



THE PHOENIX ANNUAL

Issue 12

The Raleigh Charter High School Annual Newsletter

March 2022

An Extraordinary Opportunity

The Foundation Campaign: Investing in Our Teachers, Securing Our Future

Introduction by Lisa Huddleston, Principal | Jameson Marks '03, Board Chair | Jeff Simone, Foundation Board Chair

At Raleigh Charter High School, we have an incredible opportunity to fully secure the school's future and support our teachers financially in the manner we had always intended. Like so many other opportunities that have come our way, we are at this juncture because caring and dedicated members of our school community have laid the groundwork for us to take some bold and exciting steps together. This has been made possible by a truly transformational gift of \$2 million from an anonymous donor, and we are incredibly grateful for their support of and faith in our school and our mission.



Just over ten years ago, with tremendous support and contributions from hundreds of families, Raleigh Charter moved into our permanent home on Glenwood Avenue. As we work toward another remarkable milestone in our history – our 25th anniversary in summer 2024 – we have an opportunity to secure the school for decades to come. During our 25th year, we will owe \$3.5 million on our building. **What if we were to successfully raise the funds to pay off the remaining mortgage?** The amazing part is that this would finally allow us to better and more sustainably compensate our faculty, something that we have been striving for through these last 23 years.

With our transformational gift, this option is now within our reach. **Our goal is to raise \$1.5 million in pledges and complete the compensation increase by our school's 25th anniversary – summer 2024.** Paying off the mortgage will free up approximately \$500,000 in annual operating funds. Without the burden of the mortgage, we will finally have the funds available to sustainably increase compensation for our dedicated teachers and staff.

Despite the difficulties of the pandemic, we believe now is the right time to undertake this challenge together. Reuniting with our students and returning to our classrooms this year continues to be nothing short of an adventure. Our hallways are filled with joy and laughter as students and teachers explore lessons and share ideas in the same space once again. **Beyond the initial excitement of our return to campus this fall, a renewed feeling of joy and appreciation for learning remains strong within our school community.** Through virtual learning and lockdowns and back into in-person classes again this year, our students and staff and families have come together to support one another and to support learning.

Certainly, it has not been easy, but our community has shown tremendous hope and resilience through each change we have navigated together. **As the challenges of the pandemic persist and evolve, so do we.** While we have been reimagining everything from classes to Flex Days and adding new things like tent installations and vaccination clinics, our families continue to support us each step of the way. We are grateful for the dedication of so many members of our community who continue to make Raleigh Charter possible — our families, our students, our alumni, and

especially our faculty and staff. Now — with this new possibility — **we have the chance to emerge from these difficulties stronger and as committed as ever** to providing our students with a truly high-quality education.

At the heart of our commitment to quality education are our outstanding and passionate teachers who work hard every day to keep a relentless focus on learning and fulfilling our mission. **These teachers are the foundation of everything that we do,** of everything that we have done since our founding 23 years ago.

Our model of fostering active, social, and creative learning relies on **innovative, committed and passionate teachers.** To make this possible, we keep classes small so that these teachers can build strong relationships with students. **A goal of Raleigh Charter High School has always been to provide our faculty with competitive salaries commensurate with local districts.** Thanks to generous contributions from families to both our annual Phoenix Fund and our long-term Foundation Fund in recent years, our Board of Directors was able to approve a 5% salary increase for all faculty and staff effective this school year. Even with this outstanding increase, we are still not able to pay all of our educators the same or more than their local peers.

When we needed to raise funds to buy our forever home on Glenwood Avenue over

Lisa Huddleston has been part of the RCHS community since 2001 and has served as principal since 2015. Jameson Marks is an alum from the class of 2003 and currently serves as chair of the RCHS Board of Directors. Jeff Simone has been involved with Raleigh Charter since 2010 as a parent and volunteer. He currently serves as board chair of the RCHS Foundation.

Continues on page 6.

Faculty in Focus



The faculty pictured above have taught at RCHS since our early years. They all joined us before 2005! Back row, from left: Betsy Newmark, Whit Hames, Maggie Rasnick, Kenny Felder, Mark Slattery, Becky Schmitz, DeeAnn Cherveney, Mary Grimes, Charles Montague, Cynthia Brown. Front row: Shayne Klein, Hikaru Wajima, Amy Koch, Lisa Huddleston.

