



Students Jay, Sarah, Akira, Carley, and Bryce enjoying orientation at the Burton 4-H center in Tybee.

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Montessori of Macon's Mission

"To Educate the Whole Child for a Whole World."

By the whole child, we mean the social, emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual aspects of being human. By nurturing the wholeness of our children and fostering respect for each other, nature and community we prepare them for a life of continued joy that will contribute positively to a whole world.

We are equipping our students with "grit".

Paula Davis-Laack describes grit as "having both the passion and the perseverance to achieve a goal" in an article she wrote for Psychology Today. She believes that "gritty" students outperform their peers. Montessori students have the opportunity to "grow their grit" in all of our classrooms. For example our students are able to see a task through to completion. To learn more about "grit" see her article "Grit: The Secret Ingredient to Success."

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/pressure-proof/201408/grit-the-secret-ingredient-success>

MONTESSORI OF MACON

From the Head of School

by Michele Scott

December 2015

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Newsletter

If we could fast forward twelve years to 2027 ... what would Montessori of Macon look like? What would be different? What would be the same? What would “be” that we can’t imagine just yet?

Twelve years ago when I enrolled my oldest daughter in the Primary program at Montessori of Macon, the school looked very different. In 2003, Montessori of Macon rented space from St. Francis Episcopal church and had 5 classrooms ranging from primary to middle school. Our school rented space from the church since the original families started the school. The initial conversations about a new school campus were just beginning when my family joined the MOM community ... “Could we own our own land?” “What would a permanent MOM campus look like?”

I know it sounds very cliché ... but the concept of having a new, permanent Montessori of Macon campus was just a dream at that point. Cliché maybe, but having the dream or vision of where we were going was critical to actually getting there. In addition to that vision, we also needed a plan and a strong community to take action! If any of those three – vision, plan, action – would have been missing, I would not be writing this from my office at our current school campus.

What will the future hold for Montessori of Macon? Luckily we don’t have to figure out 2027 just yet. However we do need to create the vision and plan for the upcoming 5 years. As you heard during our Annual General Meeting in September, we are wrapping up our current Strategic Plan and beginning our new Strategic Planning cycle. Your MOM Board of Directors has been working hard to outline the process and initial steps of creating our next 5-year Strategic Plan. The Board of Directors will guide us through this process and synthesize the data we collect. For this plan to be representative of our community, we will need input, ideas, feedback and more from all stakeholders – parents, staff and students.

When we come back to school in January, our Board of Directors will provide more information about the Strategic Planning process and opportunities for you to participate and provide your input. I encourage each one of us that has such a vested interest in the success and direction of Montessori of Macon to take a few minutes to participate on the level that is comfortable for you!

With a future that is grounded in the Montessori philosophy, our Montessori of Macon mission, and your input ... I am very excited about the possibilities for our future!



Montessori Of Macon's Campus 1991-2010

Toddler 1

Ms. Deidra & Ms. Hattie

MONTESSORI OF MACON

December 2015

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Newsletter



Leo sharing our jack-o'-lantern.



Mahima cleaning out the pumpkin.

This session we have been enjoying all the changes that come with the autumn season. We have been on several nature walks, which gave us the chance to observe the different colors of the leaves and talk about other changes taking place.

Inside the classroom, the children are explored farm animals with songs, books, puzzles and other manipulatives. Our sensory bin is filled with beans, farm animals, a red barn and a tractor, and is definitely among some of the most popular activities the children choose to work with daily.

Another popular activity was pumpkin scrubbing. This lesson involved several steps that require our toddlers to focus and think through the steps and process required. I personally love how an activity as simple as this helps to develop so many qualities of the toddler such as development of order, concentration, coordination, independence, self-esteem, hand-eye coordination, coordination of gross motor movement, and development of logical sequence. This is the beauty of Montessori; it allows a child to develop both directly and indirectly with everyday enjoyable activities.

