduate students who are not only fluent in English and Spanish, but fluent in emotional intelligence, systems thinking, ecological stewardship, and personal purpose.

Our vision is to grow intentionally to serve the needs of the growing population of the Nicoya Peninsula and of international families who are inspired by our vision.



# Our 3-Year Strategic Priorities

## 2025–2028

Over the next three years, we are focused on strengthening our foundation and building the next chapter of Gaia School through five major priorities:

### 1. Program Expansion

Launch high school grades beginning in 2027, with a curriculum that integrates academic excellence, environmental science, global citizenship, and artisan/entrepreneurial pathways.

### 2. Campus Development

Develop a campus master plan that integrates learning spaces with the natural landscape, including an amphitheater, high school buildings, sports and arts facilities, and sustainable infrastructure, solar power, and a regenerative learning farm.

### 3. Faculty Investment

Recruit and retain exceptional faculty through competitive compensation, professional development, and an organizational culture that honors teacher well-being and mastery.

### 4 Financial Sustainability

Strengthen long-term financial health through expense control, increased enrollment, tuition assistance, and the development of a scholarship endowment campaign strategy.

### 5. Community Engagement

Deepen relationships with local families through the launch of the Parent Association. Attract international supporters and mission-aligned partners who share our values of inclusion, biodiversity, and innovation in education.



Soy la AVENA  
Suave y callada  
No me basta el suelo  
Ni la lluvia helada  
No envidio tierras fértiles  
Ni sol ardiente  
Cresco en el valle,  
Hoy me siento  
Cuerpo y alma  
de caballo  
calma.



Soy el ARROZ



Soy el ARROZ  
Kal Gabriel

# Our 10-Year Strategic Priorities

## 2025–2035

This shared vision is ambitious, but possible because it is grounded in the strength of our community and our shared values.

Looking further ahead, we hope to become a beacon of holistic, nature-based education for the world. Over the next decade we will:

- Build a model regenerative campus that demonstrates circular resource systems, ecological restoration, and outdoor learning.
- Become a fully accredited bilingual K–12 international school with a diverse student population and a globally relevant curriculum.
- Serve as a training center for educators, hosting exchanges, conferences, and certification programs focused on sustainability and bilingual education.
- Expand our scholarship program to ensure broad access and cultural diversity.
- Position Gaia as a thought leader in international education, contributing to conversations on climate, equity, and educational innovation.



# Leadership and the Future of Gaia School

Midway through the 2024-2025 school year, our beloved Head of School, Reese Langston, had to step down due to a serious illness.

During this unexpected transition, our President of the Board, David Perry, stepped in to provide leadership, stability, and a sense of calm across the community.

Recognizing the importance of finding the right person to lead us into our next chapter, Gaia partnered with Search Associates to conduct an international search for our next Head of School.

# Recruitment Process

40

accomplished educators **from around the world** applied

17

semi-finalists selected for follow-up interviews

4

finalists invited to Costa Rica **from China, Oman, Spain, and Hawaii** for on-site visits



Guided by the collective vision of our faculty, families, and Board, the search for Gaia's next Head of School became more than a recruitment process, it was a reflection of who we are as a community.

We are honored to announce that Mr. Brayan Muñoz will step into this role beginning July 2026. A proud Costa Rican with extensive international experience, Brayan brings a unique blend of local understanding and global vision.

Over the past decade, he has held senior leadership roles in international and bilingual schools across Asia and Latin America, including positions as Executive Manager for School Improvement at the ISA International Education Group in China, Director of Data and Assessment at ISA Science City International School, and Executive Principal at Hefei IVY Experimental Academy, where he established two international schools and led accreditation processes. Earlier in his career, he also served at the Pan-American School in Costa Rica as MYP and Department Coordinator.

Brayan holds a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Texas, a Certificate in School Management and Leadership from Harvard University, and a Bachelor's Degree in Biochemistry from Westminster College in the United States. He is also an alum of the Red Cross Nordic United World College in Norway.

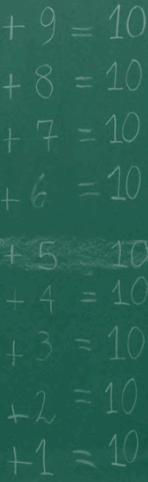
Deeply aligned with Gaia's Waldorf-inspired, bilingual, and nature-connected philosophy, Brayan is passionate about whole-child education, community engagement, and environmental stewardship. His hiring marks an exciting new chapter for Gaia, one that will continue to strengthen our programs, deepen our values, and expand our impact.



