

# The School for Ethical Education Annual Report



September 1, 2020 — August 31, 2021

*Ethics in Action Creates Character*

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The School for Ethical Education is grateful to the organizations and individuals that have supported our mission to advance *ethics in action*.

### 2020-21 DONORS

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Bob & MaryAnn Betts, Bharucha Charitable Foundation, Bigelow Tea, Pitney Bowes, Judith R. Corchard Fund, Rosella Criss, Richard Davoud Donchian Foundation, Peter & Alexandria Donovan, Mike Flament, Chris & Debbie Gallo, Oz Griebel Fund, Gilbert

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### History

John Winthrop Wright founded The School for Ethical Education in 1995. As a nonprofit organization recognized as tax-exempt by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, SEE provides courses and programs for teachers, parents and students to advance ethical behavior in schools and communities. Mr. Wright's vision for school improvement focused on expanding opportunities for teachers and students to learn how ethics in action creates character. This phrase became the school's motto and recognizes the power of positive ethics in the creation of character. The core ethical concepts or virtues Mr. Wright desired to promote included respect, responsibility, caring, justice, honesty, truthfulness, courtesy, citizenship and the principles of the Golden Rule. The goal of positive character development is integrated into all programs offered by SEE. With the passing of Mr. Wright in 1996, and the monetization of his estate in 2012, SEE has functioned as a totally independent 501(c)3 since 2018 while supported by the John Wright endowment, fees for services, grants and private donations. In the fall of 2021, SEE began a collaboration with Character.org to expand its program offerings through their international network of schools.

### Vision

The School for Ethical Education teaches strategies to (K-16) educators to put ethics in action for positive character formation of students.

### Mission

The School for Ethical Education recognizes the need for an increased focus on ethical behavior in all human interactions. We affirm the contribution of sound ethical reasoning in the advancement of ethical behavior and character. To promote our vision, SEE uses a variety of methods to provide educators strategies to support student ethical and character formation.

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## Program Year Summary

The School for Ethical Education (SEE) concluded its twenty-sixth year supporting school ethics and character programs in the second year of the COVID pandemic. Prior to COVID, SEE had been successful in recruiting teachers to have students participate in our two Connecticut programs that include SEE's Academic Integrity PSA contest for high school students, and *Laws of Life* essay writing contest for grades 5-12 students. COVID continued to reduce participation in both programs and prevented SEE, for the second year, to host students at our Character Celebration.

The John Winthrop Wright *Ethics in Action* award was presented to Jennifer DelMonico, a Partner with Murtha Cullina during an limited capacity Celebration in May. Ms. DelMonico graciously accepted the award and honored her father as a lawyer committed to ethics in practice and example. SEE also continued to offer the Youth: Ethics in Service (**YES**) service-learning program, and teaching and consulting programs that included outreach to schools and other education agencies along with Integrity Works! with the Academic Integrity PSA contest, a free subscription to the Reasoning with Ethics blog, the online sale of our *Creating a Culture of Academic Integrity* text, the baseline student assessment tool AMIS (Academic Motivation and Integrity Survey), and an on-line video professional development seminar for secondary teachers titled the *Achieving with Integrity Seminar*.

The program year concluded with the successful negotiation of a collaborative agreement with Character.org to integrate SEE programs into their effort to support ethics and character education within their international network of schools. The boards of both agencies agreed to a three-year collaboration where SEE would fund the John Winthrop Wright Director of Ethical Education to be hired by Character.org. The collaboration has the potential to leverage the assets of SEE and Character.org to more broadly promote John Winthrop Wright's vision to advance ethics in action to create character.

Regarding the Academic Integrity PSA contest, SEE administered its eighth-annual Academic Integrity Public Service Announcement (PSA) Contest during the 2020-21 school year. COVID prevented many videography classes from meeting in the fall semester. Registrations dropped to 9 schools where 47 students created 15 PSAs in support of academic integrity.

