Middle School Mission Statement

The mission of the Montessori Middle School is to educate the minds and the hearts of its students in a challenging, vibrant community that prizes academic excellence.

Founded in 2004, our Middle School Program serves 6th, 7th & 8th Year students through a classical curriculum designed to motivate learners of varied backgrounds, interests, and talents. What they share is a demanding academic environment in which their teachers inspire them to love learning and to embrace curiosity, creativity, and hard work. Providing structure and a strong foundation from the start, the curriculum allows for increasing independence as students move through the three years. Small classes permit teachers to find their students’ strengths and insist on their best efforts. Our commitment to the success of every student is absolute.

At the same time, we believe that success comes in many forms. Through the arts and athletics, ample leadership opportunities, extracurricular activities, and community service, Montessori students are encouraged to discover and to demonstrate that the mind and heart are equally important, and that one is empty without the other.

Diversity Statement

The Montessori Middle School is committed to diversity in an educational environment of responsibility, mutual respect, and empathy. We value individuals whose differences include, but are not limited to, age, ethnicity, family structure, gender, learning style, physical ability, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. Fulfilling this mission is an ongoing process requiring active participation and frequent dialogue.

All members of our community are expected to keep their minds and hearts open to difference as a source of strength and a means of growth.
Goals for Students

In order to become intellectually curious and self-reliant, Middle School students must develop a strong academic foundation and critical thinking skills. The academic program is a classical liberal arts curriculum, adapted to the modern world, which emphasizes in-depth study within the daily context of Montessori tenets and values.

As part of the Middle School community, a student is expected to:

1. Take responsibility for their own work.
2. Adjust to different teachers’ styles and expectations.
3. Face challenges and learn to overcome obstacles that come with building a strong academic foundation.
4. Discover who they are and learn to cultivate their strengths and talents.
5. Respect all members of the community: students, faculty, and staff.
6. Participate actively in the wider community life of the school.

Goals for Parents

The school expects to work in partnership with parents in support of the education of their child as she/he becomes increasingly confident and independent.

This partnership is achieved when parents:

1. Trust the Montessori educational philosophy and support the faculty as they set standards for both the intellectual development and the personal behavior of each student.
2. Establish schoolwork as a priority at home and provide time and space for study.
3. Stay well informed about the school program and their child's progress by reading regular mailings and attending curriculum nights, teacher conferences, and other parent events.
4. Communicate with the school through your child's advisor, whose role is to oversee each student's educational development.
5. Respect the school schedule by assuring your child's prompt and regular attendance.
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Sixth Year Core Curriculum

Service Learning

All students are immersed in several service learning activities and opportunities throughout the academic year. The Montessori Middle School firmly believes that service toward human communities and the environment helps shape the developing adolescent. Our partnership with several local organizations allows our students to practice building self-esteem, character, teamwork, respect, compassion, and kindness. Students examine how socioeconomic status, race, age, and circumstance might affect specific communities and their opportunities. Students are encouraged to introduce new service projects and endeavors to our school community and are supported through the process of translating an idea into a reality.

Geography & Economics

Through our study of the global economy, the relationship between geography and economics becomes clear. In the Geography portion of the course, we analyze how geography has shaped human civilization—why cities developed around sources of water and why farming allowed for population growth. Students discover the power of maps both to show and conceal the truth. They study ancient and present day mapmaking skills and explore the meaning behind political boundaries. In the Economics portion of the course, students discover economic principals of the free market in a project directly related to their Marketplace product. Students create a personal budget and then a proposal for the national budget. Upon completion of the course, students are able to answer questions such as: What is money? How does a credit card differ from a debit card? How does the stock market work? What is the purpose of a bank?
Language Arts

YEAR COURSE

Students read a variety of genres, authors, and styles in order to improve their critical thinking skills, analytical, expository, persuasive, and expressive writing pieces. Students learn how to craft strong, clear arguments and support them with relevant evidence. This course requires daily reading and writing in and out of the classroom. Writing assignments take different forms, from structured essays and poems to less formal journal entries, creative pieces, and short articles. Peer-editing and “read arounds” continue the Montessori-inspired traditions of student evaluation and oral presentation. Students improve their vocabulary, grammar, and writing mechanics through targeted lessons and essay revisions.

