

# MOUNTAIN LAUREL

MountainLaurelMontessori.org  
2016-2017

*In praise of our learning communities*





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Kris Boucher, Chairperson  
Mona Nixon, Head of School  
KC Dickman  
Stephen Graham  
Maureen McGowan  
Ernie Ryles  
Carolyn Linke  
Meg DeMato

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Mona Nixon

##### Co-Director

Meg DeMato

##### Business Manager

Rose DiNinno

##### Marketing Coordinator

Elaine Glier

##### Advancement Coordinator

Misty Brown

##### Administration Assistant

Jessica Kuzmick

#### LOCATIONS

##### Main Campus

155 Biggs Drive  
Front Royal, VA 22630

##### Junior High Campus

23 Sunny Slope Lane  
Flint Hill, VA 22627

##### Phone

(540) 636-4257

##### Website

mountainlaurelmontessori.org

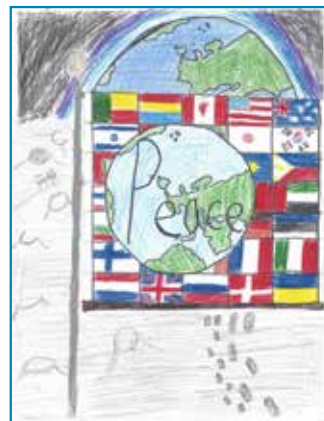
##### Email

info@mlm-school.org

Mountain Laurel Montessori School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion or ethnic or national origin in the administration of its educational program, admissions policy, or other school administered programs.

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Sixth grade students created t-shirt designs for the Montessori Model United Nations. Designs by: left, Charli Noel; center, Nathaniel Lascano; right, Brooke Owens.



## Message from MLMS Co-Directors

Dear Families and Friends of Mountain Laurel,

We decided to highlight the opportunities our students have in Geography and Science this year to give you all a glimpse of the love and understanding of the Earth that is developed throughout your children's years at Mountain Laurel from toddlerhood through adolescence.



**Mona Nixon**  
Founder/Co-Director



**Meg DeMato**  
Co-Director

One of the main tenets of the Montessori approach is respect for oneself, other people, and the environment one is in. Of course, the earliest experience of this is in how the classroom environment is lovingly and scientifically prepared for the children. As the children live in this prepared environment, the adults model respect, and the students learn to take care of the environment and their classmates. Throughout the years this sense of responsibility is expanded to include our greater home, the Earth and indeed the entire Universe.

As parents of Montessori students, we often have bits of evidence that come home with our children through their early drawings of the puzzle maps of the world and each continent or even earlier through comments from 3-year-olds such as, "There is South America!", as the child recognizes the continent's shape in a cloud formation or a partially eaten cookie. One of our Mountain Laurel 5-year-olds was busy for days as he drew, painted, and labeled each of our fifty states, sounded out and wrote the entire "Star-Spangled Banner", and then completed his study with a painting of our flag.

At the elementary level our students perform countless science experiments and studies. This year they have become passionate about the Periodic Table of Elements, drawing it and reading about the elements. Children from 6 to 12 are fascinated by our magnetic board of the Table, learning the order of the elements as they work with it. (A 7-year-old recently made a correction when he saw that lithium and beryllium had been switched accidentally!)

This passion goes with our students into their teen years as they study more complex issues of our planet and begin seeing themselves as the ones who will come up with solutions to continue the care of the Earth. Our 7th and 8th graders joined Montessori adolescents around the world by participating in the International Montessori Adolescent Summits. Our students researched and presented on Sustainable Energy in a 4-day conference in Huntsburg, Ohio. When a group of Montessori students from different parts of the world collaborate, they become advocates for what is true human progress.

We would like to express our gratitude to the community of MLMS - the students, parents, grandparents, family, staff, friends, businesses and other organizations who have helped us flourish. We are excited that so many of you will be joining us as we embark on new adventures next year.

Sincerely,

Mona Nixon and Meg DeMato  
Co-Directors

# Message from Chairperson of the Board

Dear MLMS families and community,

The 2016-2017 school year was an exciting adventure with our 5th and 6th grade students attending the Model United Nations Conference in New York, and our Junior High Students attending the NAMTA Summit Conference in Huntsburg Ohio. At this year's Model UN our students represented Australia, and learned about diplomacy and negotiation to bring peaceful resolutions to the problems facing the world today. Collaborating with Montessori schools across the US, our Junior High Students researched and developed presentations on Sustainable Energy for the NAMTA Summit. The purpose of the Summit is to engage adolescents in problem solving to "develop an authentic understanding of the human condition as their social and moral selves evolve." Instilling our students with a sense of purpose and a greater understanding of the world around them is a fundamental goal of Montessori education. At MLMS we are cultivating tomorrow's leaders.