Making pumpkin muffins and pumpkin art were among other activities we worked on. We also had seven toddlers that mastered potty training this session! This is always a big milestone towards independence for our toddlers.

We have completed many lessons and activities this session. We are looking forward to all that will evolve during the remainder of the school year. Thanks for sharing your children with us!



Julian working on a large floor puzzle.



Finn placing animals on continents.

MONTESSORI OF MACON

Toddler 2

Ms. Amanda & Ms. Carla

December 2015

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Newsletter



Everly and Cooper working on the door collage work.



Jayden building a tower with the shape overlay puzzle.

Toddler 2 was very busy during the second session. Our class was introduced to the circle, square and triangle shapes. We enjoyed reading books about shapes, searching and finding shapes around the classroom and practicing drawing shapes with chalk on the patio.

The toddlers enjoyed learning about the autumn season. We learned about pinecones, the changing of the leaves, the chilly air and pumpkins. The toddlers enjoyed a practical life lesson on cleaning and washing pumpkins, and then cutting them to discover what was inside, while we harvested the seeds within. We hope to use these seeds to plant our very own pumpkins next year.

The toddlers enjoyed many lessons on numbers. They love to count everything. This time of the school year, many of the students are already normalized and enjoy choosing works, sitting at a table and being able to concentrate. It's a beautiful thing for a toddler teacher to see. The works on the shelves are rotated periodically to keep the environment fresh and interesting for the students. They always love to explore the room searching for the newest work to complete. We enjoy seeing their excitement for learning.

The toddlers finished out the session with lessons on the colors orange, green and purple. We talked about one color per week. The students were able to explore the new color in many different ways including new works, reading books, painting and searching for the new color in the classroom. They all loved to be the one to find the new color! Learning is fun in the toddler classroom!



Nate pattern matching with cookie work.



Our beautiful fall tree art.



Noor is using fine motor skills to make a beaded bracelet.

Primary 1

Ms. Paula & Ms. Whitney

MONTESSORI OF MACON

December 2015

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Newsletter



Ella arranging flowers.

The last Thursday of session 1, we enjoyed our traditional Open House where the children invited their families to see the different works they have been doing at school. It is always great to have guests in our classroom. Thank you, families, for a beautiful evening.

Our second session started with exciting news as we welcomed Ella and Randy as new students. It was great to see the children offering a warm and welcoming place for their new friends as they transitioned into our classroom community. The students were also glad to see their friends again and to find new and more advanced works in the classroom. It is always exciting to see the first year students returning with confidence to a familiar environment.



Camille enjoying the fall festival.

October marked the anniversary of the death of Thomas A. Edison and the birthday of Alfred Nobel; therefore, the children spent time studying each man's legacy. They also enjoyed learning about different peace makers who have received the Nobel Peace Prize, including Dr. Montessori's three consecutive nominations.

During this session, we studied female painters, starting with Mary Cassatt, then Frida Kahlo, and lastly, Georgia O'Keeffe. The students loved learning about the artists' lives as little girls and how they became famous women.

Since October marked the 223rd anniversary of the White House, we decided to learn about this remarkable building and its history, and according to the children, they "all" have been there! We ended the month of October with the now traditional Fall Festival, an afternoon full of games, prizes, face painting and delicious snacks. The children had a blast and loved the "no nap" day.

Our science lessons started with the definition of living and nonliving things, moving on to the difference between animals and plants. We studied the animal kingdom, particularly the vertebrates. We learned about fish, mammals, and amphibians. During the month of November, we focused our science studies on reptiles.

During the first session, in Geography, we learned that the globe is a model of the planet Earth and studied the world map. We also learned about our continent, North America. Currently we are studying South America and have talked about its political and biome maps, its culture, population, and flags.

Every year, our outdoor environment becomes richer. Our proud gardeners enjoy every opportunity they have to go outside and take care of the garden, and learn new lessons about flowers, vegetables, and life cycles. The garden teaches them the rewards of hard work.