Mathematics

All courses begin with a review of problem-solving strategies and applications. Pre-tests are given to determine the skill level of each student. Students are placed at their level. Frequent assessments in the form of scheduled chapter tests, weekly quizzes, vocabulary tests and graded homework are part of each course.

Pre-Algebra 6

YEAR COURSE

This foundations course is designed to strengthen student knowledge of operations and properties, problem-solving strategies, and critical thinking skills while developing a new understanding for pre-algebraic thinking. Students will deepen their understanding of fractions, decimals, integers, variables, and simple equations. Applying concepts to the real world is a core focus within this readiness course. This program is targeted at providing students with a broad-based foundation in mathematics with the acquisition of needed basic skills to be successful in Algebra Readiness and Pre-Algebra.
Chemistry lies at the heart of environmental science. As such, the sixth year begins with an examination of the basic principles of chemistry including: states of matter, solubility, atoms, elements & the periodic table, chemical bonds & chemical reactions, and finishes with an investigation of acids and bases. These concepts will give students the means to understand the delicate balance of earth's many systems and how our actions can have a profound effect on them.

Students begin their unit on ecology by learning about basic earth systems: the water, nutrient and carbon cycles. They then move on to understanding how humans both interact with and impact key resources such as our soils, water sources and the atmosphere. At the same time students will be exploring basic ecological principles including: population dynamics, competition, the predator & prey relationship, biomass, food webs, community stability and the role of native and non-native species in the local ecosystem as a platform to deepen their understanding of the physical sciences.

The sun's energy fuels all life on earth, and has a profound effect on global climate. Students will discover how the effects of latitude, solar radiation, and ocean currents affect earth's climate and weather patterns. The approach is science education through thoughtful inquiry and analysis. Students will conduct lab work and field studies, and complete projects relating to course study.
The Great Outdoors

YEAR COURSE

Dr. Montessori believed that during the middle school years land-based experience is not only a valuable component but essential. (The Montessori School has always held our relationship to the outdoors as an integral part of our educational approach.) The Montessori Middle School includes land- and water-based encounters in the curriculum with an emphasis on Outdoor Expeditions. The students experience rock climbing, caving, orienteering, hiking, sailing, canoeing, and kayaking. In addition to short expeditions, two major trips are taken during the school year. In the autumn we take a five day trip and in the spring, a ten day trip. All expeditions and outdoor work are based on Dr. Montessori's vision for the extended classroom and the respect and responsibility inherent in meaningful encounters with the land and sea. Students are challenged both physically and mentally within the outdoors in their quest to push limits and learn more about themselves. Rivers, mountains, lakes, forests, and beaches are as much the stage as they are the characters that play a role in shaping adolescent growth and development. Among many other activity-based skills and objectives, students learn how to cook in the outdoors and contribute to their community.

Physical Fitness & Education

YEAR COURSE

In this course we explore the many facets of physical fitness and their interconnected nature. By engaging in a variety of training modalities, students experience firsthand how strength, flexibility, balance, speed and agility contribute to their athleticism. Emphasis is placed on training safely, minimizing the risk of injury and recovering efficiently after training sessions. Students will keep training logs, practice setting appropriate fitness goals and learn to evaluate their short and long term progress. Activities will include yoga, sprinting, long distance running, calisthenics and basic self-defense.
French/Spanish

French

YEAR COURSE

The French program further develops fundamental language skills, building on lessons given at the elementary level and increasing vocabulary and grammatical proficiency. Students are placed in classes according to ability. All levels use the textbook *Bien Dit* as a basis for grammar and vocabulary. Emphasis is on using the present, near future, and immediate past tenses, while introducing the imperfect and future tenses encountered in literature. Concurrently, French literature is presented in the form of short stories, fables, and poetry.