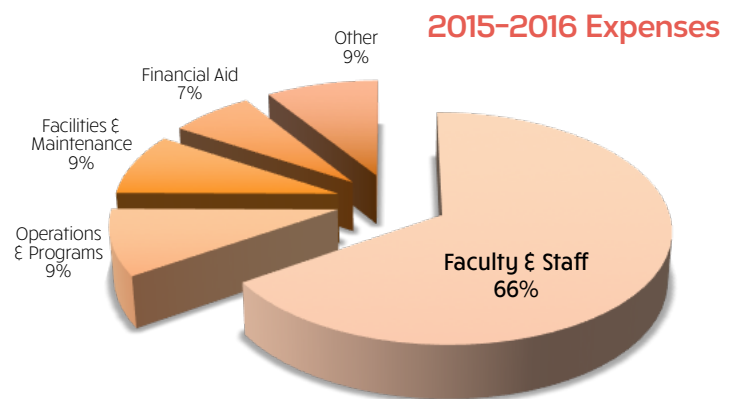
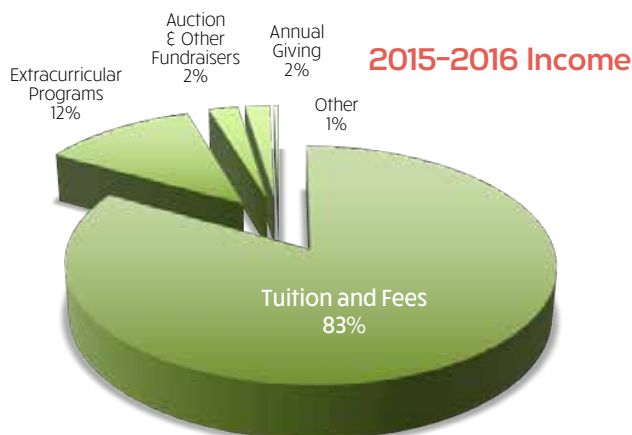
**Kris Boucher**  
Chairperson, MLMS  
Board of Directors

The 2017-2018 school year will bring exciting changes to two of our programs here at MLMS. First, our Toddler Program will be expanding to full time hours Monday through Friday from 8:15am to 3:30pm, with before and after care programs available to assist working families. The Toddler Program provides a loving and nurturing environment for children aged 16 months to 3 years. Children in the Toddler Program participate in practical life activities learning to care for their environment, their friends, and themselves. Child sized equipment, furniture, and tools are provided for the children to manipulate and create; giving them a sense of accomplishment and self-worth. Lessons in grace and courtesy help toddlers develop empathy while stimulating their curiosity about others, themselves, and their environment. This program has always had a waiting list and the expansion of hours will help us serve more families.

The Junior High program is moving to the Main Campus and adopting the Montessori "Village Model" for adolescent education. The Village Model is focused on Global Citizenship, and will give students the opportunity to explore and work in the greater Northern Virginia community as well as classroom and land based lessons. Students study geography, science, math, world religions, world governments, and different cultures during their 7th, 8th, and 9th grade years, which allows them to discover more about themselves and the world they live in.

We thank each and every one of you for your ongoing support and contributions to the Mountain Laurel Montessori School community. It is with your help that MLMS continues to offer and expand our programs to help students become leaders and global citizens uniquely prepared to peacefully solve the problems of tomorrow.

Sincerely,  
Kris Boucher  
Chairperson, MLMS Board of Directors



# MLMS Board of Directors

Kris Boucher is a former MLMS parent whose daughter started in Ms. Irre's primary classroom and graduated from the Junior High Program in 2011. She is the CEO of Hope Advanced Veterinary Center; which has two locations in Virginia and Maryland for emergency and specialty care for pets. Ms. Boucher is passionate about Montessori education and devoted to the Mountain Laurel Montessori School community. Since graduating from George Mason University in 1993 she has lived in Fauquier County, where she currently resides with her husband and daughter.



**Kris Boucher**  
Chairperson

Mona Nixon founded Mountain Laurel in 1989 and has worked full-time as a teacher while guiding the school administratively for the past 25 years. She is trained as both a primary and elementary teacher through the Association Montessori Internationale, Mona taught in Atlanta as a primary teacher for seven years before her work at Mountain Laurel began. It is her greatest delight that her two grandsons, Byron and Gage, are now reaping the benefits of the loving environment that the entire staff has created.



**Mona Nixon**  
Founder/Co-Director



**Meg DeMato**  
Co-Director

Meg DeMato graduated from Loyola College in Maryland with an undergraduate degree in Elementary education in 2006, certified in K-8th, as well as a Master's Degree in Education, specializing in Early Childhood in 2007. Prior to working at MLMS, she taught at the Montessori School of Manhattan and at Wyoming Seminary College Preparatory School. Meg attended Montessori school in Scranton, Pennsylvania for her primary years, and was excited to find such a wonderful Montessori school for her children, when she moved here from New York City. Meg and her husband Mike have three joyful children at MLMS, Michael, Grace, and Maggie.



**Maureen McGowan**

Maureen McGowan has been involved with Mountain Laurel Montessori School since 1999. Her two sons attended Mountain Laurel from ages two and four through 9th grade. For 10 of those years Maureen worked in various roles at MLMS before returning to her career as a clinical social worker. She is fond of saying that together with family and the Mountain Laurel community she joyfully raised two sons! As a Clinical Social Worker Maureen has over 20 years of experience working with youth, adults and families in various mental health practices and agencies. Maureen recently joined Dr. Sherri Yoder at Crown Behavior Services, in Front Royal, providing services to support, enhance and promote mental health and wellness for individuals, families and community.



**Carolyn Linke**

Carolyn Linke graduated from the University of Maryland in 1976. Her education training came from Washington Montessori Institute, with an AMI Primary Diploma. Carolyn has eighteen hours of Special Education from George Washington University and is currently Head of School and Primary classroom Director at the Montessori School of Oakton.

Ernie has worked as an educator for most of his adult life. He has been a classroom teacher, Program Coordinator and has been named as Teacher of the Year. In addition to the supervision of teacher and parent training, Ernie also facilitated curriculum development and use of teaching methodologies. He co-founded and was the CEO of a national publishing company which created materials for education leaders to distribute to approximately eight million US households. The company is one of the nation's fastest growing small businesses.



**Ernie Ryles**

KC earned her AMI elementary certification at the Washington Montessori Institute. She also holds a Master of Education degree from Loyola University. KC comes with years of experience as an educator and parent of 6 children (now all adults). KC was head of school, teacher, and founder of Salem Community Montessori that merged with MLMS in 2009. She comes with experience in many areas from driving a bus to teaching adults with disabilities. KC uses her creative and communications skills to enrich the Mountain Laurel community.