## Academic Program

As Gaia continues to grow, our academic vision expands with it. Each year we build upon what has been learned, strengthening our academic framework and preparing for the next stage of growth.

In 2025, this evolution took shape through two major initiatives: the early planning of Gaia's future High School and the launch of the Supported Learning Program, both essential steps toward a more inclusive, world-class educational journey that reflects Gaia's purpose and values.



## High School

This year we entered the early stages of strategic planning for what will become Gaia's high school program. We plan to expand the grades upward as our current students progress, and so we will begin 9th grade programming in the fall of 2027.

Our current number of 6th and 7th grade students is small, and if those numbers remain the same, we will not have a full cohort of 9th graders until fall of 2029. With that said, we intend to take full advantage of this lead time for planning, construction, and recruitment.

Our goal, is to create a world-class high school, and so it is important that we use the next few years to collaborate on a shared vision for the physical plant, personnel, and curriculum that such a program will require.

While the bulk of our construction up to this point has necessarily focused on the lower school's needs, we have also begun to create important features of the high school physical plant.

In particular, we have completed work on infrastructure projects that will make it possible to increase the number of permanent physical structures on our expansive property.



Gaia's faculty and staff have grown as we have added a new grade each year. This growth will necessarily continue as we move into high school education, particularly as we work to make world-class expertise available to our students. We have enjoyed success in recruiting wonderful teachers to Gaia over the last several years, and we intend to take full advantage of all the attractions our unique location can offer to outstanding faculty from around the world.

In this way we hope to bring in excellent teachers, with extensive training and expertise, on both a short- and longer-term basis. This might mean everything from month-long visitors brought in to teach a main lesson block, to long-term commitments from folks ready to spend several years in Costa Rica, and everything in between. We also expect to take advantage of remote online offerings from experts around the world to make excellent holistic education a reality in Santa Teresa.



Finally, we will work collaboratively over the next few years to create a high school curriculum rooted in Waldorf principles, tailored to the unique time and place we find ourselves and the technology that is available to us.

# Supported Learning Program

This year marked a pivotal moment for Gaia School with the launch of our Supported Learning Program, a cornerstone initiative that advances our commitment to inclusive education.

In its inaugural phase, the program has established a Learning Support Department, designed to provide individualized guidance for students who benefit from additional academic or social assistance.

Through customized learning plans, small-group interventions, and collaborative strategies with classroom teachers, we ensure that every child has a place within the Gaia community.



The 2025 school year began with the inclusion of two remarkable students who are supported by full-time shadow teachers in the classroom. These dedicated educators offer one-on-one assistance, enabling meaningful participation in daily activities while fostering independence and self-confidence. Sensory garden activities and outdoor exploration have sparked joy and measurable progress in ways conventional settings often cannot.



Our long term vision is inspired by the holistic, land-based philosophies of Camphill communities and Ruskin Mill Trust in the UK.

We aim to establish a dedicated school on our campus for students with more intensive support needs. This facility will offer specialized therapies, vocational training, and potentially residential options, all grounded in practical crafts and therapeutic engagement with the land.

Shared facilities like nature trails, communal dining spaces, and art studios will foster meaningful connections between all students, promoting mutual learning and dismantling barriers.



## Family and School Programs

Strong communities create strong schools. At Gaia, programs that connect families, educators, and daily life, such as our Food Program, Parent Education, and Parent Association, play a vital role in shaping a cohesive, participatory learning environment.



# Food Program

At Gaia School, we believe that caring for our bodies and caring for the planet go hand in hand. That's why our meals are centered around a whole food, plant-based menu that is both nourishing for children and gentle on the earth.



# The Food

Every day, children share wholesome snacks and lunches together. Mealtimes are not just about eating, they are about community. Students try new foods side by side, encouraging one another and discovering flavors they might never have tried on their own.

Hand in hand, the children and teachers sing a blessing song to give thanks to Mother Earth for the abundance she provides, fostering gratitude and awareness.





# The Food

This year, we deepened our commitment to local and organic foods by partnering with Kura Organic Foods, a Costa Rican company dedicated to growing produce without chemicals.

Kura cares for five farms located at different elevations across the country, which means our children are enticed to “eat the rainbow” by enjoying colorful fruits and vegetables alongside beans, legumes, nuts, and seeds.

We also have direct relationships with local farmers through, a local organization started by organic and regenerative farmer Ensi Gholami Retana. Organika provides Gaia School with lentils, beans, rice, salt and peanut butter, all grown without the use of chemicals by small, local producers.