Students hone their listening and speaking skills through regular use of Rosetta Stone®, an interactive language immersion software program. Students have opportunities to explore many aspects of French culture through correspondence with French pen pals, art history lessons, restaurant excursions, and concerts.

Spanish

YEAR COURSE

*El Lenguaje es una forma de comunicación, el reflejo de una cultura.* (Language is a way of communication, a reflection of a culture.) Learning how to communicate in a foreign language will develop an appreciation of other people's culture, its literary heritage, and its impact upon the global community. During their cycle at The Middle School, students are provided with the foundations necessary for academic success at the high school level, while being guided towards a life-long interest in learning Spanish or other foreign languages. Feeling connected to the greater world is very important to our school community, making global communication essential; therefore language learning, vital. Grounded in the belief that learning modern language involves the use of all linguistic skills —*listening, speaking, reading, and writing*— all four disciplines are equally emphasized within the classroom. Instruction in Spanish encourages students to develop fluency and proficiency. Students gain understanding from audio and video materials and have access to many online study (Rosetta Stone®) and practice materials. As part of our enriching multi-discipline approach students read and recite Spanish poetry, study colonialism and current events, compose letters and other writing pieces, and partake in a variety of inspiring cultural activities such as cooking, attending presentations, outings, etc. All Spanish students take the National Language Exam. Students exit the The Middle School Spanish Program with the confidence to be successful at a high school intermediate level.
Seventh Year Core Curriculum

Service Learning

YEAR COURSE

All students are immersed in several service learning activities and opportunities throughout the academic year. The Montessori Middle School firmly believes that service toward human communities and the environment helps shape the developing adolescent. Our partnership with several local organizations allows our students to practice building self-esteem, character, teamwork, respect, compassion, and kindness. Students examine how socioeconomic status, race, age, and circumstance might affect specific communities and their opportunities. Students are encouraged to introduce new service projects and endeavors to our school community and are supported through the process of translating an idea into a reality.

U.S. History

ONE YEAR COURSE

In U.S. History, students examine the Colonization of America up through Westward Expansion and the United States Civil War. Political, economic, social, and cultural histories are studied so that students gain a grounded perspective towards what has shaped modern America. Through class discussion, literature readings, and examining primary/secondary sources, students are challenged to understand decisions and policies that have come to influence the development and identity of the United States. Students strengthen their note taking and critical thinking skills in this course as they will analyze multiple points of view. This course also focuses upon how the global community viewed the beginning of the United States and how those viewpoints have evolved within contemporary times. Therefore, current events are viewed with a historical lens.
Language Arts

YEAR COURSE

Students glean meaning, create and support a strong thesis in critical, expository, and persuasive essays, and compose expressive writing that shows evidence of knowledge of the structures and conventions of written standard English. Students begin the year reading a variety of texts focusing on author’s intent and character studies. The year concludes with in-class reading of William Shakespeare. In a seminar-type setting, we explore reading responses, question character motivation, and develop discussion skills. Students practice forming a focused thesis, then hunting (diligently! courageously!) in both their books and their own lives for supporting examples. Students improve their vocabulary, grammar and writing mechanics through targeted lessons and essay revisions.

Mathematics

All courses begin with a review of problem-solving strategies and applications. Pre-tests are given to determine the skill level of each student. Students are placed at their level. Frequent assessments in the form of scheduled chapter tests, weekly quizzes, vocabulary tests and graded homework are part of each course.