**KC Dickman**

# DONORS

are an important part of the Mountain Laurel Montessori School community. Each of you who have contributed, whether financially or with time and talent, have had a positive effect in the lives of our children and families. We would especially like to thank our top donors this year for leading the way by making significant financial contributions to our Annual Giving Campaign.

We would also like to express our deepest appreciation to parents, grandparents, alumni, and special friends who donated time, talent, energy, and funding by their volunteer work on both campuses. Your names and stories are too numerous to list... we cannot express enough our thanks to the MLMS community for each and every hour of volunteer work that you gave and every additional dollar you contributed to support the children and our mission of providing "an education for life."



## What is the annual fund drive?

Our Annual Giving Campaign supplements student tuition. By frugal fiscal management and hard work, Mountain Laurel is thriving on a very lean budget. Your donation to our Annual Giving Campaign is quite literally an investment in our school, ensuring a legacy of quality Montessori education.

Your gift is an investment in Mountain Laurel's mission—to nurture future citizens empowered to make a difference as responsible and compassionate caretakers of our society and world.

## What does tuition cover?

While tuition funds contribute to the school's annual operating budget, maintaining our beautiful environments and excellent quality depends on the support of our community. Even with tuition, we still need your gift to provide this quality education to those who seek it. There is an approximate 15-20% gap in the amount of tuition paid and the annual operating costs of the school.

## How are the funds used?

The Annual Giving Campaign at MLMS supports all programs. Your gift to the fund goes where it is most needed, unless you note the specific area you would like to support. Most funds contribute to replacing well-loved and used materials in the classroom, improving our grounds, building upkeep and maintenance, financial aid assistance, staff development, and maintenance of our beautiful environments. Through your Annual Fund gift, our dedicated teachers can continue to offer the best programs to children.



## 2015-16 Annual Giving Donors

### Lead Donors \$1,000+

C. Faye Richardson  
Helen Wilkes  
Maureen McGowan & Jeff Bussells  
Monica and Jon Nixon  
Sigrid Hepp-Dax  
The Boucher Family

### \$500 to \$999

Anonymos  
Ernie Ryles  
Elaine & Gerry Glier  
Judith A. Almquist Intervivos Rev TR  
Judith A. Almquist &  
Mrs. Susanne Jackson  
Patricia F. Brinklow  
Sarah & Roel Lascano  
Stratton Semmes

### Up to \$499

Andrea & David McKay  
Anthony & Anita DeMato  
Beatrice von Gontard  
Caite Noel  
Carrie Irre  
Cathy & Robert Bovey, Jr.  
Daniel Shiben  
Donation for title for car for auction  
Drs. Thomas & Margaret Hogan  
Harold Beebout  
Helen Falkenmeyer  
John House & Nancy H. Sweeny  
Kathleen and Nicholas Crettier  
Larry and Jeannette Ison  
Mary Frances LeMat  
Matt & Kate Bradley  
Meg & Mike DeMato  
Pam & Dana Thomas  
Robert & Susan Sloan  
Robert Seaman & Holly Okell  
The DiNinno Family  
The Kuzmick Family  
Veritas Wellness (Sarah Lascano)

### **I can't afford a big gift. Is there any point in me giving?**

Annual gifts—no matter the size—add up and are an important income stream that ensures the school's fiscal health and continued excellence. Your participation also plays a major role in encouraging large donors, corporations, and foundations to support the school. When participation rates are strong, foundations and corporations are more likely to award grants and funding to MLMS. Each individual's contribution also inspires giving from other Mountain Laurel families as we join together to support the school in whose mission we believe and whose community we cherish.

### **When will my support be needed?**

The Annual Giving Campaign runs from year to year beginning on July 1st and ending on June 30th. You have the opportunity to give anytime by mailing a check or by giving online. We send a direct mail appeal each year to alumni, current families and friends of Mountain Laurel.

## Our Partners in Education

Mountain Laurel Montessori School has been providing the Shenandoah Valley and eight surrounding counties, a viable alternative to traditional education for children for over 26 years. As part of the greater community, MLMS seeks to strengthen established relationships and build new partnerships with other service organizations and businesses.

To realize this goal we have established a "Partners in Education" program. "Partners" donate ten hours a month of professional services or contribute \$1,000 or more to our Annual Giving Campaign. These contributions help support and maintain our unique and ideal learning environments for children, while also providing funds for professional development for teachers and staff. The Annual Giving Campaign is essential to preserve our rich cultural, social, and economic diversity and to keep tuition affordable. In appreciation MLMS acknowledges our partners and their web address on our website.

All monetary contributions are tax-deductible as Mountain Laurel Montessori School is a 501 (c) 3 organization.

**L Dee's Pancake House**  
**Castiglia's Italian Restaurant & Pizza**  
**Better Thymes**  
**Blue Wing Frog**  
**Pam Owens Design**  
**Element**  
**Front Royal Dental Care**  
**Veritas Wellness Center**  
**Moms In Motion**

# *Each Gift Supports Our Mission:*

Provide ideal learning environments for each stage of a child's development, adhering to the highest standards of Montessori education.



## Beginnings

### Infant-3 years

Montessori Beginnings is a parent-infant education program that allows parents the opportunity to contemplate their children's quest for independence and how to best nurture their growth and development. Through weekly, 1 ½ hour classes, parenting and child development topics are discussed, and infants and toddlers joyfully work with materials that entice their senses and stimulate their minds. Cooperation and friendships are fostered with a simple group meal and singing at the end of each morning.