# The Farm

Our vision for the farm continues to blossom. While we are looking for a farm manager to help us move toward a fully Biodynamic farm, the teaching garden has already become a magical place of discovery for the children.



# The Farm

Here, students roll up their sleeves and take part in planting, harvesting, and tasting the gifts of the earth. This year, the garden overflowed with mangoes, starfruit, water apples, pitaya, cherries, turmeric, hibiscus, and limes; all of which the children delighted in picking, sharing, and sampling together.

Each grade had special projects that connected their garden work with their classroom learning. The 1st graders planted and harvested beans, then used their imaginations to craft tiny elemental figurines and homes from natural materials and paints. The 2nd graders grew potatoes, beans, and flowers, and proudly made herbal teas for the whole school community by harvesting, drying, and blending garden herbs.



The 3rd graders embarked on a hands-on “Grain to Bread” journey, where they learned the traditional Central American process of transforming maize into tortillas. From soaking the corn with lime to cooking tortillas on an open fire stove, they experienced each step with their own hands. The 4th graders grew corn, beans, cotton, pumpkins, herbs, and flowers, and also learned to make natural sunscreen from local plants over the fire. They crafted teas and joined in the “Grain to Bread” project.

The 5th and 6th graders took on three larger projects: a botany science study, a weaving project using native fibers they harvested and processed themselves, and a waste management initiative. As part of their sustainability work, they made paper, partnered with WaterKeeper for a beach clean-up, and learned how collected plastics can be upcycled into concrete building blocks.

Through these projects, the garden has become much more than a place to grow food, it is a living classroom where curiosity, responsibility, and respect for the earth take root.



The Food and Farm Program continues to serve as a cornerstone of Gaia School's mission to nourish both body and spirit by fostering a love of healthy food, gratitude for nature's gifts, and the skills to live in harmony with the earth and oneself.

# The People

At Gaia School, we're elevating our food program with a renewed focus on quality, nutrition, and ingredients grown on our own land, guided by our new Executive Chef and a team dedicated to nourishing children with meals that truly matter.



This year, we are excited to welcome Executive Chef Rob Essa to our community. Chef Rob brings creativity and dedication to the kitchen and an extensive knowledge of edible and medicinal plants. He is working closely with nutritionist Maria Laura Matamoros to design meals that are not only delicious but also perfectly suited for the nutritional needs of growing children. He is also collaborating with our gardening teacher, Viktorija, to introduce more kid-friendly meals that highlight ingredients grown right here in our school garden.

Over the summer, our kitchens received a complete makeover, with brand-new appliances that have transformed the way we cook for the children. These improvements have allowed us to expand our offerings, and now the children enjoy the comfort of freshly baked goods at snack time. Looking ahead, we are especially excited to introduce a much-anticipated "pizza day."

The dough will be made from scratch using Italian wheat flour, chosen with care because of its higher quality and gentler effect on digestion compared to many wheat products commonly found in the Americas. Italy's strict food regulations, along with those of the EU, ensure that this flour is free from harmful additives, pesticides, and contaminants. By making this choice, we are giving children a healthier, tastier option while also teaching them that food quality matters.





## Development Area



# Financial Aid & Scholarship Fund

At Gaia, we believe that every child who is a strong fit for our educational philosophy and values should have the opportunity to attend, regardless of their family's financial circumstances.



Our commitment to inclusivity means that financial capacity should never be a barrier for mission-aligned families. Through a robust and growing scholarship program, we strive to ensure that access to a Gaia education is based on alignment and potential, not income.

Most of our students who are part of our scholarship fund were born in Costa Rica and therefore hold Costa Rican nationality. However, many come from international families, which enriches their cultural and linguistic identity with traditions, languages, and customs from around the world.

For example, a child may be Costa Rican by birth but grow up in a French or American household. This cultural richness defines our school community and allows us to provide a truly multicultural learning environment.



# 37%

of our students receive some form of financial aid or scholarship.

Among them, 37 are Costa Rican-born students, alongside others from Nicaragua, Colombia, Australia, and the United States, each contributing their heritage to the diversity of Gaia School.

Until now, the scholarship fund has been sustained by the founding families together with a small group of donors. However, our long-term goal is to establish an endowment fund, which will make the scholarship program self-sustaining and allow us to expand support to more families in need.





The scholarship application process is both rigorous and transparent. Each family undergoes a full economic evaluation conducted by a social worker, who carefully reviews their situation and issues a recommendation to the Scholarship Committee. Based on this assessment, the committee decides whether to award a scholarship and the percentage of financial aid to be granted.