In November, we celebrated the anniversary of the International Space Station and the birthday of Charles Schulz. Our classroom community also had our traditional Thanksgiving potluck dinner.

We are excited to see our primary students working independently on their individual lessons in a peaceful classroom. In Maria Montessori's own words, "The greatest sign of success for a teacher... is to be able to say, the children are now working as if I did not exist."



Grant reading to Maya.



Wyatt doing knobless cylinders.



Isabella working on the teen board.



Joseph playing the bells.

MONTESSORI OF MACON

Primary 2 Ms. Amanda & Ms. Jenny

December 2015

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Newsletter

This session Primary 2 has been productive and busy! We had a parent volunteer come into our classroom to work on "Ladder to the Moon", a painting by artist Georgia O'Keeffe. This art project specifically involved the use of watercolor paints, for the background, and the children were able to choose their moons, background detail, and ladders with various types of art paper, card stock and cardboard.

During our study of O'Keeffe and her works, especially her flower works, where the children practiced color mixing and easel painting. They also practiced sketching and outlining their works. We have been learning about lines, shapes and textures.

While the younger students in the classroom have been busy working on practical life, sensorial, cultural studies, gardening, pre-language and pre-math works, our second year students have been working towards mastering all their sounds, word-building with the moveable alphabet as well as linear counting and the decimal system. Our oldest children have been focused on their own challenging math and language works such as addition with the golden beads and building words with the moveable alphabet, respectively. They have been working on creating their own world maps, North America maps and South America maps, using pin-punching and construction paper. Many students in the classroom have been interested in handwriting and our older students have been making lots of progress reading their word lists and series reader books.

We have already studied the continents, North America and South America. We have been learning about the geography, peoples, animals and wildlife in these regions. We have talked about all the continents. We will continue to study all the continents in depth, as we move through the academic school year. We have been learning about the calendar, seasons, days of the week and months of the year. We even touched upon some of the seasonal differences between the northern and southern hemispheres. For example, in Georgia it is autumn at this time of year and at the same time, it is spring in South America.

During the month of November, the children studied Europe and artist Claude Monet. We also studied artist Frida Kahlo, surrounding Halloween and Dia de los Muertos. We continued our study of political and biome maps of Europe. We learned about the culture, people and animals of Europe. We talked about the story of Thanksgiving.

Our garden is coming together quite nicely. We had a family purchase the materials and build all 25 garden boxes. The children enjoyed loading our wheelbarrow with soil, during some outside playtimes, and filling the garden boxes with soil. We will continue to work on the mulch for the walkway of our garden area. Our garden party was a success, and many children got started on planting seeds and seasonal plants into their garden plots. If you were not able to come to the garden party, please feel free to send seeds and plants for the children to plant into their garden plots. Going forward we will have a parent volunteer coming in to help the children plant these items. It is always fun to watch the seeds turn into edible plants, roots or flowers! The garden area is a great extension to our study of plants, trees and seeds.

We are looking forward to all the works the children will continue to do in the classroom!



Ms. Jenny leading musical chairs/cake walk during our Fall Festival.



Lukas and family at the garden party.



Ayush creating a spaceship with the blocks.



Sophia working on the addition strip board.



Charlie working on pink tower, brown stair extension.

Lower Elementary 1

Ms. Sally & Ms. Kerry

MONTESSORI OF MACON

The spirit of Culture Fest is a celebration of the different peoples from around Earth and their beautifully different cultures. Maria Montessori knew how important it is to study other peoples in order to broaden our understanding of how all of our same basic needs are the same, and how our different biomes and traditions shape the way that we each meet our basic needs. Dr. Montessori lived through two world wars and decided that the only hope for humanity was to educate the children for peace.