## Toddler

### 16 months-3 year olds

Children ages 16 months to 3 years are driven to learn to "do it by myself," and Mountain Laurel Montessori School provides the ideal environment for children to do just that. In a cheery, inviting classroom, children enjoy cooking, caring for animals and plants, numerous cleaning and dressing-skill lessons, and specially designed language, art and music activities. The children form a true "toddler community", where respectful social skills are learned and compassion for others is nourished.



# art!

This year was the third gallery opening for Mountain Laurel Montessori School. Our sweetheART Gallery featured works from every student from toddler all the way through Junior High. While some focused on photography, others imitated work by famous artists, such as Andy Goldsworthy. Students' individual works were featured at the Blue Ridge Arts Council Gallery in Downtown Front Royal, right alongside of local artists. This fundraising event was catered by Element, and brought in funds for our new school bus!





## Trip to the Orchard



## Primary

### 3-6 year olds

The Primary Classroom houses children ages 2 ½ to 6 years and provides an environment where the child continues to build skills to navigate his/her physical and intellectual world. Children of this age wish to know "what?" about everything they encounter. They are given guided lessons in practical life skills that teach them how to care for themselves, each other, and their environment.

Guided lessons are also given with Montessori materials that enable them to explore and classify their sensorial impressions of the physical world. As part of their daily experience, children explore concepts of grammar, mathematics, geography, science, other cultures, art, and music.

## Classroom work





## Holidays Around the World







## Our Elementary Program

Children between the ages of 6 to 12 years have an abundance of energy and burgeoning imaginations. This is an explosive period of social and intellectual growth when their drive is to learn the “why” and “how” of the entire universe.

Our Montessori Elementary prepared environment is ideal to meet the needs of the energetic and curious child of this age. Key lessons are presented by the teacher to small groups, which give the child the skills needed to explore botany, zoology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, language, geography, history, music, art, foreign language, and physical education.

The elementary Montessori classroom is not confined to four walls, and encourages students to use the natural and the human world for exploration to deepen their understanding. They are invited to research topics that are of interest to them and to use resources such as experts in the field, “going-outs” (student planned field trips), and media.

### 1st-3rd Grade Greek Plays

Each year the lower elementary students perform Greek plays with costumes created by the upper elementary students.



## Winter Concert



## Geography Fair

This year's elementary fair was based on geography. The students work in teams or independently for several weeks in the fall researching their topics and creating their presentations for special friends, parents and visitors.





### Air Flow

The air flow is two specific air flows: hot air and cold air. The hot air rises and the cold air takes the spot of where the hot air started. Then the cold air turns into hot air and hot air goes to the north or south pole. Then the hot air becomes cold air and it does that cycle all over and over.

—DYLAN WILSON

### Studying the Water Cycle

Today I studied the water cycle by painting a picture from the chart in our class. It rains and falls to the ground and then the water gets hot and evaporates and goes to the sky again. This happens again and again and again.

—VASILY WAGNER

### Air Flow

Hot air above the equator rises and goes to the atmosphere. Then it goes to the poles and becomes cold. Then it heads back to the equator and turns back to hot air again. And it keeps going on like that and it's called the air cycle. In the air cycle there are two streams of air. One of them is the hot air stream that travels in the atmosphere. The other is the cold stream which travels on the earth.

—COLE JORDAN

### How We Learned About Volcanoes

Some volcanoes are in the ocean. The volcanoes are making rocks and they are falling in the ocean.

—CADENCE PETERSON

### The Periodic Table In the Elementary Classes

In the elementary classes we can draw the Periodic table or if you want to make it a little bigger, (by a little, I mean take up a good fourth of the floorspace in the room) you can get out the periodic cards. It's basically a set of cards, each with its own element on it, one through one-hundred and eighteen. While we are doing this, we learn what elements are, and (the stuff that makes up the earth) some of the elements. (like Neon, Ununoctium, Iron, and Hydrogen) Doing the Periodic table is fun, whether drawing it on paper, or doing it on the floor, with all 118 cards.

—NATHANIEL R. LASCANO

### Wind and Air

Hot air rises above the equator. The cold air come from the North and South Pole and rises up as hot air, then splits in half, then it goes back down to the North and South Pole. There is one air stream that is close to the ground, and one that is in the atmosphere.

—NIKOLAI COMPTON

### The Sun

The sun is 1,000,000 times bigger than the earth. If the sun hadn't been created the earth would be covered in ice. There are little spots on the sun called sunspots. They are cooler spots on the sun. The sun is a big ball of flaring gas. The sun is not one of the biggest stars. It is a very small one.

—MICHAEL DEMATO AND ULI DUKE



## How We Learn about Mass

To measure mass you need a balanced scale. I bring the shell box normally. I put it on the scale and use different mass, which I think would be grams. After that I write the number of grams on a graph paper and I go and get another thing to measure.

—CARTER

## Volcanoes

Deep inside the earth is so hot that rocks melt. Melted rock is called magma. When the pressure is extreme this magma forces its way up to the earth's surface and escapes through volcanoes.

—VASILY

## The Egg in Vinegar Experiment

In our class they let us do science experiments to learn stuff like the egg in vinegar science experiment. So basically we take a egg and put it in vinegar for about 24 hours. Then you pour out the vinegar and your egg's shell is gone and what is left is the sack that protects the white and yolk, and it will feel squishy. Just don't pop it!

How it works is the shell and the vinegar have a chemical reaction! It makes the bubbles on the egg shell and the bubbles eat away the shell.

—BROOKE OWENS AND MERIDITH CLIFFORD

## How the Earth Was Made

First it was so toxic that you could not even land a rocket ship. Then other planets crashed into our planet. A couple of million years later our planet was still black and toxic. Then liquid started to flood the black planet which we call home. Little bits of rock showed up. Those rocks we still see today because those are continents, but they looked like normal rocks at the time. In another hundred million years dinosaurs started. Before that there were animals and plants that we probably never heard of. Finally the first humans showed up. After that we became a little smarter. That's how Earth was developed.