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Through this joint effort, Gaia School ensures that its mission and vision come to life: providing an integral and transformative education, accessible to diverse families, honoring the legacy of Waldorf pedagogy while responding to the urgent needs of today's world.

## Personal Stories

# An Opportunity that Transforms Lives

*We are a family of four: my husband, our two children, and I. We come from a small community, where it is not always easy to find good educational opportunities. For years we have worked with effort and dedication so that our children can study and build a better future.*

*When we first learned about this school, what struck us most was the quality of the education and the values it promotes. We wanted our daughter not only to receive academic knowledge, but also to grow as an integral person, with strong principles and clear goals. And here we found exactly that.*





*Our experience as part of the school community has been very positive. We have felt welcomed and supported by the teachers and other families, in an environment where our daughter feels safe and motivated to learn.*

*Receiving the scholarship has been a great blessing and an immense relief. Without this support, it would be impossible for us to cover all school expenses. The scholarship gave us back hope and allowed us to dream big for our daughter's future. Thanks to it, we were able to enroll her in a school that would otherwise have been out of our reach.*

*The changes in our daughter are evident. Academically she has progressed a lot, but the most valuable thing is seeing her grow in confidence, responsibility, and values. She has made healthy friendships and feels part of something important.*

*One of the achievements we are most proud of is her improvement in English, a fundamental tool for her life and future.*

*One of the most special moments for us has been seeing her adapt with such joy. Knowing that she happily attends school every day fills us with peace of mind and gratitude.*

*Looking ahead, we dream that she can continue studying through to university, find a career that inspires her, and contribute positively to society.*

*To those who support the scholarship fund, we want to say thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Your support does more than cover tuition: it transforms lives and opens paths. You are planting seeds of hope in our daughter's future, and that is an invaluable gift for our family.*



## Personal Stories

### Our Story at Gaia

*We are a family of four: my husband is French and I am Spanish. We met in India while practicing yoga, and ten years ago we decided to settle in Costa Rica, a place we fell deeply in love with and where we wanted to raise our children. Here Samira was born, who is now 9, and Milán, who is 7.*

*From the very beginning, we knew that another way of educating was possible. When we found Gaia, we felt that at last we had discovered what we had been searching for: a school that combines discipline with creativity, that deeply respects the stages of childhood, that fosters individuality, and that places nature at the heart of learning. A school that understands that pressure and competition do not support growth, but instead promotes curiosity, movement, and community life.*



*Being part of this school community has been very enriching. Communication with the team is always clear and close, and we truly feel included in our children's educational journey. Receiving the scholarship was decisive for us. It was what allowed us to take the step and offer our children the education we had always dreamed of. Thanks to this support, we have been able to cover tuition and ensure that Samira and Milán enjoy this experience.*

*The changes in them have been remarkable. They go happily to school every morning, without pressure or fear. They have developed a deep respect for nature, know how to create with their hands and imagination, and feel more confident both socially and emotionally. For me, as a mother, mornings are completely different: my children wake up excited to go to school, something that fills me with joy.*



*We also have concrete examples that make us very proud. Samira has learned to knit with needles and yarn, creating crafts that are truly surprising for her age. Milán, who previously had difficulties socializing and speaking in public, is now a chatty, sociable child with great self-confidence.*

*Our dream is that they grow up to be independent, with critical thinking and a profound respect for nature and their surroundings.*

*To those who make the scholarship fund possible, we want to say that you are doing invaluable work. Unfortunately, this type of education is not within reach for all families, and thanks to your support, we and many other parents can give our children the opportunity to grow in such an environment. We firmly believe that this is the education of the future.*

*Thank you so much for making it possible.*



# Nonprofit Status & the Role of Friends of Gaia

Gaia School is a nonprofit institution, which means that every dollar invested or raised goes directly back into the school. Rather than generating profits, all resources are reinvested in ways that strengthen our community, whether through improvements in infrastructure, professional growth for our teachers, or programs that enrich the lives of our students.



A few examples of this commitment can be seen in initiatives such as our surf program, after-school activities, subsidized bus fees for students, and dedicated transportation for teachers, all of which are supported and sustained by the school. These investments ensure that children have access to a holistic education and that our staff is supported in meaningful ways.

To help us sustain and expand this impact, we rely on the generosity of donors who give through our U.S.-based 501(c)(3) organization, Friends of Gaia. This entity was created to make giving more accessible and tax-deductible for our supporters in the United States. Friends of Gaia serves as a bridge between our international donor community and the projects, scholarships, and programs that bring lasting change to our school.

Through their contributions, donors not only ensure that Gaia School continues to thrive but also directly support our mission of nurturing children, families, and educators in a way that strengthens both our community and the planet.

