

WINTER 2024

THE SEED

ANNUAL REPORT



A LETTER FROM THE *Head of School*



Dear Families and Friends,

Raising a child is a remarkable journey, one that involves understanding the spontaneous urge towards development within each child. As Maria Montessori wisely noted, it is the role of a parent to observe and support this growth rather than force it. At Litchfield Montessori School, we embrace the philosophy of “follow the child” and “trust the process.” This means creating an environment where children are empowered to take charge of their own development. Our classrooms, equipped with specially designed Montessori materials and diverse programs, are tailored to cater to the unique needs of each child, fostering independence, perseverance, and confidence.

Our commitment to Montessori philosophy is embedded in the classroom environments and in our extracurricular programs. We’ve all seen the exceptional artwork our children produce with Monika and the Season of Lights and Children’s House Winter Concert were evidence of the impact Gina, our new music specialist, has had on our school. Time learning outdoors, Spanish language, art, music, and movement are embedded in each child’s day. All of the adults in your child’s life here at school contribute to an environment that encourages development at a natural pace. With a focus on observation, encouragement, and gradual introduction of challenges, our children build confidence as they navigate through various stages of learning.

Litchfield Montessori School is not just an educational institution; it is a community. We understand that the journey of parenting can be both rewarding and challenging. To support our parents, we provide resources in weekly updates, monthly Community Circle events, and conferences where guidance is offered to establish routines and consistency at home. Join us for coffee on Friday mornings, where you’ll find support from faculty, staff, and other families, creating a village that surrounds and uplifts every child. Annual events such as the Fall Festival, Wine & Beer Tasting Gala, the spring play, and moving on ceremony bring our families together to celebrate milestones and build lasting connections. Play Dates and Game Nights on the first Friday of each month provide opportunities for current and alumni families to connect and share experiences.

Litchfield Montessori School has been a home to families for over 51 years. Our doors are always open. Please stop by, share your experiences, and join us in discussing dreams for the future of this extraordinary place. We extend our gratitude to the entire LMS community for being an integral part of this incredible journey. Your dedication and support make Litchfield Montessori School a unique and thriving community.

With gratitude and joy,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane Hart".

Diane Hart
Head of School

Board of Trustees

Dear Litchfield Montessori School Parents,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a member of the Board of Trustees, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some information about our roles and responsibilities within the school community.

The Board of Trustees is a dedicated group of individuals committed to the mission and values of Litchfield Montessori School. Our primary role is to provide oversight and support for the school's overall development and sustainability. We wholeheartedly believe in LMS' mission and are deeply invested in maintaining and enhancing the educational experience for the children in our area.

One of the critical ways in which the Board contributes to the school's development is through strategic planning. We actively engage in discussions and decision-making processes that shape the school's future. This includes setting long-term goals, identifying opportunities for growth and improvement, and ensuring that our educational programs align with our mission.

Financial support is another essential aspect of our involvement. While the Treasurer and Finance Committee have specific roles in managing the school's finances, each Trustee has a fiduciary responsibility to ensure sound financial management. This responsibility drives the board to work collectively to secure the necessary resources to sustain and enhance the school's operations, programs, and facilities.

Furthermore, our commitment to the school extends to annual and capital giving. We actively participate in fundraising efforts and encourage other members of our community to join us in supporting the school financially. These funds are crucial for maintaining the high standards of the school's programming, facilitating infrastructure improvements that benefit our students, and supporting professional development for our teachers.

The Board of Trustees is deeply invested in the success of Litchfield Montessori School. We are here to serve as stewards of the school's mission, ensure sound financial management, and actively contribute to its ongoing development. We have been thrilled with Diane's energy, expertise, and focus as she leads LMS into the next 50 years of its mission. It is clear that the team Diane has assembled in the front office and in the classrooms is having a direct impact on the positive outcomes that are being created on a daily basis.

We welcome your questions, feedback, and involvement in the life of the school. Together, we can continue to make Litchfield Montessori School a thriving, nurturing, and enriching environment for our students.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership in your child's education.

Sincerely,



Chris Ford

President, Litchfield Montessori School Board of Trustees

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Upcoming Events

WINE & BEER TASTING GALA & SILENT AUCTION

Friday, February 23rd

COMMUNITY CIRCLE

Thursday, March 7th at 3:30pm
Wednesday, April 10th at 5:30pm
followed by evening parent social

SPRING CLEANUP

Friday, April 19th after school

COMMUNITY CIRCLE

Thursday, May 9th at 3:30pm

GRANDPARENTS DAY

Friday, May 10th

SCHOOL PLAY

Thursday, May 30th

MOVING UP CEREMONY

Friday, June 7th

THE *Annual Fund*



Dear LMS Community,

When asked to contribute to this page of The Seed, I looked through previous annual fund appeal letters in search for a clue as to how to approach this topic. The unifying theme was clear... Litchfield Montessori is a personal experience in every single way. Any accurate assessment of the Montessori experience has to begin with “the personal.”

My personal journey with Montessori took a somewhat unusual trajectory. When our son, Ben, now 42 years old, was enrolled in Children’s House, my wife Deb brought her artistic skills and classroom experience, and most of all, herself to the community. It was a perfect match of teacher to the institution.