Our beloved faculty is the heart of our school. From creating engaging classroom activities to imparting wisdom and teaching life's lessons, our teachers devote innumerable hours and limitless energy to our students and our school every day. We know that teachers play a huge role in making RCHS a special place.

We asked faculty members – longtime and new – to share their thoughts on why they enjoy working at RCHS and what makes our community so special.

*“Charter is special because it has always embraced innovation, oddity and imaginative spirits. When I first started working at Charter, I used to tell my friends, affectionately, that the place was like the land of misfit toys, that students dressed like everyday was Halloween and I loved it. Yes, we are more intellectual than the average high school, but that difference has bound us both in a wonderful, gritty, energetic attitude seen in the “Raleigh Charter Rowdies” and an ability to excel on every academic level as individuals and even more so as a community. **Class rankings ignored, weirdness embraced***



***and convention debunked is the Raleigh Charter way** and we couldn't be more cool about it.”*

Charles Montague, History Teacher
With RCHS since 2001

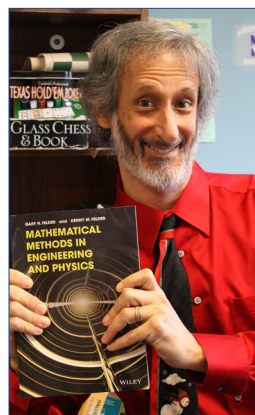


“Raleigh Charter is the fourth school at which I've taught, yet it's the first place I've felt at home, professionally. My colleagues are not just folks with whom I work; they're my friends.

***We share a commitment to the whole student — the social, emotional, and intellectual components.** And here, I feel free to pivot, reassess, and change. I've definitely done each of these things over*

the years. Suffice it to say, I have truly loved my decade at Raleigh Charter High School!”

Melani Winter History Teacher | With RCHS since 2010



*“I think a tremendous number of RCHS students cares about learning. **Learning is cool here. Knowing things is cool; helping other people learn is cool.** That makes education much more of a cooperative effort between the faculty and the students, and less of an antagonistic struggle.”*

Kenny Felder, Math Teacher
With RCHS since 1999

THE PHOENIX ANNUAL

The Phoenix Annual is published by the Raleigh Charter High School Offices of Development, Communications & Alumni Relations. Printed copies are sent by mail to parents of current and past students. Alumni receive a digital version via email.

This issue and past issues are available online at

www.raleighcharterhs.org/alumni.

For information or inquires, please contact Margaret Barnett, Director of Development & Communications at mbarnett@raleighcharterhs.org.



From front office operations to IT, and from communications to college counseling, our **Support Staff** crew is always ready to help.

Our Mission

Raleigh Charter High School challenges college-bound students in a creative and supportive atmosphere to become knowledgeable, thoughtful, contributing citizens.

Citizenship Preamble and Principles

We, of RCHS, intend to cultivate the understanding and practices that sustain individual self-determination and equitable, self-governing communities. We have adopted the following principles in order to ensure that all who pass through our halls can imagine, create, and govern a more perfect world.

We believe:

That a foundation of knowledge and ethics must precede all intellectual inquiry;

That if we

- encourage self-awareness
- build and maintain local communities
- develop an awareness of our membership in ever larger communities
- work consciously towards equity and against oppression and injustice
- recognize and embrace the dignity of every human being
- engage in common enterprise
- facilitate problem solving
- foster balance in life and
- take ownership and responsibility for learning,

We shall become good citizens.

The Citizenship Preamble and Principles was originally drafted by the faculty between 2007 and 2009 at a series of meetings and retreats. These ideas exist in a living, working format that we revisit and reflect upon often. They are meant to express our aspirations for our school community. The principles shown above were most recently revised in July 2020 by our entire faculty of teachers, staff, and administrators.



“What makes Raleigh Charter a great place to teach is the sense of community we have. Through unique programs such as Flex Days, Community Work Days and other programs, teachers get to know all of the students rather than just those we teach.

Administration, faculty and staff, parents and students work well together to provide a good learning environment for all.”