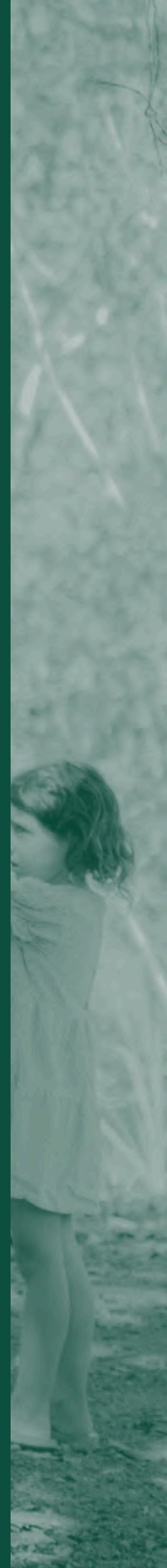




## Teacher Training

Gaia's approach to education is rooted in the care and intention of the educators who hold each child's journey.

We strengthen their work through training, mentorship, and a vision for teacher preparation that continues to evolve.



Teachers are the heart of Gaia School. Their steady presence and continued growth shape the daily experience of every child.

From the beginning, Gaia has invested deeply in building a faculty that blends the strengths of Waldorf education with the unique character of this region. Many of our teachers come from the local community, bringing an understanding of the land, culture, and people that roots Gaia firmly in this place. Others bring Waldorf or international teaching backgrounds, contributing a breadth of experience that enriches our educational tapestry.





Waldorf teacher training is both rigorous and holistic, uniting child development, pedagogy, artistic training, movement, and a commitment to personal growth. Whether teachers join Gaia with a Waldorf background or arrive through more traditional pathways, all of them engage in ongoing Waldorf training each year.

During the summer months, teachers travel to programs around the world to deepen their practice, and every February Gaia hosts on-campus trainings that bring leading educators and mentors directly to our faculty. Through our mentoring program, seasoned Waldorf teachers generously support colleagues who are newer to the approach, helping cultivate a culture of collaboration and continuous growth.



As Gaia matures, so does our vision. In the coming years, Gaia will develop a teacher training initiative that not only strengthens our own faculty but also serves educators throughout Costa Rica and beyond.

This program will integrate the foundations of Waldorf pedagogy with emerging research in topics such as human development, bilingual education, coherence and nervous system regulation, creativity, and the growing global conversation about the essential human capacities needed in an AI-driven world.

Our aim is to create a place where teachers from diverse backgrounds can gather to study, practice, and grow, where artistic work, nature-based experiences, developmental understanding, and cutting-edge research come together in service of education. Gaia's campus, surrounded by the natural beauty of this place, offers an ideal setting for this work.

Over time, Gaia aspires to become a regional and international hub for teacher development: a center where educators, innovators, and researchers meet to cultivate the capacities that make teaching a transformative art. In strengthening teachers, we strengthen the future of education itself, and the future of every child we serve.