—KELLY

## Birthstones

For the Geography Fair my friend Emma and I did a report on birthstones. There are 12 birthstones so I wrote about 6 and Emma wrote about 6 too. We first read about them and then made notes. Then we wrote about each birthstone and glued the facts on cardboard. We got pictures of the birthstones and put it on the cardboard too.

—RUTH

## How Earth Started

About 4 billion years ago, the Earth was still forming. Earth started out really really hot. On our chart to teach us about this angels are pouring really cold water on the heat. This was the rain. It was raining a lot and then getting really hot again. That happened over and over and over again until the Earth cooled enough. This is how the Earth was formed.

—MILA COMPTON AND ELISABETH PITCOCK



# MLMS students represent AUSTRALIA at Annual Montessori Model UN in NYC

## What is MMUN?

Our goal is to inspire youth. MMUN students formulate, present, debate, and revise positions on current issues that are affecting people of the world. By assuming the perspectives of a citizen of their selected countries, MMUN students not only develop an understanding of the needs and rights of others, but also learn to respect the cultures, the political views, and the belief system of others.

Taking on their ambassadorial roles in a Model UN simulation, students research the issue that their UN committees will address. Model UN participants learn how the international community acts on its concerns about topics including peace and security, human rights, the rights of the child, child labor, the environment, food and hunger, economic development and globalization.







“MMUN is a powerful experience for our Montessori young people to come together to listen, negotiate, collaborate and then offer solutions to some of our planet’s most pressing problems. This program is an important step toward achieving our vision of educating for world peace.”

Richard Ungerer, Executive Director of AMS





## Our Jr. High Program

Our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of students ages 12-15 years (7th-9th grades) by a rigorous college preparatory plan of study realized through Montessori principles. Mountain Laurel Montessori Jr. High is rich in experiences for the hand, the heart, and the intellect through the work and micro-economies of the farm. All state requirements for a full complement of credits are met or exceeded by the comprehensive course of study offered at Mountain Laurel Montessori Jr. High.

Weekly community work events are important opportunities to enhance our curriculum and build a spirit of camaraderie and purpose. Families and friends often join us on these occasions, adding to the fun and sense of accomplishment. Such experiences naturally develop students' cooperative and leadership skills.



### Canoe trip



### Hiking 'Old Rag'



### Prep for Market







## Farm & Garden Chores



In the garden this year students grew carrots, kale, swiss chard, cucumbers, and a new garden dedicated just to salsa, growing tomatoes, peppers, onions, and spices.



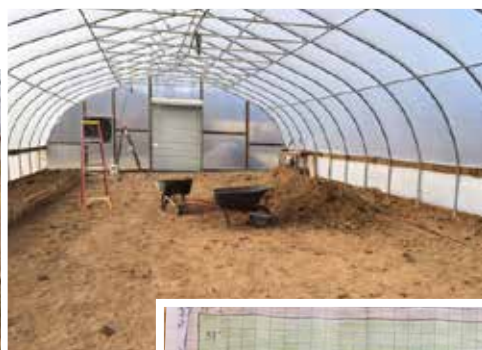
This year, the students chose from a variety of creative expressions classes including drums, guitar, cooking, painting and drawing, sewing, building structures, Shakespeare, yearbook.

## Sleepovers



## 2016-2017 Jr. High Student Managers

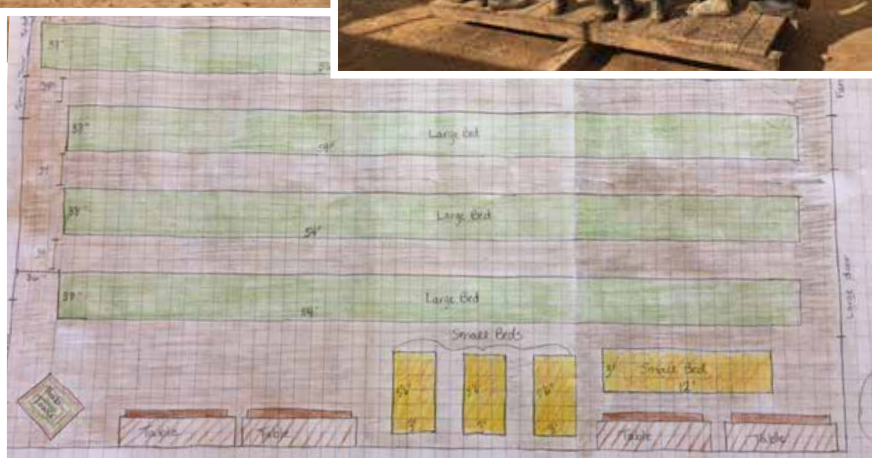
Isabella Trumpetto - garden  
Meghan Sutter - pigs  
Will Schmidt - grounds  
James Williams - chickens  
Sebastian Sabahi - sheep  
Ryan Jones - culinary  
Riley Hogan - market



## The greenhouse

This year I was privileged to be garden manager. Being garden manager has involved some big projects; the biggest one was the greenhouse. Mary Bell and I knew we needed to redo the beds and at the same time still try to get produce coming out of the garden as soon as possible. We took on the project thinking it was going to take a little time, but we could do it. It was definitely work. It took longer than we had anticipated, but with help were able to take it one step at a time. We had many helpers along the way: Bryan DiNinno, my dad, Jonathan Trumpetto, and all the students and staff at the Jr. High.

