

WHY WE GIVE: Bill & Kristin Becket

Back in 2012, afternoons at the Becket house were not fun. Bill and Kristin's son Matthew was seven years old then and 2nd grade was proving to be a challenge. While the school reading specialist assured Kristin that Matthew was fine, Kristin—backed by her experience in education and as a mom of two older children—knew that Matthew's reading was significantly delayed.

"He couldn't read anywhere near grade level," Kristin says. "He was struggling and we were fighting every day. Bill and I decided to start looking at schools for him and Benchmark was our first stop. They assured me that the constant arguing in the afternoons with this tiny, little person was going to stop. And it DID."

This fall, Matthew is an 8th grader at Benchmark. His parents gave him the option of attending Malvern Prep this year in order to have a year at a new school before he begins high school, but his answer to them was absolutely not; he felt strongly that he wanted to finish what he started at Benchmark.

It is that kind of maturity, as well as Matthew's academic growth, that the Beckets continue to appreciate with each passing year. They credit Matthew's success to not only his own hard work, but also the talents and expertise of Benchmark faculty and staff.

"He's had the most loving and caring teachers and been with people who understand his personality and understand how he learns. In turn, they have taught him to understand that he thinks a little bit differently," Kristin says. "This year will be the big year for him to take that understanding and learn how the fact that he thinks differently impacts other people. I think that will be the big growth in 8th grade."

Not only are the Beckets faithful donors to The Benchmark Fund (the school's annual fund), but Kristin is also serving her second year as Benchmark Fund Chair. In that role, Kristin encourages her fellow Benchmark parents to participate in The Benchmark Fund, bridging the gap between tuition income and the actual cost of operating the school. With Kristin's background in education (as a teacher in a private school and a principal in a public school), she understands that it is the rate of participation in giving—not necessarily the size of the gift—that can have a significant impact on the success of a school.

"Bill and I understand that the tuition we pay does not cover everything that Benchmark provides for our child, and we feel that any extra funds that we can donate to help further Matthew's education is important and valuable," she says. "The dollars we give don't even need to be spent specifically on



Bill, Kristin, and Matthew Becket

education—if it's bettering the school, then it's helping Matthew.

"I think there needs to be an understanding within a school community that tuition alone does not cover the operating costs of a school," she continues. "I am comfortable asking fellow parents to give because I've been on both sides of an annual fund. I've sat on the side of being a teacher at a school that needs to have the annual fund come in above tuition, and now I'm on the flipside of being a parent and understanding that my donation—no matter the amount—will reflect my commitment to the school. When potential donors from outside the school community see that level of commitment from parents, they are more willing to make their own contribution. No one is going to give to a school that parents don't support."

"Bill and I believe in what Benchmark has done for Matthew. That's why we give to Benchmark." 

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—Kristin Becket