It was not to last long. The cancer with which she had dueled for over a decade returned for one final battle. Her room at Charlotte Hungerford was decorated with student work filling an entire wall. Every picture bore the same unspoken personal message; “We love you, Deb!” In the array of named stones in front of the school building, there is one dedicated to the memory of Deborah Hamlet Putnam.

Personal.

Thirty years later, I’ve remarried, and my stepdaughter has given us a granddaughter. When the subject turned to investigating day care for our newest family member, I pointed out that the formidable expense of day care could better be invested in Montessori instead.

On a late summer day, all three generations drove to Northfield. Betsy Johnson met us and led us into a classroom to talk. While parents and grandparents chatted, driven by the inherent curiosity of a two-year old, Alexa explored the environment. As Betsy told us about the program, she subtly took in Alexa’s explorations. The subsequent news was terrific: she was IN! She still is, now in Grail’s Lower Elementary classroom.

I am now retired, but I spent nearly four decades teaching, in both public and private schools, as well as boarding and day schools ranging from sixth grade to college courses as an adjunct. As a generalization, they were teacher-centered dispensers of factual information– the “what.” Evaluation was most often based on factual recall rather than acquisition of method. At Montessori, the course of study is focused on student learning via the interactive relationship between the student and directress/director.

This brings us back around to “the personal.” Montessori thrives on community support to function at its best. It does indeed take a village. An important part of that interaction is the financial support we all contribute to the Annual Fund. Through the years, this fund has played a vital part in the continuing work of our school community. It needs every member to be part of the process.

Some time ago, a teacher of mine made a nearly off-hand comment in class, which has resonated with me ever since. “When you think about it, a budget is a philosophical statement. It’s a testament of what matters to you.”

Your philosophical statement is your contribution. It’s...well, personal. Please join me in making that statement.

Many thanks,
Brock Putnam

Former Parent & Current Grandparent

Annual Giving

2022-2023

FOUNDER'S CIRCLE

Amy & John Ducci
Heather & Chris Ford
Julie & Gregory Miller
Brock Putnam
Lindsey & Jonathan Rotolo
Triford Foundation

COMMUNITY CIRCLE

Sheila & Ronald Caselas
Carole St. Mark & Charles Conn
Mary E. Kranzlin
Rachel McGinnis
Joseph & Lynette McKnight

HEAD'S CIRCLE

Anne-Marie & David Fenn
Susan Ford
Linda & Alan Harbec
Susan Vontell & Dr. Michael Kovalchik III
Richard Loyer
Caroline Nastro & Brian Nurenberg
George Seabourne
Linda Saarnijoki & Rusty Davis
Sarah Westby & Devin Hartley

FRIEND'S CIRCLE

Sarah & Michael Bresson
Eliza Davis
William Hotchkiss
J & J Precision, Inc.
John Merrill
Tanya & Anthony Mongitore
Margaret & Donald Samela
Emily & Bruce Swomley

SUPPORTER'S CIRCLE

Michelle Augustine
Sharon Baird
David Barberet
Angela & Kevin Bartolotta
Candace & William Boden
Michelle Brady
Gwendolyn Burgess
Amanda Caron
Michele Caulfield
Judy Conroy
Samuel Cochrane
Deborah DeGuire
Melissa D'Aversa
Alana DiPesa & Tom Truelove
Joline Douglas
John Dwan
Richard Dyer
Kelsey Ferguson
Donna Fortier
Elizabeth & Peter Frew
Kathleen K. Furman
Jennifer & Matthew Gagnon
Linda Garrettson
Monika Geerling
Kate Gnitzcavich
Megen & Matthew Groski
Elizabeth Hagymasi
Carmela & Mark Hansen
Carl & Patricia Hart
Diane Hart
Deborah Helck
Gina Hepp
Jamie Hughes Burnop
Cara & Daniel Johnson

Elizabeth & Mark Johnson
James Kaniewski
Grail Kearney
Megan & Michael Kowalchick
Joy Lapsertis
Jessica Veneziano-Lemos & Matthew Lemos
Thomasina & Steven Levy
Stephen Lewis
Doug Maclean
Justine Dibenedetto & Benjamin Mccusker
Tyler Miller
Kelly & Jamie Morin
Julie & John Murrone
Naugatuck Valley Electric, LLC
Alyson & Brian Paliwoda
Susan & Jason Patrick
Susan & John Payne
Eva & Tom Pedro
Meredith & William Penfield
Laura Bertrand & Stephen Pfender
Jay Potter
Michelle & Joseph Pratt
Barbara Putnam & Bob Berson
Mollie Smith & Julio Quintanilla
Sadie Rotolo
Jeffrey Schmidt
Ian Schmidt
Danielle Shaker
Danielle Snyder
Helena & Zachary Sweet
Terrance Tyree
Gloria & Charles Vegliante
Elizabeth Wasiutynski
Joanna & William Wesson
Bernice Wright



Montessori FOR LIFE: THE ALUM

NURTURING INDEPENDENCE: THE MONTESSORI ALUM'S JOURNEY – DIANE HART



Montessori alumni share a unique bond shaped by the principles and experiences that have guided them through their formative years. The Montessori approach, with its emphasis on independence, self-discovery, and community, leaves an indelible mark on our lives, whether we are among the alumni or the parents and grandparents who have chosen this gift for the young people in our lives. A Montessori education has an enduring impact. It continues to shape our paths long after we leave Litchfield Montessori School.

