



Preparation for a Montessori Parent... *The Montessori 'Elevator Speech'*

Have you ever had people inquire about where your child/children go to school? Answering questions about what Montessori is and who we are as a school can be a little intimidating sometimes. Lucky for you, here are your answers in a brief 'elevator speech'!

The Montessori Method is an educational method for children, based on theories of child development originated by Italian doctor/educator Maria Montessori in the early 20th century. The Montessori Elementary & Middle School's culture is devoted to helping each child grow toward independence by building confidence, competence, self-esteem and respect for others. More than an approach to education, Montessori is an approach to life. The program at The Montessori Elementary & Middle School, both in philosophy and pedagogy, is based on the scientific research of Dr. Maria Montessori. The School respects children as self-directed individuals and fosters their growth toward independence and social responsibility, while creating a joyful, diverse and family oriented community. Even though we are a charter school, we are a "real" Montessori school, abiding by the fundamental principle of Montessori education.

Montessori classrooms are designed in a multi-age mix from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade, which allows for both individual and social development. The classrooms are beautiful by design. They are set up in an open style, with work areas throughout the room and materials available on accessible shelving. Most lessons are given to small groups or individual children while other children are working independently.

The school uses stories, Montessori materials, charts, time lines, objects of nature, treasures from the wealth of cultures around the world and conventional tools to teach children. Guided by the teacher, Montessori students actively participate in planning their time and taking responsibility for their work.

Dr. Montessori felt that the outdoor environment should be an extension of the classroom. She placed a great emphasis on nature and the environment. Students at The Montessori Elementary & Middle School participate in 'going out' trips, 'moving up' trips, land labs and end of the year 'big trips'. These trips may include, but are not limited to, trips involving students doing community service for various organizations which change according to need. Students learn environmental stewardship through emphasis on how they interact and participate as a member of their school community, local community, state community and the global community. We believe that independence, character and confidence are built when students are given the opportunity to experience and explore life outside their everyday comfort zone. *"There must be provision for the child to have contact with nature; to understand and appreciate the order, the harmony and the beauty in nature."* Maria Montessori

The Montessori Elementary & Middle School is unique in that it offers a full time Fine Arts program to every student. This program includes weekly in Visual Arts, General Music, Suzuki Strings, and Orchestra.

Committed to diversity, The Montessori Elementary & Middle School community is inclusive and depends on the tenets of respect. The school believes in sharing what we have with those in need and encouraging children to learn to live responsibly in the world. At The Montessori Elementary & Middle School, students are inspired to live both passionately and compassionately in a global community.

PTC Meeting wrap-up

Meeting date: Tuesday, September 1, 2015

Topic: "What is Montessori?"

- Each of our levels presented about the topic on what Montessori is in their particular level. Ms. Joy presented for our 4-6 level, Ms. Jenn presented for our 6-9 level, Ms. Karen presented for our 9-11 level and Ms. Amanda presented for our mid-school level. The over-all theme was how the basics of many concepts are built in the 4-6 group and are built upon in an age appropriate way throughout each of our levels in areas such as conflict resolution, classroom structure, utilization of the materials, and more.
- Questions were asked about various things, including:
 - *What fundraising events do we do?* Answer: The Jog-a-thon and Spring Gala are our biggest fundraisers every year. The Jog-a-thon is scheduled for October 15th and the Spring Gala is scheduled for March 4th. Our goal is to raise \$20,000 at each of these fundraisers. The money raised will go towards our Educational Assistant fund to help us keep EA's in our classrooms. The Spring Gala is booked at the Kiva Auditorium this year! Please begin thinking about what items you may be able to donate to the Silent Auction at the Spring Gala this year.
 - *Is it possible to have PTC Meetings in the evening instead?* Answer: Although we understand that some may like the idea of having meetings and events scheduled for the evenings; the reality is that it just doesn't work. Our teachers would then be required to stay (unpaid) for those events. Our students receive almost 200 hours more contact hours with our teachers compared APS schools. We have tried evening PTC Meetings in the past and the participation rate vs. burden on our staff just doesn't work.
 - *Are we getting a new website?* Answer: Yes! We are in the process of having a designer create a completely new website for our school. We are really excited about the new website. It will be user friendly and full of useful and timely information. We hope to complete it in the next month or so.
 - *Is there a way to get a left hand turn out of the school for the west side traffic?* Answer: We have tried! Our school is surrounded by two neighborhoods that do not want another stop light in this area.
 - *When can we volunteer?* Answer: We typically have volunteer opportunities beginning 6 weeks into the school year. Every volunteer is required to have a background check. We are in the process of creating a new, easier and faster background check process so please stay tuned for information on that!
- Feedback from parents who attended:
 - "I'd just like to say that today's PTC meeting was VERY informative and definitely a meeting I will make every effort to attend each month. I feel that I gained a ton of knowledge about how Montessori is integrated into each and every age group. Specifically, how OUR teachers and staff are dedicated to providing a world-class education to every student at our school! This is our 6th year at TMES and I feel just as honored & excited to have such an AMAZING education experience for my kids as I did the day my oldest child's name was pulled in the lottery! We are truly blessed to be apart of this community! Thank you TMES/TMMS teachers, staff, students & parents for all that you do!"
 - "I really enjoyed the PTC meeting this morning. It helped me get over my Montessori 'free for all' thinking :) I definitely plan on attending more meetings and getting my parent friends attend."

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 13th from 9:15 – 10:15 am. We hope you will join us!!