In honor of the spirit of Culture Fest and Dr. Montessori's instructions, LE1 has been researching countries from the different continents. This started with a lesson, The Parts of the Flag, illustrated by our flag of the United States of America in particular. The children chose a country from a map in our entryway, being careful to each get a country not already taken by another classmate. The children used atlases and books on flags to discover what the flag of their chosen country looked like. They each colored the flag appropriately and presented it at group time, pointing out the parts of the flag at the same time. Of course all the parts of the flag were the same on each but each flag's field and canton are unique!

Our classroom has bloomed with many flags from around the Earth. Several children elected to research additional flags. Some children chose to research and write a flag report because almost everyone at group time wanted to know why the designs and colors were chosen by the peoples for their flags. Every child also researched and wrote a report on their chosen country, each at their own level of ability. These reports were presented with an accompanying visual aid created by them. Many paper dolls were made and presented for this purpose. These reports and dolls are displayed around the world map in our entryway. Please stop by to look and learn!



Alice working on her Chilean doll.



Michael working on his flag.



Raegen working on her flag.



Max working on his U.S.A. report.



Our entryway!

MONTESSORI OF MACON

Lower Elementary 2 Ms. Gyni & Ms. Katherine

December 2015

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Newsletter

Maria Montessori believed that any hope for the future peace of the world rested in the children. She had seen the schools she established in Italy taken over by Mussolini for the purpose of indoctrinating children with his political views and she found herself interned in India by the British for the duration of World War 2 because they were not sure they could trust her. During that time, she was strongly influenced by Gandhi's thinking about peace. She came to think that the way to achieve peace in the world was to cultivate in each child a strong desire and commitment to living peacefully. The peace component of the Montessori curriculum grew out of that period in her life.

Peace begins within. In our Lower Elementary classroom, we have a Peace Corner devoted to the development of a serene environment. Students can go there to take a break from the stresses of the classroom. There are lovely books to read which celebrate the worth and dignity of each individual as well as the diversity of cultures on our planet. There, children can listen to music or a guided meditation, which leads them to calm down and think of quiet, beautiful things. They can practice yoga, write an encouraging message for a classmate, or compose a poem or sentence using magnetic words.

As we begin our work in the classroom each morning, we listen to quiet music to help us relax and begin to focus on our work. When we gather together after a busy morning, we practice the discipline of "making silence" before beginning a lesson or discussion. This requires the efforts of every person in the group and focuses our attention on what we will do together. During lunch, we've enjoyed listening to a variety of classical music. So far, we've heard Vivaldi's "Four Seasons", Handel's "Water Music" and Bach's "Toccatina" and "Fugue" in D minor. After a busy playtime outside, we transition back to work by coming together for a yoga sequence called a "sun salutation" to the accompaniment of "Pachelbel's Canon" in D. The children are beginning to recognize and appreciate these pieces of music.

Before going back to work in the afternoon, we recite Gandhi's Peace Greeting together:

*I offer you peace.
I offer you love.
I offer friendship.*

*I see your beauty.
I hear your cry.
I feel your pain.*

*This wisdom flows
from the spirit within me.
I salute that spirit in you.
Let us work together in peace.*



The Peace Rose



In our classroom...



"I offer you peace...."



The Peace Candle

Of course, we are a typical group of people. We have our arguments and times when classmates are unhappy with one another. For times like this, the Peace Corner becomes a place for discussion and negotiation. Students are taught to use "I" messages to speak when they are feeling wronged. A sign with these prompts for discussion helps them get started:

"I have a problem with . . ."
"Because I . . ."
"I feel . . ."
"I need you to . . ."

The Peace Rose also helps with these conversations. Students pass it back and forth as they take turns talking. It ensures that each person is heard. These are valuable lessons in advocating for oneself, voicing grievances and negotiating peaceful settlements to disagreements. At the end of a busy week, we like to wind down and celebrate with a Peace Candle ceremony. We stand together in a circle of silence around a lighted candle. Quiet music begins and students take turns carrying the candle around inside the circle, then passing it to a classmate. They make eye contact and whisper "peace" to one another as the candle is exchanged. It is a quiet and dignified ceremony for young children. They look forward to it and take it seriously. It is wonderful and moving to witness.