One of the foundational pillars of Montessori education is the belief in a child's innate ability to learn and grow independently. Danielle Snyder, a Montessori alumna and Children's House Directress at LMS, believes her Montessori education, with the freedom to choose activities and set her own pace, instilled in her a sense of responsibility that continues to guide her decision-making today. She says it supported her ability to manage her time. "You learn that there are limitations on the way you spend your time", Danielle explains. "You can't do it all in a morning work cycle. There's a freedom in realizing that the choices you make have power. What we're hoping to do in Montessori is empower children to make choices." Danielle is new to LMS this year. She attended a Montessori school as a child and later trained to be a guide. This preparation is evident in her adult life. She is a dedicated and talented faculty member, with excellent time management skills!

Montessori classrooms are microcosms of the real world, where students learn not only academic but also crucial life skills. Practical life activities, sensorial experiences, and exposure to various subjects provide a holistic education. These experiences translate into practical skills that serve

the individual well in adulthood, fostering resilience, adaptability, and a lifelong love for learning. In our youngest classroom, our toddlers learn autonomy in the prepared environment. Susan Patrick, LMS alumna and guide in our toddler classroom, shares that, when the young child feels this sense of agency and confidence in themselves, it extends to their experience in the real world. She embodies the patient, confident Montessorian through and through and, as a guide, sows the seeds for this in future generations.

Montessori education places a strong emphasis on community, teaching the value of collaboration and mutual respect. Working alongside peers, irrespective of age, encourages a sense of unity and belonging. This collaborative spirit proves invaluable in personal and

"Montessori classrooms are microcosms of the real world, where students learn not only academic but also crucial life skills."

professional lives, enabling Montessorians to navigate diverse environments with ease. The sense of belonging to a larger Montessori community is a unique aspect of the journey. Even as alumni, the connections forged during your time in the Montessori environment remain strong. Events and gatherings, such as Game Night on the first Friday of every month here at LMS provide opportunities to stay connected and engage with current students and faculty, for a continued sense of community and shared experiences.

In Memoriam FORMER FACULTY & STAFF

DEVOTED HUSBAND OF OUR SCHOOL'S FOUNDER, MARY LOYER

RICHARD "DICK" LOYER

1938 – 2023

Richard "Dick" Loyer, the loving and devoted husband of our school's founder, Mary Loyer, died in Litchfield on August 27th at the age of 85.

Dick attended the Cranbrook School in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan where he met Mary while singing in the Gilbert and Sullivan chorus. He went on to study engineering at the University of Michigan and then attended medical school at Wayne State University.

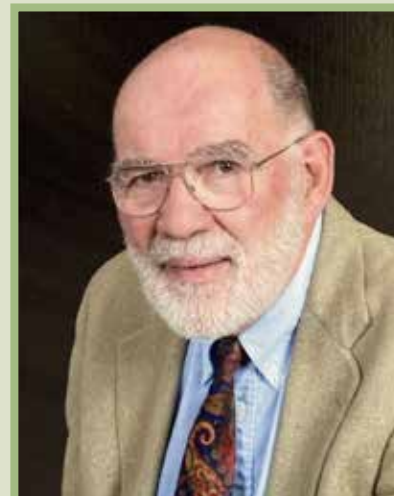
He did his residency in orthopedic surgery at Harper Hospital in Detroit and then moved with Mary to Connecticut where he practiced orthopedic surgery at Waterbury Orthopedic Associates and Waterbury Hospital for 37 years. An early adopter of arthroscopic surgery, Dick was always educating himself and loved listening to his patients' stories.

He had a broad array of hobbies and passions: singing, sailing, tennis, skiing, reading, woodworking, gardening and canning jams. He sang with his wife in the Hartford Chorale and their church choir at St. Michael's in Litch-

field. Dick volunteered at the Carlos Otis Clinic on Stratton Mountain in Vermont and served on the vestry and as warden at St. Michael's. He was a faithful supporter of LMS, and local painters.

Dick volunteered at the Litchfield Food Pantry and the Torrington Soup Kitchen. He was also a member of the First Litchfield Artillery Regiment, a reenactment group that was responsible for recreating the tolling of the Liberty Bell at 2 p.m. every Fourth of July through a 13-gun salute and the simultaneous ringing of all the church bells in Litchfield.

His obituary stated that Dick died the same way he lived, with bravery, clarity, determination, and calm dignity. LMS is extremely grateful for all his support over the past 50 years. We wouldn't be here without him. ■



As Litchfield Montessori alumni, you understand the transformative power of this place. Many of you learned here early on the joy in giving back to your community. Our Montessori roots inspire us to contribute positively to the world around us. The Montessori journey doesn't end at the Moving On ceremony. It serves as a foundation for a lifetime of growth, exploration, and meaningful connections. You carry the torch of independence, curiosity, and community, lighting the way for future generations to thrive in a world Maria Montessori dreamed you would shape. May your shared experiences continue to shape and inspire you as you navigate the exciting paths that lie ahead, confident in the knowledge that our Montessori foundation is a gift that keeps on giving.

