What is in our “Secret Sauce?”

In 2022, SHARP Literacy celebrates a milestone - 25 years of providing elementary school students with imaginative learning experiences that build confidence, self-esteem and a greater awareness of the world.

As we were reflecting on our growth and evolution over the years, we asked our educational and community partners to share what foundational elements they believe have allowed SHARP to impact students in our communities. Several key “ingredients” emerged:

- **Integration of art** into the study of science, technology, engineering and math, encourages students to learn visually and experientially, celebrates creativity and discovery, and sharpens critical thinking.

- **Educational tours to partner sites like the Milwaukee Art Museum, Discovery World, Urban Ecology Center, etc.,** help students see things outside of their own neighborhoods, the larger world around them and explore and experience new things.

- **Parents and family are invited and encouraged to join the students** as they demonstrate and explain what they are learning. It is very powerful for students to be able to explain a concept or tell a story to their parents in their own words.

- **Engagement with students** from different schools and backgrounds provides exposure to new things and diverse perspectives.

- **The SHARP curriculum is aligned with material the students are already learning in the classroom.** The materials support and enhance what is already being taught, which is important to educators. SHARP’s programming is provided at no cost to schools.

- **SHARP has built strong relationships with school administrators and educators.** Beginning with just a few schools and a handful of teachers in 1996, to 49 schools and nearly 500 educators today, relationship have been built on trust and mutual support.

- **A strong board** comprised of individuals with unique talents and a shared passion for our mission. A number of the original board members continue to serve and support SHARP today.

Follow us over the next months as we share stories that demonstrate the power of our “secret sauce” to celebrate SHARP and our mission to help students become lifelong learners and shrink the opportunity gap that they face.