Mark Slattery, Spanish Teacher | With RCHS since 2001

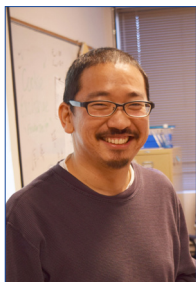


*“I think RCHS is special in large part because those who founded the school, those who serve on its Board, and those who work here each day **all believe deeply in the importance of both teacher autonomy and school community.** One of those ideas*

involves respect for individual perspectives and approaches, and the other is an acknowledgement that a school is a collective body with a mission, norms, and values to uphold. That’s a difficult balance to strike, and while no institution could do it perfectly, RCHS gets awfully close much of the time. And when folks at RCHS realize they need to reassess or work towards new goals — in areas such as diversity and equity — they take those goals seriously, and they get to work.”

Hannah Page, History Teacher
With RCHS since 2006

Faculty in Focus



“I love learning from this faculty. One of the highlights of my day is being able to observe other teachers teach — even a quick glance through an open door. Seeing how they engage their students pushes me to think about how I can do better in my classroom.

The faculty also brings a wide range of experiences and perspectives that open my eyes to different ways of thinking about the students, our school, and also the world around us.”

Hikaru Wajima, Math Teacher | With RCHS since 2001



“The faculty and staff at RCHS are *dedicated, kind, thoughtful, and smart.* There are no weak links. Even with 25 years of experience, I learn something new from my colleagues every time we work together.”

Amy Koch, Science Teacher | With RCHS since 1999



“I can’t imagine working at any other school where I would have so much respect for the administration and my colleagues. Every day I see evidence of how much they care and how they’re willing to put in any extra effort for our students and our school. Add in the wonderful, fun, curious, kind-hearted students and our supportive parents and my job has become a joy.”

Betsy Newmark, History Teacher | With RCHS since 2002



“Throughout my 23 years, I knew that each day would offer not only meaningful musical experiences, but also, but perhaps even more importantly, personal growth and a sense of renewal in my belief that music is the universal language. Each day as I drive home, I bring back to consciousness all that I had learned from my students. I am grateful that they will be the leaders of my future living and of our collective living.”

Cynthia Brown, Music Teacher | With RCHS since 1999



The faculty pictured above include some of our recent staff who have joined us in the past five years. Back row, from left: Margaret Barnett '08, Mimi Tomei '16, Colin Russell, Angie Kraft, Mitch Dyrdahl, Damien Sauzet, Troy K. Weaver, Caio Setubal, Myles Robinson. Front row: Shannon Hess, Jacob Cole, Julia Ferrando, Scotty Fristoe '15.

“I appreciate the diverse community at RCHS, where people are encouraged to be different and celebrated for their differences. We learn by being around people who are different from us and thus have new perspectives to offer.”

Shannon Hess, Spanish Teacher | Joined RCHS in 2021

“At RCHS, it is clear that both teachers and students do a great job at creating that atmosphere where everyone is learning and growing together. I think that when you can grow up and go on to future great things in life and always have that attitude of curiosity and learning, then that’s going to set you up for success in all aspects of life. Be curious, and be a lifelong learner.”

Mitch Dyrdahl, Math Teacher | Joined RCHS in 2021

Thank you to Z. Das '24 and students of *The Flame* newswriting club, for helping with new staff interviews.



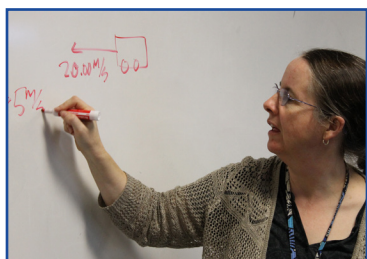
Alumni Connections

We love to hear from our Forever Phoenix and we are grateful to the many alumni who have shared their time and talents with our students over the past year. During the 2021-22 school year, over seventy-five alumni joined us online for a series of panel discussions with our students. Alumni from all over the country (and even a few abroad!) joined us on Zoom to speak about a variety of topics including applying for college, making the most of your university experience, and what it is like to work in different career fields “in the real world.”