The social aptitude that comes with the universal Montessori experience impacts how you live and work with

others. Regardless of what is innate in your personality, you were shaped by the nurturing environment that allowed you to become your best self. As you engage in human interactions at home and in the world, think about how you are carrying what you absorbed in your experience and how you can contribute to this mission. ■



Send us news of your achievements, graduations, weddings, and births! We love to hear from our alumni!

Stay Connected!

www.litchfieldmontessori.org

Ed Thorney's RETIREMENT

– BY DONNA FORTIER

What words could possibly be adequate to express everyone's appreciation of Ed Thorney and his work? Perhaps a song is a better way to go about it. One of the many things Ed brought to our children is the school song, "My Peace" by Woody Guthrie. The song brings everyone together by illuminating that we all have the same gift to give. Woody had an awful lot to say during turbulent times in this country, but one of my favorite quotes of his is, "The best way to get to know people is to go and listen to their music." Listen to their music. Be in their presence and listen.

We have been fortunate enough to be in Ed's presence, listening to his music for the past eight years. His cheerful disposition, quiet wisdom and absolute devotion to nature and our children has been the drum for the Litchfield Montessori orchestra, keeping us playing in time, heading in the right direction, and finding laughter, even during some unprecedented times.

Ed's work at Litchfield Montessori has been a joy to our ears. His music. The music he brought to our children and our community by sharing his love of nature, of the woods and water, the native animals, rock climbing,

creating stools and benches out of fallen trees... that will be the Grammy, the legacy he leaves with Litchfield Montessori for generations.

As we move on, under Ed's guidance, we are creating a new Wilderness Team, which will continue the Outdoor Ed program for our children. As Ed moves on, we know he will be living his best outdoor Ed life. We can picture him playing guitar on his back porch surrounded by family & friends, visiting his grandchildren, woodworking and clearing trails... all while quietly dispensing wisdom to those he loves.

As you probably know, we all are experiencing a little separation anxiety over Ed's retirement, but we are Montessorians. We know not to make this separation more difficult by saying the words "Good Bye," but instead, "We will see you later, Ed, at singing time, near Potter's barn." ■



Wilderness Program THRIVES WITH NEW SPECIALISTS

A vibrant and innovative wilderness program continues at LMS, guided by the expertise of the school's new specialists, Michelle Augustine and Jay Potter. Nature exploration, hiking expeditions, fairy house building, crafting winter wreaths, picnics and storytelling allow students to discover the beauty of the natural world firsthand. Foraging trips teach them to identify and process acorns, rose hips, and pine, imparting valuable knowledge about local flora. Team building is a cornerstone of the wilderness program, with activities ranging from LMS-specific Nature Scavenger Hunts to games and activities that encourage collaboration, communication, and problem-solving—essential skills that extend beyond the wilderness and into everyday life.

The community service aspect of the program is exemplified through leaf raking, instilling a sense of responsibility towards the environment. Michelle and Jay have also introduced students to the art of knot tying, including macramé. As students progress, they begin to create intricate and purposeful designs, adding a touch of creativity to their outdoor adventures.



3RD YEAR TRIP TO *Norwalk Maritime Center* – GRAIL KEARNEY

Last year's field trip to the Norwalk Maritime Center in early June was a marvelous experience! Ed and I were lucky enough to accompany our small group of third year children on their final Lower El field trip. Upon our arrival, we set out on a self guided tour of the many interesting exhibits. The children had a wonderful time observing and petting the large collection of stingrays. They also enjoyed watching the nonstop antics of the sea otters!

We also spent time looking at the seemingly endless collection of invertebrate life. Having just finished their third year extended study of the Timeline of Life, the children were happy to actually observe living specimens of the very creatures they had been learning about this year. Finally, after sharing a picnic by the water, we returned to see an exciting IMAX film entitled "Octopus." All in all, it was a fun and memorable adventure with our third years! ■



In the colder months, students learn essential survival skills such as preparing kindling and tinder for a woodstove and fire pit. One of the highlights is the opportunity to prepare and cook baked oatmeal over an open campfire, creating a memorable and delicious outdoor experience.