Upper Elementary Ms. Tethel, Ms. Fran & Ms. Susan

MONTESSORI OF MACON

December 2015

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Newsletter

An explosion of reading is underway in Upper El. All students are reading (and listening) to cultivate and reinforce the habit of becoming lifelong readers. In this newsletter issue, we highlight a series of reading experiences that is causing conversations at school and among many families.

U.E. Students enjoyed shows at Wesleyan

Our first class field trip in Upper El was to see a series of short plays adapted from famous short stories. In preparation for the performances, we read several short stories in the first half of this session. Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" was the first story we read. Several great points and questions were asked, and many students hypothesized as to what disease afflicted the speaker to make him obsessed over the old man's eye. From this horror story, we read Guy de Maupassant's "The Necklace". The ending upset the class, and all came up with ways they would have acted differently than Mathilde if they were in the same situation in which she found herself. "The Monkey's Paw" by W.W. Jacobs and Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" both sparked our imaginations. One student remarked that he cannot wait to see how the players create the horse chase that highlights Irving's classic tale. As a class, we discussed the importance of reading a book or story before seeing someone else's interpretation of the piece. We were all entertained by the players, and during lunch when we returned, several students were still discussing which shows they liked best.

PIE- A mystery

Molly Beasley was intrigued when she learned all students in U.E. were reading a mystery that featured pie recipes. Her son, Chris, a 5th grader, asked if they could bake a pie using a recipe from PIE by Sarah Weeks. Without hesitating, Ms. Beasley agreed that on the next shopping afternoon, Chris, along with his brother Mikey, a second grader in Lower El, would go to the grocery store and purchase ingredients. The Beasleys made the trip and that evening they prepared two buttermilk pies for the class based on the recipe on page 24. The next morning, the Beasleys caused a lot of excitement when they entered the classroom bearing two large toasted crème-colored buttermilk pies.



Chris preparing to share his pie.

The pies were served as dessert following lunch. From the perspective of adults in the classroom and students who like buttermilk, the pies were absolutely delicious. Students unfamiliar with the taste of buttermilk were not so enthusiastic. We are very grateful for the Beasleys' support, and Chris says he and his mom are planning to prepare another one.

Fourteen pie recipes are featured in Week's realistic story about the "The Pie Queen of Ipswitch," owner of a pie bakery who passes away unexpectedly and wills the recipe for her famous crust to her missing cat, Lardo.

U.E. students enjoyed reading and discussing this intriguing tale, and students had a lot of ideas about what happened to Lardo and why would Aunt Polly leave her famous recipe to her beloved pet. As we prepared for the Thanksgiving celebration that always features pies, teachers decided to focus on Weeks's mystery as a rallying device to encourage the pleasure of reading. Each Tuesday and Thursday at the beginning of the school day, the class spent 30 minutes discussing new developments in the story including characters, plot, and author's descriptions.

What did we do when we finished the story? Why baked pies of course for our Annual Thanksgiving Luncheon.

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Maddie and Cole working on a reading comprehension packet.



Chris sharing his pie.



Mr. Joseph reading "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" in preparation for their field trip.

MONTESSORI OF MACON

Middle/High
Ms. Sarah & Mr. Robert

December 2015

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Newsletter

You have heard it said many times, a Montessori education is not just about academics. We certainly have high academic standards, but we also understand that a true education is not restricted to facts and figures. It is one that incorporates all aspects of life. A true education seeks not only to educate the mind of the student, but the heart as well.

But what exactly does this look like? What are these “extras” that we talk about? How do we educate the whole child and still balance academic studies? We do this by following the needs of the students, by listening to what they are telling us both with and without words.