When redoing the beds there were a lot of steps we needed to take. First, we took apart the beds and started removing gravel. The beds had rotting wood and rebar. The rebar was not the funnest part. It was almost two feet in the ground, which made us work twice as hard. Bryan made us a special tool that we could use to get the rebar out. After getting out as much rebar as we could we were able to start breaking up the rock hard dirt that was in the beds. Once the ground was flattened we started building up our beautiful new beds.



The new beds are now done, and we finished bringing in gravel for the aisles. Now all we need to do is plant the seeds and procure the produce that we were hoping we would in the beginning of the year. Even though redoing the greenhouse has been a little stressful I am glad we kept with it. After thinking it was taking forever the greenhouse finally came together better than I could have hoped.

—ISABELLA TRUMPETTO





# Constructing with wood & metal







# MLMS Jr. High Market Products

This year our Jr. High produced delicious goods and wool/yarn. The students care for the animals and plant and tend their garden. The products sold in their market sales generate funds for their micro-economy.

## **PORK**

**Boneless Ham**

**Pork Chops**

**Bone-In Center  
Cut Chops**

**Bone-In Blade Chops**

**Pork Fat**





**Farm-Raised  
Sheep Wool  
Yarn**



**Eggs**



**Wool**



**Uncured  
Slided Bacon**



**Ground  
Breakfast  
Sausage**



**Ground Hot  
Italian  
Sausage**



**Salsa**



**Dill Spear  
Pickles**



**Bread & Butter  
Pickles**



# *Practically* TRADITIONALLY Speaking *Historically*



MLMS invited teachers from Northern Virginia to explore the world of Montessori at each level of development. Primary and Toddler teachers enjoyed studying the Practical Life area. Practical Life expands into lessons on cultural studies, language, math, concentration, and even grace and courtesies. Elementary teachers dove into two traditions at MLMS: quilting and Shakespeare. The Junior High students and teachers taught about the Dramatis Personae, as a fun way to explore history.



# Mountain Laurel continues work with sister school Kenyan's Insoisuk School

The Kenyan outreach project is gaining momentum. The Mountain Laurel Montessori American Traditions book is taking shape. We have received pictures and write ups from several families. So far the pictures include a Christmas tree and opening presents, a Superbowl birthday party, a visit to the Grand Canyon, a Star Wars birthday, a visit to Arches National Park to see nature, a picnic birthday with lovely cake and lit candle, and a trip to the White House for an Easter Egg roll.



We are looking for any of your own family traditions and American cultures to share with the Kenyan children. Who knows, they may reciprocate with a return book from the Inkoisuk students depicting their traditions. That would be so fun to share with our children.

When presented with the writing books, school supplies, soccer balls and jump ropes from our [school supply drive last spring] drive, their school community was so very excited.

The Coins Across the Ocean jug is getting a little heavier. Please share, or have your child share any spare coins. It's amazing what the Big Life Foundation can do with the monetary donations we send. The jug is on the office desk right outside of Mrs. Irre's classroom.





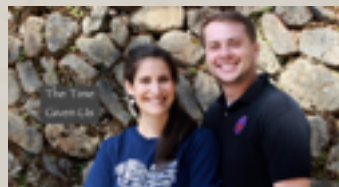
## Just how impactful can Montessori be?

Hi, my name is Steve Graham and although not currently active, I have served on the Mountain Laurel Montessori School Board of Directors for many years. I believe that every child that has had a Montessori experience, no matter how short, has been given a positive influence that will have an impact on the rest of their lives. My daughter Meghan attended the very first year of MLMS way back in 19???. I'll let her take it from here.



Hi, this is Meghan (Graham) Durfor. I'm the one on the left. Thanks dad for asking me to reminisce about Mountain Laurel Montessori School. Goodness, I remember painting, circle time songs, introduction to acting/drama, sandpaper letters, the hermit crab class pets and Mrs. Nixon's calm and kind presence as an unintrusive guide in my learning. At 5 years old, I can vividly remember selecting geography "toys". I remember the feeling of wanting to know more about the Earth and everything on it. Since then, I've continued to have a thirst for knowledge of the world coupled with a love of learning. My early Montessori schooling set the stage for this and my openness to learn from my environment.

Since then, I've grown up, gone to college and graduate school to be a teacher and reading specialist and have celebrated 10 years of marriage to my husband, Craig. This past August 2016 Craig and I moved from Charlotte, NC to Baguio City, Philippines to volunteer with Helping Hands Healing Hearts Ministries (HHHHM), a medical ministry and orphanage for sick, neglected and abandoned children in Olongapo and Baguio City, Philippines. I am the Education and Activities Manager and Craig is the Communications Manager for the ministry here in Baguio City. Here we have joined with local staff to enrich the lives of the children in their care.

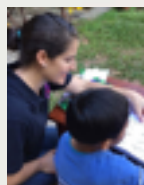


At HHHHM children's needs are met physically, emotionally and spiritually. The medical home is a place where children, and as necessary their families, can live near a hospital and receive medical assistance. Often these families live over 6 hours from the nearest hospital and struggle to live off of \$3 a day or less. The children's home works with the inter country adoption board and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to provide temporary shelter, and long term homes while children await

to be reunited with family or matched for domestic or international adoption. We help families get the support they need and provide a home for them and their child or often just the child while parents or guardians return home to care for the rest of their family while the sick child gets well in our care.

As a teacher I chose a traditional route of education. However I feel my early exposure to Montessori tuned my heart to be conscious of a child's needs and their feelings about the learning process first, rather than about the facts and data of the actual learning, then I prioritize making learning fun. This approach to learning (while not explicitly Montessori philosophy) has worked for me and my students over the past 10 years. It has prepared me for working in a ministry with children of all kinds of background, all of which desperately need to feel safe and loved before they will be able to learn and make progress. The natural heart I have for my students as people, before students, has been a great asset in this work.

