



# L'Ecole Française du Maine

South Freeport, Maine, May 22, 2023

Ladies and Gentlemen, esteemed Grandparents, and dear Friends,

My name is Willy LeBihan. It is an absolute pleasure to stand before you today as the Founder and Head of School to celebrate this special day: Grandparents and Special Friends Day 2023. As we gather here, surrounded by the picturesque beauty of the small fishing village of South Freeport, Maine, we can truly appreciate why this place is a perfect haven for your grandchildren to grow up.

With its enchanting landscapes, abundant nature, and tight-knit communities, Maine offers a unique environment for our young ones to thrive. From the stunning coastline to the majestic forests, our children can explore and appreciate the wonders of the great outdoors. They embark on bike trips at Wolfe Neck Farm, immersing themselves in nature's beauty. On the school playground, they develop a deep connection with the environment. Our ski trips to Sugarloaf allow them to conquer the slopes, teaching them perseverance, resilience, and the joy of accomplishment.

Moreover, within the walls of the French School of Maine, our students are nurtured in a rich cultural and educational environment. As a French Immersion and IB PYP school, we embrace the curriculum of France, offering our students a global perspective and a comprehensive education. Our Suzuki music classes and chorus programs allow the children to cultivate their artistic talents and develop a lifelong appreciation for the arts. Our art curriculum fosters their creativity and self-expression, enabling them to see the world differently.

I want to thank our talented **Teachers and Staff** for instilling in our students the values of compassion, empathy, and acceptance. Our school does

not use screens in instruction. Instead, we take the time to foster an environment where students can ask questions, make mistakes, and learn from them without fear or judgment.

Today, as we celebrate our student's accomplishments and honor their grandparents, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the incredible individuals who have made this day possible: School Director Emily **Smith** and **Laura Piehl**, Adult Education Director; we are fortunate to have their dedication and talents supporting our mission each day.

I would also like to extend a special thank you to **Martine Goldberg**, the Kindness Program, Choose Love, Coordinator. Through her initiation of essential life lessons, Martine has touched all our students' lives, instilling the values that will guide them throughout their lives.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to express my gratitude to **Dr. Caroline Foust-Wright, MD**, for her involvement as a parent in our school for the last five years. Caroline's active participation and support have been invaluable, and we are grateful for her commitment to our community.

In closing, I would like to share a quote from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince*, which encapsulates the spirit of our school and the importance of nurturing young minds: "L'essentiel est invisible pour les yeux." (What is essential is invisible to the eye.) At the French School of Maine, we strive not only to provide our children with a comprehensive education but also to nurture their hearts and souls, enabling them to see beyond the surface and embrace the beauty and significance of what truly matters.

I am glad you could spend some time in the classrooms this morning. As students yourselves years ago, I am sure things were quite different when you were in school.

Thank you all for being here today, for your continuous support, and for being an integral part of our school community. Together, we are shaping the future, one child at a time. Your presence is a testament to the strong bonds that unite our community and the value you place on your grandchildren's education.

Don't forget the concert this afternoon; you will find the program on the tables.

Merci beaucoup!

Now I invite you to the following presentations by:

- Martine Goldberg (Kindness Program Coordinator)
- Dr. Caroline Foust-Wright MD (School Parent)