# Finance Overview

Building a  
Sustainable  
Future Together

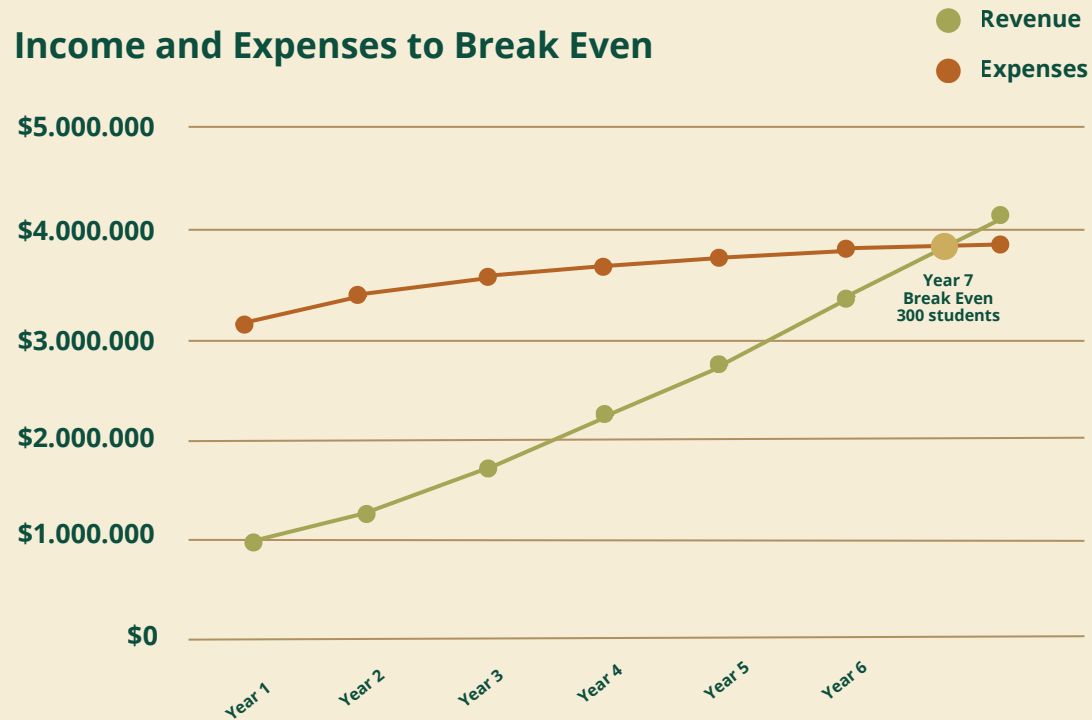


At Gaia School, we are building a long-term vision grounded in both financial sustainability and educational excellence. As a young and growing institution, we are deeply grateful to our founding families and early donors whose generosity has been instrumental in supporting not only our day-to-day operations but also the capital investments needed to bring our campus to life.

In our current stage of development, operational expenses are still supplemented by this core group of supporters. However, our long-term financial model is designed for self-sufficiency.

Based on our projections, we expect to reach operational breakeven when enrollment reaches approximately 300 students, ensuring that tuition and program income will fully support the ongoing costs of running the school.

As of this fall, we serve about 115 students, with a continued growth trajectory planned to reach break-even in the next 6-7 years.



One of Gaia's enduring commitments is inclusiveness, and a critical component of that commitment is our scholarship program. Today, approximately 37% of our students receive some level of financial aid, and we plan to maintain that level of accessibility as we grow. To support this sustainably, we are working to expand our Scholarship Endowment, allowing us to reduce dependence on annual fundraising and to provide long-term support for a diverse student population.

While we progress toward reaching operating breakeven in the years ahead, our vision for facilities growth is ambitious and ongoing. As we expand enrollment, we are also planning a phased development of our campus infrastructure to support a world-class education.



Our next phase includes specialized classrooms, athletic facilities, and student boarding options, and we will continue to invest in these capital projects to ensure we can meet the needs of our growing community.

We are fortunate that the same founding donors who have helped build Gaia thus far are committed to continuing their support for these capital expansions. Their vision and generosity ensure that Gaia can grow responsibly, maintaining the highest standards of education while remaining rooted in our mission and values.



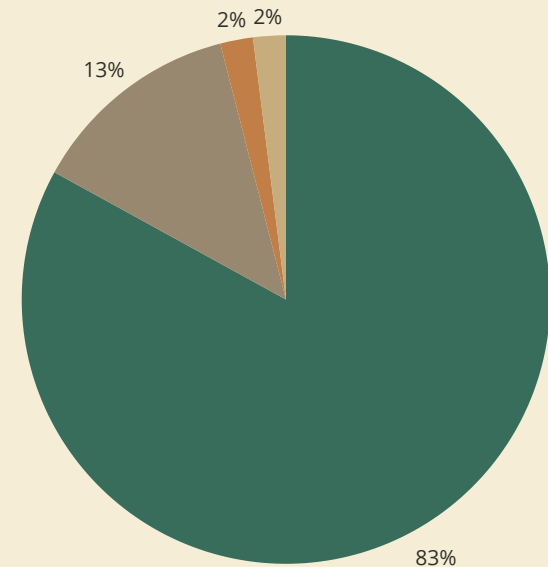
In short, our financial strategy reflects our belief in shared responsibility, long-term planning, and stewardship of both our resources and our community. Together with families, donors, and partners, we are building a thriving, resilient school for generations to come.

# Financial Results | 2024-2025

Earned Revenue		
Tuition	\$ 455,858	13%
Enrollment	\$ 81,214	2%
Other Income	\$ 62,994	2%
<b>Sub-total Earned Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 600,066</b>	<b>17%</b>

Contributed Revenue		
Capital Contributions	\$ 3,029,717	83%
<b>Sub-total Contributed Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 3,029,717</b>	<b>83%</b>

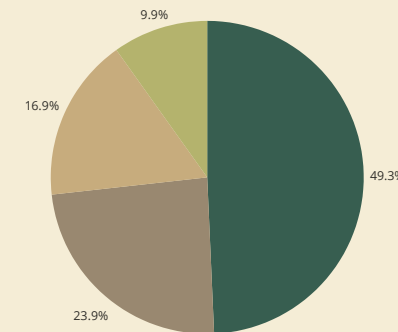
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 3,629,783</b>
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# Financial Results | 2024-2025

Operational expenses last year were approximately 2.5 million dollars, which represented about \$31,000 per student. We expect these expenses to increase modestly as enrollment grows; however, the cost per student will decrease, allowing us to move toward financial sustainability. Based on current projections, we anticipate reaching break-even at around 300 students, enabling the school to operate sustainably while continuing to expand programs and services.