On a daily basis I work one on one with about 6-10 different students ranging from 3 to 18 years old with a wide range of educational and English speaking abilities. I work and manage other volunteer's time and activities with the children in order to give our children both fun, crafty and educational activities every day. We help our children prepare for kindergarten. Often times this involves catching up in order for them to enter school after many years' absences. We also help older children with homework and exam reviews. We review mathematics, play with playdough, draw with chalk, read books, teach the alphabet & handwriting, hold babies, attend parent teacher conferences, do puzzles, build towers, give hugs and sincere "I love you's" every chance we get. It's all in a day's work and there's so much more. My favorite part of our work here is to be a mother figure to the children who are waiting to be matched with their forever families. These children often have a huge hole in their lives and we strive to fill those with love. Back to you dad.



Well, a father couldn't be prouder. The formative years can have such an impact on the trajectory of a person's life. We are grateful for the experiences Meghan had at Mountain Laurel Montessori School and "Mona Nixon's calm and kind presence as an unintrusive guide."

Helping Hand Healing Hearts Ministries' Vision, Mission and Goals can be found on the website at [www.helpinghandministries.com](http://www.helpinghandministries.com).

You can follow Meghan and Craig's "The Time Given Us" blog at [www.thetimegivenus.blogspot.com/](http://www.thetimegivenus.blogspot.com/).





*Join us for*

# SUMMER CAMP



## Primary Half & Full Day

**Join us for one week, several weeks or all 9 weeks!**

Children ages 2.5–6 learn and play with friends, using all of their senses in a joyful learning environment. Language, math, geography, and science all come to life through materials designed to entice and delight. Arts and crafts will have a special focus at camp, along with lots of time spent outdoors. Your child will have the chance to grow socially, academically, and spiritually this summer!

### Primary Camp Themes

WEEK #	DATES	PRIMARY THEME
Week 1	Jun 12-16	Beach Week
Week 2	Jun 19-23	Creepy, Crawly Things
Week 3	Jun 26-Jun 30	Down on the Farm
Week 4	Jul 3-7 *no camp 4th	Cooking
Week 5	Jul 10-14	Around the City
Week 6	Jul 17-21	Literature–Fav. Authors & Illustrators
Week 7	Jul 24-28	Balance/Yoga
Week 8	Jul 31-Aug 4	Our Earth and Beyond
Week 9	Aug 7-Aug 11	At the Zoo



# Summer Camp

## Elementary

Full Day



Join us for one week, several weeks or all 9 weeks!

Explore the natural world on a working, sustainable farm! The MLMS Elementary Summer Camp begins each day with taking care of the animals, followed by activities and lessons centered on a weekly theme. In the afternoon, we enjoy time swimming at the 4-H Center. There are also special visits to the Izaak Walton League and Lake Arrowhead Beach and other fun places in the Shenandoah Valley. Every Friday we have an adventurous field trip. Hiking, swimming, reading, exploring and relaxing ... it's the perfect way to spend the summer!

And, we welcome ANY elementary students for **FIELD TRIP FRIDAYS!** You don't have to be a Mon-Thurs camper to go join us.



## Elementary Camp Themes

WEEK #	DATES	ELEMENTARY	ELEMENTARY FIELD TRIP
Week 1	Jun 12-16	Hydrology	White Oak Canyon
Week 2	Jun 19-23	Entomology	Botanical Gardens
Week 3	Jun 26-Jun 30	Music and Drama	Amer. Shakespeare Center, Staunton
Week 4	Jul 3-7 'no camp 4th	Wild West	Smithsonian Folk Life Festival
Week 5	Jul 10-14	Geology	Luck Stone Quarry
Week 6	Jul 17-21	Medieval Times	Museum of Natural History
Week 7	Jul 24-28	Health and Nutrition	Dickey Ridge Hike
Week 8	Jul 31-Aug 4	Astronomy	Air and Space Museum
Week 9	Aug 7-Aug 11	In the Jungle	National Zoo

**Reserve Your Child's Spot Today!**

**More info online: [MountainLaurelMontessori.org](http://MountainLaurelMontessori.org)**



# Why Montessori Education?

Many families come to us as a referral, having heard wonderful things about our school and community. There are often questions about Montessori as a method of teaching. Here are some of our most common questions.

## Q. Where did Montessori come from?

**A.** Montessori education was founded in 1907 by Dr. Maria Montessori, the first woman in Italy to become a physician. She based her educational methods on scientific observation of children's learning processes. Guided by her discovery that children teach themselves, Dr. Montessori designed a "prepared environment" in which children could freely choose from a number of developmentally appropriate activities. Now, nearly a century after Maria Montessori's first Casa dei Bambini ("children's house") in Rome, Montessori education is found all over the world, spanning ages from birth to adolescence.

## Q. What is the difference between Montessori and traditional education?

**A.** At the under age six level, Montessori emphasizes learning through all five senses, not just through listening, watching, or reading. Children in Montessori classes learn at their own, individual pace and according to their own choice of activities from hundreds of possibilities. The children are not required to sit and listen to a teacher talk to them as a group, but are engaged in individual or group activities of their own, with materials that have been introduced to them by the teacher who knows what each child is ready to do. Learning is an exciting process of discovery, leading to concentration, motivation, self-discipline, and a love of learning.

Above age 6, children learn to do independent research, arrange field trips to gather information, interview specialists, create group presentation, dramas, art exhibits, musical productions, science projects, and so forth. There is no limit to what they create in this kind of intelligently guided freedom. There are no textbooks or adult-directed group lessons and daily schedule. There is great respect for the choices of the children, but they easily keep up with or surpass what they would be doing in a more traditional setting. There is no wasted time and children enjoy their work and study. The children ask each other for lessons and much of the learning comes from sharing and inspiring each other instead of competing with each other.