Algebra Readiness

YEAR COURSE

In this course, students continue to develop algebraic thinking skills by deepening their understanding of concepts and vocabulary. Areas of study include operations with whole numbers, integers, inequalities, number theory, metric and customary measurement conversion, fractions, percents, proportions, ratios, probability, concepts in plate and solid geometry, functions, linear functions, and an introduction to the scientific calculator. Much like Math I, students make real world applications within the realm of math and how it affects and shapes daily actions, thought, and decision making. Students are expected to utilize the step-by-step examples provided in their text and maintain an organized section of notes for nightly review. This course is geared towards the standards of state and national educational organizations and propels students into strengthening their mathematical skill base.
Pre-Algebra
YEARN COURSE

The pre-algebra course is designed to develop a strong foundation in algebra, geometry, trigonometry and problem solving. Students need to understand these pre-algebraic prerequisites, concepts and skills to be successful in more advanced courses. The student learns to read the text to find key concepts, to take notes, and to build a math vocabulary. Practice with test taking and varied question formats are given to build the confidence and problem solving skills needed to achieve success. Use of scientific calculators and the publisher’s web pages are incorporated into classroom study.

Algebra
YEARN COURSE

As a high school level math course, students are presented with a broad range of topics focusing on the development of algebraic concepts and the acquisition of skills. Various algorithms are carried out using a collection of mathematical properties and relationships. Students then apply these properties and thus are able to visualize and verbalize the underlying mathematical concepts while building a strong mathematical vocabulary. Technology is integrated through the use of scientific calculators, graphing calculators and computers.

TEXTS: Course 2 McDougal Littell Middle School Math, McDougal Littell
Pre-Algebra, McDougal Little
Algebra 1, McDougal Little
Earth and Life Sciences
TWO YEAR COURSE

Our study of Earth and Life Science occurs over the course of two years.

For the seventh year the focus is on Life Science. Distinct units focus upon: the needs of living things, cell theory, cellular function and reproduction, disease, biological adaptation, genetics, evolution, speciation, and extinction. The course finishes with the discovery of the diversity of structure and function in plants and animals in comparison to similar systems in the human body.

For the eighth year the focus shifts to Earth Science. The course begins with a review of basic chemistry and in depth units on rocks, minerals, and soils. The remainder of the course takes a systems approach as we examine the rock cycle, the carbon & oxygen cycles and the hydrologic cycle, and learn how these cycles played a critical part in the origins of our planet, our atmosphere and earth's current and future climate. With this solid foundation we then move on to major geological processes such as plate tectonics, volcanoes, earthquakes, glaciers, mountain building, the work of rivers and streams, and groundwater.

Both courses provide students with the analytical tools necessary to move from practical and specific to more abstract constructions of the surrounding world. The approach is science education through inquiry within each of the two main bodies of study, with historical, social, and technological standards in an auxiliary role. Experiential field studies and labs form the foundation for the week, with lectures and class discussions as both preparatory and reflective in nature. Students are required to maintain a learning journal in which they critically analyze a studied theme through various forms of writing and artwork. Assessment of information mastery is completed through various mediums.
The Great Outdoors
YEARS COURSE

Dr. Montessori believed that during the middle school years land-based experience is not only a valuable component but essential. (The Montessori School has always held our relationship to the outdoors as an integral part of our educational approach.) The Montessori Middle School includes land- and water-based encounters in the curriculum with an emphasis on Outdoor Expeditions. The students experience rock climbing, caving, orienteering, hiking, sailing, canoeing, and kayaking. In addition to short expeditions, two major trips are taken during the school year. In the autumn we take a five day trip and in the spring, a ten day trip. All expeditions and outdoor work are based on Dr. Montessori’s vision for the extended classroom and the respect and responsibility inherent in meaningful encounters with the land and sea. Students are challenged both physically and mentally within the outdoors in their quest to push limits and learn more about themselves. Rivers, mountains, lakes, forests, and beaches are as much the stage as they are the characters that play a role in shaping adolescent growth and development. Among many other activity-based skills and objectives, students learn how to cook in the outdoors and contribute to their community.