Expenses		
Educational Programs	\$ 1,274,162	35%
Administrative	\$ 609,299	17%
Utilities and Insurance	\$ 420,039	12%
Other Expenses	\$ 239,279	7%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 2,542,779</b>	



In addition to operating expenses, the school invested approximately \$1 million in new facilities and infrastructure to accommodate ongoing enrollment growth, as outlined below:

Capital Expenses	
Infrastructure	\$ 1,047,747

# Forecast | 2025-2028

Looking ahead to the next three years, we expect total expenses to remain relatively stable even as revenue and enrollment increase, resulting in a decline in cost per student to about \$21,000 per student 2027-2028

At the same time, we expect to continue investing in infrastructure, increasing from about \$1 million this year to approximately \$2 million in the 2027–28 school year, ensuring the school has the capacity, facilities, and resources needed to support future growth.

Revenue	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
Earned Revenue	\$ 961,887.00	\$ 1,401,101.00	\$ 1,647,358.00
Contributed Revenue	\$ 3,273,119.00	\$ 3,002,986.00	\$ 3,801,289.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 4,235,006.00</b>	<b>\$ 4,404,087.00</b>	<b>\$ 5,448,647.00</b>

Operational Expenses	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
Educational Programs	\$ 1,521,943.00	\$ 1,621,445.00	\$ 1,720,640.00
Administrative	\$ 818,043.00	\$ 917,505.00	\$ 848,215.00
Utilities & Insurance	\$ 470,299.00	\$ 466,806.00	\$ 476,310.00
Other Expenses	\$ 423,331.00	\$ 398,331.00	\$ 403,482.00
<b>Total Operational Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 3,233,616.00</b>	<b>\$ 3,404,087.00</b>	<b>\$ 3,448,647.00</b>

<b>Infrastructure Investments</b>	<b>\$ 1,001,390.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,000,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,000,000.00</b>
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<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 4,235,006.00</b>	<b>\$ 4,404,087.00</b>	<b>\$ 5,448,647.00</b>
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# Gaia Transportation | Forecast 2025 -2028

Gaia Transportation continues to operate an essential service for our students, with projected growth in both ridership and operational demands over the next three years. Revenue is expected to increase steadily as enrollment expands, rising from \$129,000 in 2025–2026 to \$372,810 in 2027–2028. Operational expenses, such as staff, insurance, maintenance, bus monitors, and essential vehicle investments, are also expected to increase as we uphold the highest standards of safety and service. This projection reflects our commitment to a strong, reliable transportation program that supports our growing community and ensures long-term stability for families.

Revenue	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
Earned Revenue	\$ 129,000	\$ 219,300	\$ 372,810
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 129,000</b>	<b>\$ 219,300</b>	<b>\$ 372,810</b>

Operational Expenses	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
Staff	\$ 127,610.45	\$ 145,430.89	\$ 163,251.33
Insurance	\$ 16,639.78	\$ 20,693.78	\$ 24,693.78
Vehicle Maintenance	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 36,000	\$ 43,200
Other Expenses	\$ 116,340.00	\$ 126,420	\$ 132,704.00
<b>Total Operational Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 290,644.23</b>	<b>\$ 328,544.67</b>	<b>\$ 363,849.00</b>

Vehicle Investment	\$ 55,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000
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<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 345,644.23</b>	<b>\$ 388,544.67</b>	<b>\$ 423,849.11</b>
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## Final Reflections

As we close this first annual report, we want to take a moment to thank all of our contributors around the world who have recognized and supported the impact of Gaia School in this small corner of Costa Rica.

Gaia School is truly a gem, a source of transformation not only for our students and their families, but also for the wider community.

Today, we proudly employ 32 Costa Ricans across our staff and faculty, alongside 18 international team members from the United States, Nicaragua, Belgium, Spain, Argentina, Mexico, Paraguay, and Canada. For some, Gaia School has become a lifeline, providing stability and connection for their entire families. For others, it represents the long-awaited ideal: a place where education, community, and purpose come together.