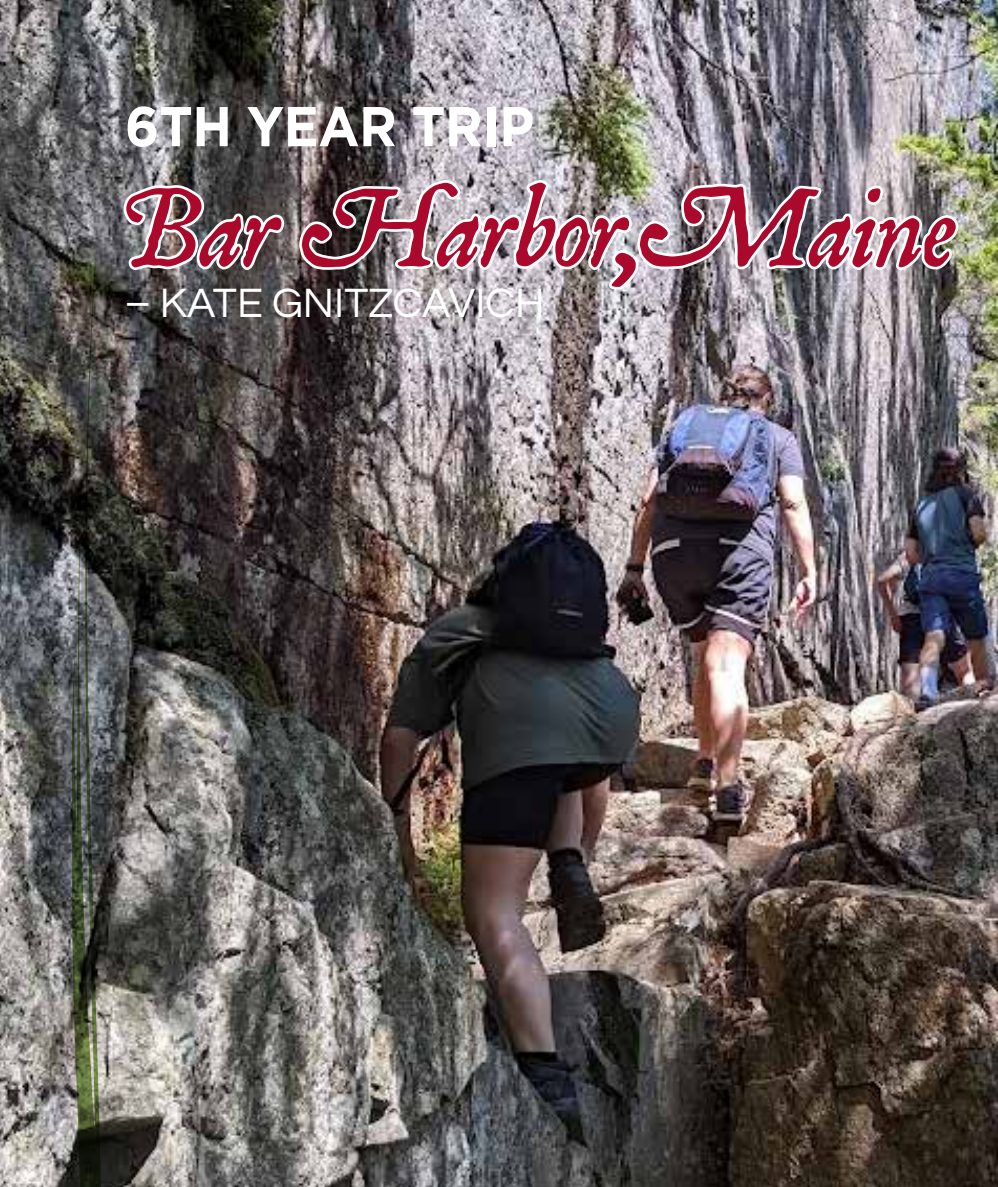
Litchfield Montessori School's wilderness program is a transformative journey that instills a deep connection with nature, promotes essential life skills, and fosters a sense of community and stewardship among its students. As these young adventurers embrace the great outdoors, they are not only learning about the wilderness but also discovering more about themselves. ■



6TH YEAR TRIP

Bar Harbor, Maine

— KATE GNITZCAVICH



Our sixth year trips are the highly anticipated culmination of the children's years at Litchfield Montessori, an experience that our students talk about well after their graduation. Besides having the opportunity to travel with their friends outside of the classroom, students are immersed in an holistic educational experience at an important developmental time of growth. These trips offer unique opportunities for our students to deepen their relationships with their peers and their teachers.

Our sixth year trip to Bar Harbor, Maine and Acadia National Park last spring had been something our students had been looking forward to for a long time. Student Sandrine Sweet '23 began talking about the trip at the end of fifth grade! To help students feel directly connected to preparations for the trip, they become involved in the fundraising process. Last year, the sixth graders ordered and delivered Monday pizza each week, held bake sales, ran a face painting booth, and sold tickets and refreshments at our first Family Game Night.

Last year's trip had many highlights, and each student had a particular favorite— hiking Great Head Trail by Sand Beach to a beautiful outlook, splashing and swimming in Echo Lake, hunting through tidepools and combing for sea glass, whale watching with the power of the wind and ocean spray on our faces; and, of course, one cannot forget a trip to Mount Desert Ice Cream and a round of pirate mini golf!

As always, I look forward to sharing these experiences with my students. Last year was all the more special as both Upper Elementary Guides, Katherine Vandiver and myself, could be the chaperones for this trip. Our hope is that students come away from these trips with a stronger sense of themselves and appreciation for each other. They have spent some of their most impressionable years together and will be moving on with a feeling of gratitude and a spark for adventure. ■

Moving On Ceremony 2023

QUOTES FROM THE STUDENT'S MOVING ON SPEECHES MADE AT THE MOVING ON CEREMONY IN JUNE

HUNTER PATRICK

"The future belongs to those who prepare for it today." This quote reminds me that at LMS I became a more independent person. For the fifth years that will become six years next year, have the best final year of your time at Montessori and remember to cherish the things that seem little, because someday you'll look back and realize that they were the big things.

JONATHAN POTTER

Dig into what you're interested in and write about it...writing about what interests you helps put your thoughts into words. If you can't concentrate, I do recommend taking a five-minute break before you go back to work. It normally prepares me for the work that needs my best attention and refreshes my senses.