Physical Fitness & Education
YEARS COURSE

In this course we explore the many facets of physical fitness and their interconnected nature. By engaging in a variety of training modalities, students experience firsthand how strength, flexibility, balance, speed and agility contribute to their athleticism. Emphasis is placed on training safely, minimizing the risk of injury and recovering efficiently after training sessions. Students will keep training logs, practice setting appropriate fitness goals and learn to evaluate their short and long term progress. Activities will include yoga, sprinting, long distance running, calisthenics and basic self-defense.
French/Spanish

French

YEAR COURSE

The French program further develops fundamental language skills, building on lessons given at the elementary level and increasing vocabulary and grammatical proficiency. Students are placed in classes according to ability. All levels use the textbook *Bien Dit* as a basis for grammar and vocabulary. Emphasis is on using the present, near future, and immediate past tenses, while introducing the imperfect and future tenses encountered in literature. Concurrently, French literature is presented in the form of short stories, fables, and poetry.

Students hone their listening and speaking skills through regular use of Rosetta Stone®, an interactive language immersion software program. Students have opportunities to explore many aspects of French culture through correspondence with French pen pals, art history lessons, restaurant excursions, and concerts.

Spanish

YEAR COURSE

*El Lenguaje es una forma de comunicación, el reflejo de una cultura.* (Language is a way of communication, a reflection of a culture.)

Learning how to communicate in a foreign language will develop an appreciation of other people's culture, its literary heritage, and its impact upon the global community. During their cycle at The Middle School, students are provided with the foundations necessary for academic success at the high school level, while being guided towards a life-long interest in learning Spanish or other foreign languages. Feeling connected to the greater world is very important to our school community, making global communication essential; therefore language learning, vital. Grounded in the belief that learning modern language involves the use of all linguistic skills—including *listening, speaking, reading, and writing*—all four disciplines are equally emphasized within the classroom. Instruction in Spanish encourages students to develop fluency and proficiency. Students gain understanding from audio and video materials and have access to many online study (Rosetta Stone®) and practice materials. As part of our enriching multi-discipline approach students read and recite Spanish poetry, study colonialism and current events, compose letters and other writing pieces, and partake in a variety of inspiring cultural activities such as cooking, attending presentations, outings, etc. All Spanish students take the National Language Exam. Students exit the The Middle School Spanish Program with the confidence to be successful at a high school intermediate level.
Eighth Year Core Curriculum

Service Learning

YEAR COURSE

All students are immersed in several service learning activities and opportunities throughout the academic year. The Montessori Middle School firmly believes that service toward human communities and the environment helps shape the developing adolescent. Our partnership with several local organizations allows our students to practice building self-esteem, character, teamwork, respect, compassion, and kindness. Students examine how socioeconomic status, race, age, and circumstance might affect specific communities and their opportunities. Students are encouraged to introduce new service projects and endeavors to our school community and are supported through the process of translating an idea into a reality.

20th Century World History

ONE YEAR COURSE

20th Century World History is designed to build a core understanding of how the past has influenced the present and possibly the future. Students study units including the Second Industrial Revolution, The Great Depression, World War II, and the post war period. Political, economic, social, and cultural histories are studied so that students gain a grounded perspective towards what has shaped the modern World. Through class discussion, literature readings, and examining primary and secondary sources, students are challenged to understand decisions and policies that have come to influence the development and identity of countries and cultures. Students strengthen their note taking and critical thinking skills in this course as they analyze multiple points of view and demonstrate those views through writing and debate. Current events are often debated and viewed with a historical lens. Student work is enhanced and supported by multimedia and field trips to places of historical significance.
Language Arts