We are fortunate to have so many alumni who continue to engage with our community and we are always happy to welcome alumni back to our school. Strong relationships with teachers and Raleigh Charter’s small, close-knit community are two elements that our alumni recall most often and most fondly about their high school experience. Here are a few warm memories and funny stories recent alumni shared about Raleigh Charter teachers and the positive roles teachers have played in their lives.

“Raleigh Charter teachers are a rare and specific type of human. They are all incredibly passionate about whatever it is they teach and also somehow more passionate about teaching. I have not had a single teacher at Raleigh Charter who I feel would rather be anywhere else talking about anything else.”

2018 graduate



“Freshman year in Mr. Montague’s class, we spent an entire week analyzing medieval and Renaissance paintings. Because many of the paintings dealt with nature and the concept of “spring,” we had class outside one of the days that week. I really enjoyed having Mr. Montague as a teacher and diving in depth into topics such as the paintings and our artifact project. His class is one of the main events freshman year which increased my passion for learning.” **2018 graduate**

“I love that students are encouraged to learn by teachers who are truly passionate about what they teach! In my four years I never took a class where I walked away without having learned a lot!”

2020 graduate

“I think my favorite part of RCHS is the faculty. Teachers from RCHS are unlike any others that I’ve had and I think their perspectives and insights are crucial to the RCHS experience.”

2021 graduate



“For Monsieur Sauzet’s birthday, French 4/AP threw him a surprise party complete with a cake and other sweets. His reaction was funny because right as we said “Surprise!” he walked right back into the hallway, maybe because we embarrassed him a little bit. He put up with our nonsense and taught us so much, including some valuable life lessons, so we thought it was necessary to show how much we appreciated him.” **2020 graduate**

“Freshman year English with Mr. Rios, he gave us one of his famed pop quizzes ... except this time there was a twist. It was April Fools Day, so he made the quotes ridiculous to identify. I was one of the first to notice at the bottom of the quiz that it was an April Fools prank and the quiz didn’t actually count. I put down my pencil and stared at Mr. Rios as everyone else was struggling. He just smiled.”

2018 graduate



The Foundation Campaign

Investing in Our Teachers, Securing Our Future

The purpose of the Foundation Campaign is to support our teachers.

RCHS faculty have stepped up for our students in many ways, for many years.

Now is the time for our community to step up for them.

Continued from cover.

ten years ago, our community provided an outpouring of support enabling us to move in ahead of schedule. Many of you, our alumni and parents, answered our call with great alacrity. Now, we are asking for all Raleigh Charter families – parents, grandparents, alumni, alumni parents, and friends – to join us once again as we take this bold step forward together. *The Foundation Campaign is about investing in teachers and securing our future.* We ask that you consider the impact that Raleigh Charter educators have had on your family’s life and make a pledge to support them and the future of our school. Every gift given to the Raleigh Charter High School Foundation will contribute to reaching our \$1.5 million campaign goal.

This newsletter features highlights about our fantastic teachers. Further details about how to support The Foundation Campaign, as well as a pledge card to make a gift, are enclosed. We greatly appreciate your continued support of Raleigh Charter High School, and we look forward to celebrating all that we know we will accomplish together through this campaign. §



RCHS teachers are amazing educators!

- Our educators have an average of 19 years of classroom experience.
- 67% of our teaching faculty hold advanced degrees.
- Over half of our teachers have worked at RCCHS for 10 years or more.
- In addition to teaching, preparing, and grading for their classes, our teachers each advise several of our 80 student-run clubs, write dozens of college recommendation letters, and fulfill a myriad of extra duties from supervising lunch to managing the carpool line.

You already know...

Educators across the nation are paid significantly less than other professionals with similar experience.

RCCHS receives state and local government funding.

RCCHS families, alumni, and friends, generously contribute \$325,000 annually through the Phoenix Fund to supplement low per-pupil funding.

Raleigh Charter High School is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

But did you know...

Many RCCHS teachers make less than their Wake County peers.