CHLOE HART

I've been mentally writing my graduation speech since first grade, but after six amazing years, I'm at a loss for words. Satya Nani said, "A little progress each day adds up to big results." What this quote means to me is that even though something may seem like it's far away, in reality, it's actually sooner than you think. For the people that are staying at LMS, here's a bit of advice... if you're having a hard time, it's not going to last forever. You have to be strong through it, and then you will move past it... focus on the present; you can't change the past, just the future, and that starts now.

EPHRAM SEAVEY

Two good habits that I will take with me from LMS are using different strategies to help me stay on task, and meeting deadlines. One way that helps me focus at school is finding quiet work spaces. A Montessori classroom makes it easier to move around and find new spaces to work. Sometimes it is helpful to be able to work at different spots. Meeting deadlines is a skill I have practiced in Upper El. Having a deadline helps me to remember to get things done. This is an important skill that shows others that you can complete things on time and that people can count on you.

SANDRINE SWEET

I would like to start my speech with this quote from Dr. Suess, "Why fit in, when you were born to stand out?" I chose this quote, because it reminds me of how at LMS everyone is awesome in their own way. They can be fast, funny, smart, or not quite sure who you want to be yet- like me.

BUNNY WESSON

There are so many things I've learned here, but mostly independence, responsibility, and problem solving. One example of problem solving is how I used to not get along with one of my friends, but I started talking with her, and now I can say with confidence if I'm doing a trust fall she will catch me. If you just talk with someone and listen to them, you can strengthen your bond with that person significantly. These are all traits I'll bring with me to my next school.



THE MAGIC OF *Music*

– BY GINA HEPP

Music is a global force that unites us all as humans. It has the power to make us dance, sing, jump for joy and weep, all while acting as a vehicle for communication between people throughout the world. Music in the life of a child can be as simple as the satisfaction that comes from singing a folk song in a circle; however, the magic lies in the multitude of lessons that one musical experience can bring.

As Montessorians, we know that young children learn best through experience and activation of their senses. We engage the ear, the eye, the voice, the hand, the body, and the soul of the child to create an experience that supports the whole child. If you were to spend a day in music class at LMS, you'd notice that one of my very favorite methods of teaching music is to dive right in– no need to chat about it, let's do it!

When learning a new song, such as “Funga Alafia,” we immerse ourselves in the melody. We practice call and response, student-lead singing, and part singing. Then we start to ask questions and add layers– how can we add hand movements, body movements, instruments? Can we sing it while playing a musical game? What does this song mean and where does it come from? What does the written music look like? How can we teach it to others?

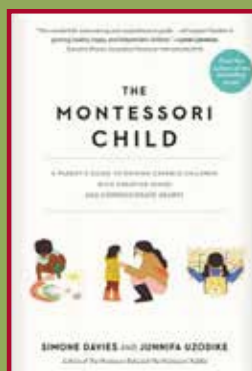
How can we perform it? How has our understanding of this song evolved over time?

This is the magic of music. The questions, the ideas, the experiments, the joy! Music not only offers the learning of pitch, rhythm, beat, etc., but it supports all learning. We practice leadership and social skills, literacy, executive functioning, problem solving, and experience the gift of connectedness to cultures near and far.

Maria Montessori said, “We tend to think that the realm of music is the privileged area of some happy few. Experience has taught us, however, that if offered the right kind of education from a very early age onwards, anyone is capable of entering the realm of music. Not everyone has the talent to practice music at an artistic level, or create new work, but everyone can reach a stage where they can enjoy it.”

We all are music makers; it's our birthright. So, the next time your child begins singing, dancing, or expressing themselves musically in your presence, I challenge you to join them. You just might find yourself enjoying it as much as your child! Together, let's continue to plant the seeds for a lifelong love and appreciation for music. ■

RECOMMENDED READING



When new YPC families join us, they receive a copy of *The Montessori Toddler*, by Simone Davies, recommended by Susan Patrick. It provides a clear introduction to the Montessori approach for parents of young children. Davies has another book coming out this March titled *The Montessori Child*. We'll be sure to put copies in the foyer

library when it comes out. Our monthly Community Circle offerings address the topics our families need throughout the year. In the spring, there will be a book discussion on *Hold Onto Your Kids*, by Gordon Neufeld and Gabor Maté. There are a few school

copies already in circulation. Whether or not you are able to finish the book in time, feel free to join us for some take-away notes and conversation about our role as adults in the lives of our children.

New Language & Cultural Exchange Bookshelf

Help us fill our new Language & Cultural Exchange book shelf in the hallway where families can find books that represent the diversity in our school. If you speak a language other than English at home, please contribute texts ranging from board and picture to chapter books. Adults and children alike will enjoy learning new languages and building our awareness of each other's cultural backgrounds.



RUNNING CLUB - 5K ROAD RACE

Healthy for Life

Our community came together for a third year to run a 5K at White Memorial Conservation Center and the Litchfield Community Greenway. Runners from the school and wider community joined us. Thanks to our partners, faculty, staff, and families for making this event a success!



Family Game Night

DAVID SAMELA AND ARI SEAVEY

Game Night is a really fun event which is also a fundraiser for the sixth year class trip. Attendees can choose from many different types of games to play. Some of our favorite board and card games are: Hero Quest, Go Nuts For Donuts, Five Minute Dungeon, Ice Cool and Oregon Trail. Parents, teachers, and students can also bring games from home to the community event. There are often snacks such as pizza, popcorn, and cookies. There will be a lot more game nights to come... the first Friday of every month! We hope to see you there!