Teaching is accomplished by teaching, not by correcting. There are no papers turned back with red marks and corrections. Instead the child's effort and work is respected as it is. The teacher, through extensive observation and record-keeping, plans individual projects to enable each child to learn what he needs in order to improve.

## Q. What are the areas of study?

**A:** All subjects are interwoven, not taught in isolation, the teacher modeling a "Renaissance" person of broad interests for the children. A child can work on any material he understands at any time.

## Q. How are students graded?

**A:** There are no grades, or other forms of reward or punishment, subtle or overt. Assessment is by portfolio and the teacher's observation and record keeping. The test of whether or not the system is working lies in the accomplishment and behavior of the children, their happiness, maturity, kindness, love of learning, and level of work.

## Q. Is Montessori good for children with learning disabilities? What about gifted children?

**A.** Montessori is designed to help all children reach their fullest potential at their own unique pace. A classroom whose children have varying abilities is a community in which everyone learns from one another and everyone contributes. Moreover, multi-age grouping allows each child to find his or her own pace without feeling "ahead" or "behind" in relation to peers.

## Q. Are Montessori children successful later in life?

**A.** Research studies show that Montessori children are well prepared for later life academically, socially, and emotionally. In addition to scoring well on standardized tests, Montessori children are ranked above average on such criteria as following directions, turning in work on time, listening attentively, using basic skills, showing responsibility, asking provocative questions, showing enthusiasm for learning, and adapting to new situations.

## Q. How do Montessori graduates fare in the real world, where they don't always set the agenda?

**A.** Increasingly, the world of modern education and business favors creative thinkers who combine personal initiative with strong collaborative skills: exactly the characteristics which Montessori education nurtures. Cultural movers and shakers from Julia Child to the founders of Google have spoken of how their childhood experiences in Montessori gave them not only the ability to work cooperatively in existing settings, but also the skills of confidence, creativity, and communication needed to make innovative and ground-breaking changes.



**Q: Why does Montessori put so much stress on freedom and independence?**

**A.** Children touch and manipulate everything in their environment. In a sense, the human mind is handmade, because through movement and touch, the child explores, manipulates, and builds a storehouse of impressions about the physical world around her. Children learn best by doing, and this requires movement and spontaneous investigation.

Montessori children are free to move about, working alone or with others at will. They may select any activity and work with it as long as they wish, so long as they do not disturb anyone or damage anything, and as long as they put it back where it belongs when they are finished.

Freedom is a second critical issue as children begin to explore. Our goal is less to teach them facts and concepts, but rather to help them to fall in love with the process of focusing their complete attention on something and mastering its challenge with enthusiasm. Work assigned by adults rarely results in such enthusiasm and interest as does work that children freely choose for themselves.

The prepared environment of the Montessori class is a learning laboratory in which children are allowed to explore, discover, and select their own work. The independence that the children gain is not only empowering on a social and emotional basis, but it is also intrinsically involved with helping them become comfortable and confident in their ability to master the environment, ask questions, puzzle out the answer, and learn without needing to be "spoon-fed" by an adult.

**Q: Is this approach still relevant to contemporary education?**

**A.** Current brain-based research is verifying Dr. Montessori's original ideas about how the human develops and how to support a child's learning to her highest potential. Current education theorists support the aspects and outcomes of a Montessori education where the goal is to (1) assist children in becoming independent and adaptable to the changing circumstances of modern life and to (2) contribute to the cultivation of human beings who would work towards a more peaceful world.

The qualities of a young person who has grown up in a Montessori environment include: creativity, adaptability, and independence in both thinking and in managing one's life, and a strong concern for and dedication to the future of humanity.

Students in a Montessori environment learn to be resourceful, to find the information they need when they need it. They learn to collaborate with others to find the best solutions to problems. They learn to speak their opinions and listen openly to the views of others. They speak with confidence in public, they apply their skills creatively, and they understand diplomacy. They comfortably work side-by-side with people of all ages.

The rigorous scope of intellectual, artistic and creative content supports children who succeed in the next stages of their academic journey.

**Q: What about discipline?**

**A.** Self-discipline develops through work that is motivated

by interest, developmental need and community living. Montessori students engage in personally challenging and developmentally meaningful activity, through purposeful work. The child develops self-regulation through positive experiences, learning how to make choices, and to develop accountability for self, environment and community. From the

very beginning, the child is given an appropriate amount of freedom within consistent and clearly defined limits. They are free to practice the skills of independence such as: social language, care of self and others, respect, supported by the nurturing guidance of trained adults when needed. The physical and temporal environments are also designed to support: order, respect, grace and courtesy, collaborative learning communities and positive attachments with their guides. Adaptation and independence naturally develop within the intentionally designed experience where joyful engagement is the goal.

Montessori children demonstrate a strong ability to be self-directed, empathetic and responsible members of their community.

**Q: How do Montessori graduates do?**

**A.** Because Montessori fosters the ability to pursue one's interests in great depth, and to have strong commitment to one's environment and community, many students are publicly known for their accomplishments and contributions. Many others are leading successful, fulfilled, and happy lives as responsible citizens contributing to their communities on seven continents around the world.

Some Montessori students who are publically recognized include:

- **Joshua Bell**, American violinist
- **Jeff Bezos**, founder of Amazon.com
- **Sergey Brin** and **Larry Page**, co-founders of Google
- **George Clooney**, Academy Award-winning actor
- **Julia Child**, first world-famous television chef
- **Katherine Graham**, owner-editor of *The Washington Post*
- **Prince William** and **Prince Harry**, sons of Charles, Prince of Wales
- **Helen Hunt**, Academy Award-winning actress
- **Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis**, former editor, former first lady
- **Will Wright**, designer of The Sims video games