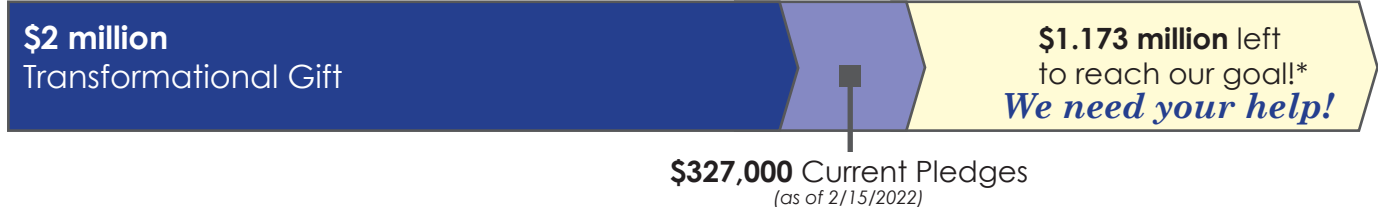
Unlike traditional public schools, RCCHS does not receive funding for our school building. This means we must stretch our limited per-pupil funds to pay the mortgage on our building in addition to covering *all* the costs of running a school (i.g., paying salaries, buying supplies, keeping the lights on).

While this incredible support makes our day-to-day operations possible, we still have not been able to sustainably increase teacher compensation to a level that adequately reflects their years of experience and dedication to our students and our community.

The Raleigh Charter High School Foundation, a separate 501(c)(3) supporting organization, was established in 2009 to obtain and manage the funds needed to move into our permanent home on Glenwood Avenue. The Foundation exists to support RCCHS and is the channel through which we can reach our longer-term financial goals.

How will we reach our *Foundation Campaign* goal?

\$3.5 million pays off our mortgage and allows us to better compensate our teachers!



This campaign is possible because of the incredible \$2 million anonymous gift. Thanks to caring generosity from early campaign supporters and recurring donors, *we have already raised \$327,000.*

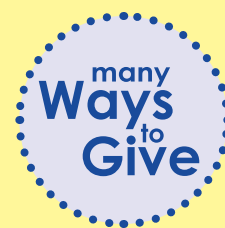
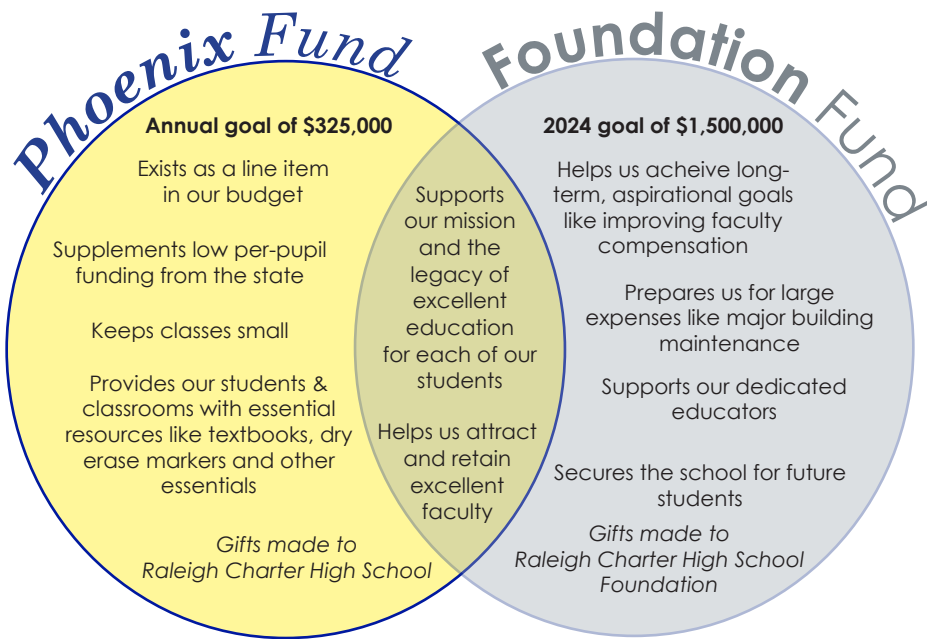
Now, *we need your help* to raise the remaining \$1.173 million needed to reach our goal by summer 2024.

**Note: A typo that appeared in the original publication has been corrected.*

The Cumulative Power of Recurring Gifts

For many, contributing a smaller monthly amount is a more comfortable way to give rather than making a one-time gift. In addition, setting up a recurring gift now ensures your continued support of the Foundation Campaign for as long as you would like to give! What seems like a small amount each month from a growing number of donors really adds up quickly and powerfully.