LMS Bookfair

AMY DUCCI

The Curious Cat Bookshop provided LMS with the quintessential book fair experience; bringing most of us back to a time we so fondly remember as kids. Stacy Whitman's perfectly curated titles provided our children the opportunity to relish in books they were familiar with as well as explore new topics to appease their ever growing, curious minds. All a child needed to do was tell Stacy about a particular topic that interested them, and she immediately was able to offer several suggestions and often a warm sentiment to her own experience with that particular topic or title. The desire that Stacy has to cultivate a love for reading in young minds makes her a perfect addition to our LMS community. We look forward to our next book fair with the Curious Cat Bookshop!



Field Day 2023

— SAM COCHRANE

Our 2023 LMS Field Day was a wonderful community event for our Extended Day and Elementary students, a huge success thanks largely to the kindness of our family volunteers. Thank you so much to everyone who helped! Our day was themed on the school play, *Robin Hood*. The students got to spend a fun-filled morning participating in several field day activities with their families as either team guides or activity guides. This was followed by an action-packed afternoon at Boulder Ridge, including a kid-favorite lunch buffet, zip lines, kayaks, tennis, and hours of pool time. As you are probably aware, Field Day at Boulder Ridge is one of the most anticipated Elementary events of the year! I look forward to seeing you again at this year's event. ■



Fall Festival OCTOBER 2023

The weather threatened to put a damper on our annual Fall Festival this year, but the rain held off and we were able to enjoy a cloudy but pleasant day! We had our usual fun and games with the addition of a wonderfully curated book fair by Stacy Whitman of The Curious Cat Bookstore in Winsted. Our second annual 'Children's Choice Tea-Cup Auction' was a success. Thank you to Hindsight BBQ for joining us again and providing delicious provisions, as well as the Upper Elementary students and Children's House faculty who hosted our concession fundraiser tables. We are also grateful to Michael Ostuni for his time and talents capturing the day in photographs.

Thank you to all who braved the weather! We look forward to seeing everyone next year!



School Play

ROBIN HOOD AND THE HEROES OF SHERWOOD FOREST – ELIZABETH DAYTON

Last year's drama production was "Robin Hood and the Heroes of Sherwood Forest," by Randy Wyatt. This new adaptation of the well-known English tale had it all! One of the elements that made this version a wonderful fit for our cast was that it emphasized a community of heroes rather than a one-man approach to heroism. Robin Hood, Little John, Friar Tuck, Scarlet, Alan-a-Dale and David of Dunsmuir all come together to save the poor people of Nottingham from the unjust taxation and poverty at the hands of Prince John and his Sheriff. With two orphans, Maid Marion's handmaiden, and a mysterious stranger, the adventure took many twists and turns. This community approach the show takes is a mirror to the collaborative approach central to life at Litchfield Montessori School. The students, teachers, and the amazing staff of the Landmark Community Theatre were once again an incredible team to work with. Thank you to everyone who came together to help make this production such a success. ■





Playground CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The indoor Montessori classroom environment is made up of beautiful, carefully chosen materials that are developmentally appropriate for children. These materials are often made of wood and simple in design. The outdoor environment should be much the same, but provide more space for free movement to support a child's physical development. With your help, our children will have an outdoor environment that extends the beauty within our school's walls to the structures on our playground.

We have 100 acres of woods where older children enjoy creative free play, building forts in a "town" they've endearingly named "Mudville." Adjacent to the woods is our playground, which has served us well over the years, but has reached the end of its lifecycle. As parts of the playground have deteriorated, we have had to remove those pieces, leaving our students with fewer opportunities to climb, swing, and slide together. A new playground, with elements chosen by our trained Montessori faculty, is ready to be installed, but we need your help. Will you support us by playing a part in the next phase of our school's history?

We are raising funds to remove the old playground structures, landscape the space, and build a fresh, attractive playground. Aligned with Litchfield Montessori's mission and philosophy, the structures are designed to encourage independence, support the child's sense of wonder, and foster opportunities for free movement as well as social interaction.

In building this new playground, we will not only provide what our students need during the school day, but also a space for families from our school and the larger community to use after school hours. Many families come for playdates, or use the playground while soccer or other community events take place on the local Northfield Park field, basketball court or pavilion. In partnership with local donors, businesses, and grant organizations, we will ensure our children have play structures that meet the needs of the school and the wider community.

With your contribution, you will build upon the legacy Litchfield Montessori School has been establishing for the past 50 years.

We are raising funds to remove the old playground structures, landscape the space, and build a fresh, attractive playground.

Your contribution is appreciated!

Scan the QR code below to take you to the Playground Fundraiser page on our website.



Digital Renders of the Proposed Playground





Parent Guild

FOSTERING COMMUNITY AND ADVANCING
THE SCHOOL'S MISSION – HEATHER FORD



Parenting is an extraordinary journey, filled with both joys and challenges. My husband Chris and I became part of the Litchfield Montessori community in 2011 when our daughter Hadley joined the Young People's Classroom. Our son Christopher, now in his sixth year, began his journey at LMS in 2014. For over 12 years, the Parent Guild has served important roles in my family's life and the success of our school community. These roles are: fostering community and support, acting as ambassadors, and supporting the mission of the school.