The PSA contest seeks to leverage the creative ability of students to address the issue of academic dishonesty in schools. The goal in the creation of these PSAs is to have students affirm the values in support of academic integrity in a manner that can be shared in their school as well as the broader online community. As the contest requires the PSA to be shown to the school community via announcements or school television, we estimate a viewing audience of 9,900 students.

The top three PSA creative teams came from Jonathan Law, Brunswick and Windsor High Schools. Their PSAs along with others from the contest were posted with links on the PSA Contest website, and placed within SEE social media posts.

### Top Three PSAs

Don't Lie to Yourself, Jonathan Law HS - [https://youtu.be/JM\\_nZ5IFJbo](https://youtu.be/JM_nZ5IFJbo)  
Courage, Honor, Truth, Brunswick School -- <https://youtu.be/yQRltXVfTwc>  
Cheating During Online School, South Windsor HS--  
<https://youtu.be/3NloAurmQ5g>



South Windsor High School's PSA Creators, Sophie & Lindsey

SEE is grateful for the nineteen volunteers (identified above) who participated as judges for the contest. They represent professional videographers, members of the video media and past PSA coordinators. The PSA scoring rubric for the contest requires the identification of one or more of the following ethical values: integrity, responsibility, fairness, and perseverance. The support of academic integrity encourages student awareness that academic dishonesty is an ethical issue.

SEE solicited survey responses from contest teachers and students and received the following responses

this year.



Jim providing guidance to PSA team.

Jim Bellantoni, the videography teacher at Willbur Cross High School has had his class participate from the first SEE PSA contest noted, “My students have been participating in this PSA contest for the past five years and It’s been a lot of fun watching the kids explore their thoughts on ethics, and then producing a quality video which communicates those thoughts. I think other teachers and their students will enjoy the process. While participating in this contest over the past several years, it has been great watching kids debate the impact of cheating. For most, coming up with the message for the PSA was their first time giving the subject any real thought.”

Jordan Arnold, a 2020 student from Watertown High School

stated, “The feedback I received is that that video was very well done. Many students and teachers enjoyed watching it and were able to understand and relate to the message. I would suggest that others take part in this competition because it is a good way to better understand academic integrity while doing something that you may love, such as filming and editing.

2021 winning PSA creators Sophie Crane and Lindsey Lucia from South Windsor reflected on their experience to note, “This was an amazing opportunity and was a lot of fun to make, and getting such great feedback has made it even better.”



Jordan Arnold

*The Laws of Life* Essay Program celebrated its 21<sup>st</sup> year. Teachers from 14 schools registered 1200 students to write a Laws of Life essay. Winning essay topics included a focus on kindness and care in and out of families, perseverance, initiative, integrity, and respect. Nineteen volunteer judges included university professors, newspaper writers and state department of education officials. Every essay was evaluated by a minimum of four judges. As the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the cancellation SEE’s annual Character Celebration, the top ten essayists were notified and sent an award certificate along with their essay placed on SEE’s Laws of Life website with an accompanying press release to Connecticut news outlets.

The top ten essay writers were (in alphabetical order)—Sierra Blume (Simsbury High School), Truman Brodeur (RHAM High School), Taryn Brysgel (RHAM High School), Alana Calhoun (RHAM High School), Lexie Hullivan (Clark Lane Middle School), Jordan Kates (Hall High School), Sofia Khan (Christian Heritage School), Langley Marshall (Lyme-Old Lyme High School), Faith Ries (Ansonia High School), and Anaelecea Trucio (West Haven High School).

SEE concludes each project year requesting survey feedback from judges, teachers, and students. Selected comments included:

### **Judges**

- \*\*\*Every year I am amazed at the student’s perspective on different life values.
- \*\*\*My essays were the best I’ve read in my ten years.

### **Teachers**

- \*\*\*I think the project is great!
- \*\*\*I had more positive students this year despite the pandemic. This provides a great opportunity for me to get to know my students better.

\*\*\*The students who entered seemed passionate and sincere about the importance of integrity.