Consider a monthly recurring gift: **Every gift of every size matters** — \$100, \$50, or even \$10 per month helps us reach our goal!



Donate Today!

- Write a check
- Donate online (one-time or recurring) www.raleighcharterhs.org/giving/onlinegiving
- Set up a recurring gift through your bank
- Commit to a multi-year pledge
- Provide a grant through a **Donor-Advised Fund**
- Ask Your Employer to **Match Your Gift**
- Give a gift of stock

Use the detachable pledge card on page 7, donate online, or contact us to learn more.

Current families, remember: *Phoenix Fund first!*

Meeting the annual Phoenix Fund goal of \$325,000 each school year is critical to funding our annual operations. We ask the families of our current students to contribute to our Phoenix Fund first. If you would like to make an additional contribution, we encourage you to also make a gift to the Foundation Campaign.

Raleigh Charter High School, Inc. and Raleigh Charter High School Foundation, Inc. are two separate 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. Your gift is tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

Donate online at www.raleighcharterhs.org/onlinegiving

To learn more about how you can support RCHS, contact Margaret Barnett, Director of Development & Communications, by email mbarnett@raleighcharterhs.org or phone 919.715.1155.

Thank you!

During the 2020-2021 school year, thanks to caring and generous support from our incredible community of alumni, alumni parents, current parents, grandparents, friends, corporations, and foundations, we met our \$325,000 Phoenix Fund goal **earlier than ever before**. Together, we raised **\$344,766**, exceeding our goal by **almost \$20,000!**



From everyone at Raleigh Charter High School, **thank you to the following contributors for donations received from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.**

There is no way to fully express our gratitude for your many gifts. We are continually inspired by your dedication and generosity.

2020-21 supporters of our Phoenix Fund

Forever Phoenix

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Nathan '04 & Rachel Ann Brothers '04
Ayarah Dharanikota '15
Erin Greig '19
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 The Stanford/Hamel Family
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 Lynn Whittenberger
 The Willett Family
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 Wayne & Clastrola Williams
 Rob & Kelly Wilson
 Tricia & Mark Wilson
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 The Winstead Family
 The Wolff Family
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 The Young Family
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 Hong Zeng

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John William Pope Foundation
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 The Florimonte Family
 Matthew & Kathryn Gerber
 Ashishkumar & Sangita Ghodasara
 The Glass Family
 The Green Family
 The Heintschel Leonard Family
 H. Jay & Joan R. Hill
 Anna Huck '14
 Sarah Huck '11
 Thomas Humble & Sally Humble
 Stephen Humphries & Helena Oakley
 Carolyn & Steve Jackson
 Gary W. Jackson
 Dick & Pat Johnston
 Elizabeth & Randal Karsten
 Mike & Heidi King
 Battle & Kathryn Koonce
 Steven & Mary Levine
 Craig & Becky Lightfoot
 The Lochbaum Family
 Charles Long & Jodi Schwartz
 Sydney '13, Jared '16 & Jasper '16 Mark
 in honor of Dr. Humble, Ms. Solomon,
 and Ms. Wall
 Jameson Marks '03
 John & Judy Marks
 Subbarayouu Mukkamala
 Hilarie Nickerson
 William & Judith Page
 Swap & Shushma Patel
 Maggie Rasnick
 The Rencibia Family
 The Rowan Family
 The Sharma Family
 Vincent Smith & Carrie Dow-Smith
 Dirk & Anne Steckmann
 Sharon Van Dyke

Corporate Matching & Giving Programs

The Walt Disney Company Foundation
 Fidelity Foundation Matching Gifts
 to Education
 GlaxoSmithKline Foundation

*Thank you to the many donors who contributed in support of our **Drama, Athletics, We the People,** and student assistance programs. We are grateful for the in-kind donations of a file cabinet, professional photography services, desktop computers, and meals for staff. We are thankful for the inclusion of Raleigh Charter High School in the SECC, United Way of the Greater Triangle, and the United Way of Atlanta workplace campaigns.*

To donate to the Foundation Fund, please give online or complete the form below and return to RCHS.