The Parent Guild brings parents from different towns and backgrounds together, provides support, champions our school, and ensures that our school is well equipped to carry out its mission for the next 50 years! Being part of the Parent Guild for such an important stage in my children's lives has been a blessing. This June, when my son moves on from LMS, I will certainly miss this fellowship, but know that the strong connections my family has made at LMS will continue to shape our lives for years to come. ■

FOSTERING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND SUPPORT

Raising young children is not without its challenges. The Parent Guild strives to create opportunities for parents to connect, share experiences, provide one another with support, and forge lasting friendships.

ACTING AS AMBASSADORS

The Parent Guild plays a role in welcoming potential families into our community by sharing their own experiences and the Montessori philosophy with others in their personal networks and local communities.

SUPPORTING THE MISSION

Through fundraising, giving, volunteering, and networking, members of the Parent Guild help to provide the school with the resources it needs to thrive.



Parent Contributions *Gratitude*

There are numerous ways we build community with each other. For many of us, the most satisfying way to connect is to contribute. Thank you to all who have volunteered to make a difference in the life of our school.

A big **THANK YOU** goes out to **Amy Ducci, Heather Ford, and Jenn DeGloma** for heading up the Parent Guild relaunch! This effort has provided more opportunities for parents to gather and get involved, gifts and snacks for teacher appreciation days, and helped to make the gala a success last year.

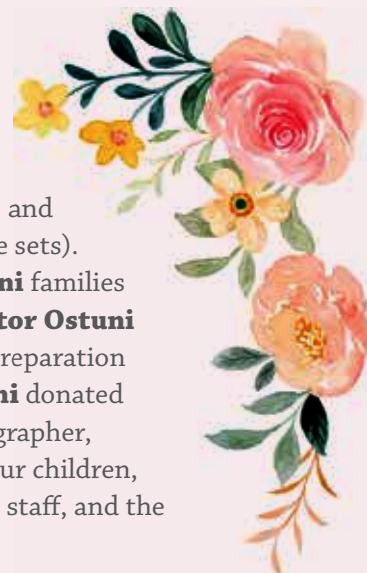
A lot went on last summer when nobody was around to see it! **Mike Bresson** offered his time and tools to take on a variety of tasks, including work in the woods, refinishing a Montessori hand washing table, and installing cork to refurbish old bulletin boards.

Chris Ford designed and built the beautiful new cubbies and benches in the Middle Kingdom, and **Matthew Seavey** cut down a large hanging branch.

MUCH APPRECIATION to our fall cleanup volunteers: **Sarah, Mike, and Willow Bresson; Zach Sweet, Maia and Hugh Cahill** (with **Chloe and Anne Marie**); **Peter Allen**; and **Julia and Vincent Cruz** (with **Leo Cruz**). And a sincere thanks for the donations of stone we have used on paths and the back steps from **Michael Hychko**.

Fall Festival was a huge community effort. **THANK YOU** to: **Ryan Crichton** (tables), **Amy, John, and Cody Ducci** (setup, school tours, and music), **Heather and Hadley Ford** (tours and cleanup), **Jeff Schmitt, Jr.** (Hindsight BBQ), **Jeff Schmitt, Sr.** (pumpkins and hay), **Caroline Nastro** (guest author at our book

fair), **Matthew Seavey** (helping run games), **Justin Watley, Mike Bresson, and Manny Cruz** (dance floor set up and removal), and the **Duccis, Harts, and Rotolos** (ladder toss and cornhole sets). Thank you to the **Hepp and Ostuni** families for their generous donations. **Victor Ostuni** helped with a variety of tasks in preparation for the event, and **Michael Ostuni** donated his talent as a professional photographer, taking gorgeous photographs of our children, Montessori materials, faculty and staff, and the larger community.



THANK YOU to **Margaret Samela** and **Crystal Seavey** for offering their sewing skills through leadership in clubs for our children and sewing materials, costumes, curtains, and floor pillows. **THANK YOU**, too, to their talented protégés: **Abby**, who made a basket for Fall Festival with doll clothing she sewed herself, and **Ari**, who helped mend our floor pillows in the Great Hall.

Continued Alumni support came from: The **Rondos Family**, with gifts of delicious food for community celebrations, **Brock Putnam**, with his work on the Advancement Committee, The **Kowalchick Family**, with the Giving Tree, and **Eva Pedro and Lindsey Rotolo**, with their work on our annual publication, *The Seed*.

OUR APPRECIATION for such a devoted, selfless and helpful community can not be overstated. **THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!**



Additional Considerations

ANNUAL FUND

Our deepest gratitude to all who give and help to make our annual campaign a success.



To make a donation, scan the QR code. Thank you!



Stay Connected!
litchfieldmontessori.org



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Northfield, CT 06778
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litchfieldmontessori.org

9TH *Annual* WINE & BEER TASTING

SAVE THE DATE

FEBRUARY 23rd
5:30 - 8:30 pm

The Litchfield Inn
Co-sponsored by
Litchfield Montessori School &
County Wine & Spirits

Entertainment by
Brother Other
Door Prizes
Silent Auction

**ADVANCE TICKETS
\$50**

\$55 AT THE DOOR

Order tickets online:
www.litchfieldmontessori.org
or call 860.283.5920