In the following pages, you will find two stories that capture the profound impact Gaia School has had over these past three years. These stories illustrate that what we are building together is more than just a school, it is a living project of hope, growth, and opportunity. They are a window into how Gaia School touches lives, not only within the classroom but also across families and the broader community



# Testimonials

## Mariel Torres

Assistant Teacher

*I grew up watching my father, a devoted teacher at a small rural school, teach under mango trees with passion and love. From him, I learned that education is an act of service and heart. Inspired by his example, I became a teacher myself.*

*Yet, once I entered the classroom, I began to feel something was missing in traditional education. Teaching seemed centered only on content, leaving little space for the child's rhythm, creativity, and emotional world. I longed for a way to teach that nurtured the whole human being.*



*That longing led me to Gaia School and to Waldorf Education. From the moment I discovered them, everything resonated: respect for the child's natural pace, art as a path to learning, the inner work of the teacher, and the connection to nature. Gaia became an answer, a calling, and a renewal of my faith in education.*



*One of the things I value most about Gaia is its commitment to teacher development. The school deeply understands the importance of both the personal and professional growth of its educators.*

*Thanks to this commitment, I've been able to participate in training that has deepened my understanding of Waldorf pedagogy. I feel profoundly grateful and blessed for this support, it strengthens my vocation and inspires me to keep learning and growing within this beautiful educational path.*

*Beyond my own transformation, I've seen Gaia's impact across the community. Families who once struggled in traditional schools now see their children joyful and thriving. Gaia has brought opportunity, inclusion, and a renewed sense of purpose offering an education that walks hand in hand with life, meaning, and hope.*

# Testimonials

## Michael Azofeifa Transportation Manager

*After fifteen years of working for the Costa Rican Public Ministry, specifically in the Judicial Branch, I first discovered Gaia School during an Open House I attended with my wife, who was already part of the institution. That day, I felt something special within me, a deep connection, and I knew that if I ever had the chance to become part of Gaia, I would be a much happier person.*

*Since August 1, 2024, when I officially joined the team, our lives have completely changed. Family is the most important thing to me, and being here together, with my wife and daughter, has had a profoundly positive impact on us. Working in a place where people are treated with such kindness and respect is truly gratifying.*



*The essence of Gaia's community, the warmth, human values, and respect that flow from the founders and leadership to every single collaborator, is something truly admirable and something to be deeply thankful for.*

*Talking with my five-year-old daughter and seeing her joy every morning as she goes to Gaia School is priceless. That joy is what inspired me to make the life-changing decision to leave behind fifteen years of public service to start a new chapter here with this beautiful community that genuinely cares for emotional, nutritional, and academic well-being. For all of this and more, I know we are in the right place.*

*Now, we have two homes. I often say that being at Gaia feels like being at your grandmother's house where only love exists, where you feel happy, and where you know it's real.*

*I want to close by expressing my deepest gratitude for the opportunity to be here with my family. I am committed to continuing to grow with Gaia School and to always give my best, with the same love and dedication that this place has inspired in me.*





The stories you have just read are only possible because of the generosity and vision of those who believe in Gaia School. Behind every child's smile, every teacher's growth, and every community impact, there are donors who have chosen to contribute to this mission.

We are deeply grateful to the following individuals, families, and organizations whose support over the past three years has made this journey possible. Your contributions (whether large or small) have been the foundation upon which Gaia School continues to grow.

**Thomas Hartland-Mackie and Nasiba Hartland-Mackie**

**Georgi Maule-ffinck and David Perry**

**Trent Herren**

**Peter and Melanie Avery**

**Luz Foundation**

**WFA PLC**

**David Ledbetter**

**Belinda Barclay-White**

**Nick Hartland**

**And other anonymous donors**

Gaia School is not just a school, it's something truly unique. Anyone who visits can feel it immediately: the connection to nature, the living practice of Waldorf education, and a community committed to making a real difference. Your support keeps this vision alive. It allows Gaia to grow while staying accessible to the children and families who need it most.

# Founders

Georgi Maule-ffinch

David Perry

Thomas Hartland-Mackie

Nasiba Hartland-Mackie



We invite you to continue walking this path with us so this special model of education can reach even more families in the years ahead.

### Ways to give:

**Bank Name:** UBS AG

**ABA#:** 026 007 993

**Account Name:** UBS Financial Services Inc

**Account#:** 101-WA-258640-000

MUST INCLUDE FURTHER CREDIT TO INFORMATION:

**Account Name:** Friends of Gaia School CR

**Account Number:** TX38404

### Scan to donate



*Thank you for being part of this journey*