 The Raleigh Charter High School Foundation

GIFT/PLEDGE FORM

Foundation Campaign

Investing in Our Teachers, Securing Our Future

DONOR INFORMATION

Name(s): _____ Phone: (____) _____ - _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Email(s): _____

I am a(n): CURRENT PARENT ALUMNUS/A ALUMNI PARENT GRANDPARENT FRIEND

Signature (required): _____ Date: _____

GIVING METHOD

One-Time Gift

A one-time gift in the amount of \$ _____.

Recurring Gift

A recurring gift in the amount of \$ _____

per MONTH QUARTER YEAR

Pledge

I/we pledge to make a total pledge of \$ _____
fulfilled via installments of \$ _____

paid MONTHLY QUARTERLY ANNUALLY

Would you like to receive installment reminders? Yes No

PAYMENT METHOD

Check payable to "Raleigh Charter High School Foundation"

Credit card: Make a secure credit card payment online at
www.raleighcharterhs.org/giving/onlinegiving

Other (donor-advised fund, stock, etc.): _____

Will your employer match your gift? Yes No Not Sure
I am employed by _____.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT INFORMATION

How would you like to be listed in our annual newsletter's donor listing?
(Gift amounts are never listed.)

Name(s) _____

The _____ Family

Do not list my name; I would like my gift to be anonymous.

*Thank you for supporting
The RCHS Foundation!
What inspired your gift?*

RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO:

Raleigh Charter High School Foundation
c/o Development Office
1307 Glenwood Ave.
Raleigh, NC 27605

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

Raleigh Charter High School Foundation

INQUIRIES:

Contact Margaret Barnett at
919-715-1155 or
mbarnett@raleighcharterhs.org.

Raleigh Charter High School
Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable
organization (tax ID #26-4266980).

All gifts are tax deductible.



Raleigh Charter High School
PHOENIX FUND
Every family. Every year.

OUR 2021-2022 GOAL IS
\$325,000

Contributions are used to supplement our limited per pupil funds. The Phoenix Fund supports small class sizes, technology, textbooks, college counseling, community service, the arts and much more.

As of March 25, we have reached 93% of our goal!

How will you support RCHS this year?

1. Name: _____ Phone: (____) _____ - _____
Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____
Email: _____

2. I am a(n): CURRENT PARENT ALUMNUS/A ALUMNI PARENT GRANDPARENT FRIEND FACULTY/STAFF

3. How would you like to be listed in our annual newsletter's donor listing? (Gift amounts are never listed.)

Name(s) _____

The _____ Family

Do not list my name; I would like my gift to be anonymous.

**Checks and bill pay incur no fees so RCHS receives 100% of donated funds.*

4. I will support Raleigh Charter with the following contribution. Please mark the box and enter an amount:

Monthly recurring donation through my bank via bill pay: \$ _____ per month.*

Enclosed check: Payable to "Raleigh Charter High School" in the amount of \$ _____.*

Online at www.raleighcharterhs.org/giving/onlinegiving: \$ _____ per month OR \$ _____ one-time.

Workplace giving campaign: I intend to give \$ _____ through: SECC UNITED WAY OTHER: _____

Payroll deduction program: I intend to contribute \$ _____ through my employer. _____

Stock donation (instructions available at www.raleighcharterhs.org/giving/stock.asp)

Other (donor-advised fund, etc.): \$ _____ via _____.

5. Will your employer match your gift? YES NO NOT SURE I am employed by _____.

Please return to **Raleigh Charter High School, 1307 Glenwood Avenue, Raleigh NC 27605**

Raleigh Charter is possible because of you.
Thank you for supporting our Engaged Learners, Contributing Citizens.

Raleigh Charter High School

Raleigh Charter High School challenges college-bound students in a creative and supportive atmosphere to become knowledgeable, thoughtful, contributing citizens.

Connect with RCHS!



Online
raleighcharterhs.org



Like us on
Facebook



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Twitter



Alumni News
raleighcharterhs.org/alumni



Raleigh Charter Alumni
Facebook Group

Alumni & Alumni Parents: Need to update your contact info? Email us! alumni@raleighcharterhs.org