### **Students**

What did you learn from your Laws of Life Essay—

\*\*\*From knowing your laws of life it becomes a part of who you are as a person. These laws are what shapes us into becoming our future selves to influence the world.

\*\*\*I learned values guide us and influence our choices, which can make our lives pleasant or not.

\*\*\*I learned how you must follow what you say and be true to yourself, regardless if you think it may lead to negative consequences. The essay helped to provide me with a better perspective on life.

\*\*\*I learned that Laws of Life really affects your way of thinking and acting.

Sofia Kahn, a winning essayist made this observation about her essay, “My law of life, respect diversity has helped me learn how to appreciate my heritage and start to interact and learn more about it with things such as food, language, and music. I learned how beautiful and amazing it is to be an Indian-American woman.”

SEE’s ethics blog Reasoning with Ethics was continued this year with new cases published weekly. The blog includes a summary of a current events story along with supplemental online links and discussion questions posted on SEE’s website. In addition, links to the blog were published on SEE’s social media pages. SEE also communicated with over 13,000 schools via an electronic newsletter that marketed SEE’s strategies and products. In addition, SEE completed PSA ads for existing programs with a grant from the Richard Davoud Donchian Foundation.

Other tasks completed during the year included volunteer service to Character.org in multiple projects that included their National Schools of Character (SOC) program and editing their SOC program manual..





## SEE Financials

SEE completed its sixth year in office space in Milford, Connecticut and its third year with total independence from historical infrastructure support from Wright Investors' Service. SEE's overall income for the year including support from the endowment was \$202,218 and expenditures for the year were \$167,031. SEE thus had a surplus of \$35,187. Of this, \$25,000 was assigned to SEE's "rainy day" fund.

Integrity Works! was funded through SEE's endowment with \$42,077. *Laws of Life (LOL)* received donations of \$5,231 and an endowment contribution of \$8,415 to administer a statewide *LOL* writing program.

Teaching and Consulting income of \$697 continues to represent the challenge SEE is facing in selling contracted services or other resources. Total donations to SEE's totaled \$13,736. With the COVID canceling of the annual fundraising Celebration, SEE lost revenue and expenses for this year with a greater concern that funders and supporters were disconnected from SEE's mission.

SEE continues to work to develop its base of individual and corporate funders to help establish a broader foundation of support for its mission and particularly in light of the collaboration with Character.org. SEE welcomes donations from those who believe in the critical need to build positive character in support of the family, local schools, their communities and our nation. SEE's vision is a progressive work and is moving forward with the positive expectation to advance *ethics in action to create character*.

To join us and donate to advance a vision of positive character, you may contact SEE through our website – [www.ethicsed.org](http://www.ethicsed.org).

<b>2020-21 Income/Expense Summary</b>						
8/31/21 (unaudited)						
	Development	Integrity Works	Laws of Life	Teaching & Consulting	Gen & Admin	<b>Total</b>
<b>Income</b>						
Consult/Sales				697		697
Donations	1,545		5,231	6,960		13,736
Endowment	16,831	42,077	8,415	95,934	5,049	168,306
Grants				2,500		2,500
Banquet	1,590					1,590
Prior Year	7,647		7,353			15,000
Interest				8	381	389
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,613</b>	<b>42,077</b>	<b>20,999</b>	<b>106,099</b>	<b>5,430</b>	<b>\$202,218</b>
<b>Expenses</b>						
Employee	13,045	32,628	12,410	75,556	3,914	137,553
Office	295	1,342	50	2426	130	4,243
Travel			30			30
Outside	3,203	4,983	997	12,678	2,092	23,953
Project	475	27	318	432		1,252
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,018</b>	<b>38,980</b>	<b>13,805</b>	<b>91,092</b>	<b>6,136</b>	<b>\$167,031</b>
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>10,595</b>	<b>3,097</b>	<b>7,194</b>	<b>15,007</b>	<b>-706</b>	<b>\$35,187</b>