One way these “extras” are worked into the middle/high classroom is through our Personal World curriculum. In Personal World, the students learn how to sit quietly with themselves, reflect on their actions and choices, reflect on their place in the world, and learn to meditate. They do this in multiple ways: artistic expression, journaling with the use of prompts, guided meditations, quiet gardening, yoga, and more. We dedicate twenty-five minutes a day to this silent reflection period, and it quickly becomes a favorite time of the day to many of us in the classroom. Spiritual leader and educational theorist Krishnamurti stated in his book *Education and the Significance of Life* that “To understand life is to understand ourselves, and that is both the beginning and the end of education” (pg 14). The Personal World curriculum is our way of attempting to achieve this.

Other “extras” include our electives. These courses are important as they help the students explore different interests that they may not have otherwise thought to explore. It gives them a taste of different fields and helps to teach them important life skills. We are fortunate to be able to offer a variety of different classes to our students that are enjoyed by everyone involved in them.

The middle school students are required to each complete two sessions of our farm/market elective. This gives each of them a chance to work in the garden, make plans for the farm program, and experience running a business. Because the students that are participating changes each session, the business model changes a little each session. This allows each group to take part in planning and executing their own goals for the business and farm.

The Music Technology elective, taught by our own Mr. Robert Hudgins, has been incredibly popular with the students. They are learning how to use technology programs to create music, which involves them also learning and understanding how music is made. Cooking was a favorite elective, as well. Especially since many of the goodies that were being made were shared with the entire class! The high school students have greatly enjoyed their Technology course which has included graphic design, website construction, typing skills, and robot programing! These electives don't always stay contained with just the students who are taking the class, either. In their excitement, the students often share their work, progress, and knowledge with each other, adding to their overall sense of community.

(continued on pg. 11)



Student Carley showing her enthusiasm for the cooking elective.



Clay helping visitor Shelley Price during her Career Week presentation.



Sydney, Weston, and Camille pose at the HS fundraising event at Smiley's.

Upper Elementary

continued...

Historical Fiction gives insight into the lives of everyday people

Another dimension of reading in U.E. is the incorporation of historical fiction books into our 6th grade American History Curriculum. During Session I, students read Liz Carbone's, *Blood on the River*, a story of a boy's struggle for survival as a Jamestown colonist. In Session II, they read *Indian Captive* by Lois Lenski. This story is based on the true story of Mary Jemison, a young girl taken captive by the Seneca tribe in Colonial America during the French, British, and Indian conflict. In both books, our students obtain an understanding of the significance of historical events and its impact on the lives of everyday people. Additionally, they view the complexity and multi-faceted aspects of these issues that is difficult to obtain by reading factual text.

Students share in the struggles and inner turmoil of the characters when faced with difficult decisions and try to predict how they would behave in similar situations.



Inisfree, Fiona, and Kadence working on a History lesson.

Middle/High

continued...

Other "extras" include, but are not limited to, our community building activities, fundraising events, service learning projects, career and college preparation, and spontaneous learning opportunities. For instance, we recently enjoyed a "Career Week" where different professionals from the Macon community came to speak to our students about their professions. We have also dedicated some of our morning PE block to community building games, waking up the students' minds and bringing the group closer together as a unit. The middle school trip to the Burton 4-H center in Tybee is another example of necessary "extras". This trip not only provides great intellectual insights, but personal growth as well.

In the middle/high classroom, we have a high standard set for academic performance and explore concepts and ideas beyond most middle/high classrooms. However, we also put a great emphasis on life beyond academics. We are working to help the students grow not only as academics, but as world citizens as well.



MS/HS students practice community building and communication through the "Body Alphabet" exercise.



MONTESSORI OF MACON

EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD FOR A WHOLE WORLD

855 Tolliver Place
Macon, GA 31210
(478) 757-8927

December 2015

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Newsletter

www.montessoriofmacon.org