YEAR COURSE

In the Eighth Year, students hone and polish their writing in preparation for their transition to their next school. All students craft exemplary five paragraph essays that will persuade, inform, and entertain their readers. When they read, they read as writers, looking to author's style, form, and content as inspiration for their own writing. Writing assignments range from structured essays and poems to less formal journal entries and creative responses. In their quest to craft original and precise essays, students continue to value (and enjoy?) pre-writing and revision. Exploring interdisciplinary connections—both in the classroom and with trips to local venues like the Westport Playhouse—happen frequently; rarely will we read a piece without considering its historical, artistic, and/or theatrical context. “Publishing” days emphasize teamwork and accountability. We embrace specific grammar lessons and concentrate on seeing grammar “in context.” Standardized test preparation includes a three-pronged approach to vocabulary along with timed/on-demand writing.

Mathematics

All courses begin with a review of problem-solving strategies and applications. Pre-tests are given to determine the skill level of each student. Students are placed at their level. Frequent assessments in the form of scheduled chapter tests, weekly quizzes, vocabulary tests and graded homework are part of each course.

Algebra Readiness

YEAR COURSE

In this course, students continue to develop algebraic thinking skills by deepening their understanding of concepts and vocabulary. Areas of study include operations with whole numbers, integers, inequalities, number theory, metric and customary measurement conversion, fractions, percents, proportions, ratios, probability, concepts in plate and solid geometry, functions, linear functions, and an introduction to the scientific calculator. Much like Math I, students make real world applications within the realm of math and how it affects and shapes daily actions, thought, and decision making. Students are expected to utilize the step-by-step examples provided in their text and maintain an organized section of notes for nightly review. This course is geared towards the standards of state and national educational organizations and propels students into strengthening their mathematical skill base.
Pre-Algebra
YEAR COURSE
The pre-algebra course is designed to develop a strong foundation in algebra, geometry, trigonometry and problem solving. Students need to understand these pre-algebraic prerequisites, concepts and skills to be successful in more advanced courses. The student learns to read the text to find key concepts, to take notes, and to build a math vocabulary. Practice with test taking and varied question formats are given to build the confidence and problem solving skills needed to achieve success. Use of scientific calculators and the publisher’s web pages are incorporated into classroom study.

Algebra
YEAR COURSE
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TEXTS: Course 2 McDougal Littell Middle School Math, McDougal Littell Pre-Algebra, McDougall Little Algebra 1, McDougal Little

Geometry
YEAR COURSE
In Geometry, Algebra and mathematics become alive through application. The course is designed to promote reasoning skills through problem solving. The first unit in the text establishes the tools of geometry, methods of reasoning, constructions and the coordinate plane. Subsequent chapters focus on properties, proofs and applications with lines, triangles, circles and transformations. Ideas introduced in the text are reinforced by review throughout the course. This course is the equivalent to a freshman/sophomore course in high school geometry. It meets all of the national and state requirements.
Science

Earth and Life Sciences
TWO YEAR COURSE

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The Great Outdoors

YEAR COURSE

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Physical Fitness & Education

YEAR COURSE

In this course we explore the many facets of physical fitness and their interconnected nature. By engaging in a variety of training modalities, students experience firsthand how strength, flexibility, balance, speed and agility contribute to their athleticism. Emphasis is placed on training safely, minimizing the risk of injury and recovering efficiently after training sessions. Students will keep training logs, practice setting appropriate fitness goals and learn to evaluate their short and long term progress. Activities will include yoga, sprinting, long distance running, calisthenics and basic self-defense.
**French/Spanish**

**French**

**YEAR COURSE**

The French program further develops fundamental language skills, building on lessons given at the elementary level and increasing vocabulary and grammatical proficiency. Students are placed in classes according to ability. All levels use the textbook *Bien Dit* as a basis for grammar and vocabulary. Emphasis is on using the present, near future, and immediate past tenses, while introducing the imperfect and future tenses encountered in literature. Concurrently, French literature is presented in the form of short stories, fables, and poetry.

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**Spanish**

**YEAR COURSE**

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Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Year

Nutrition, Health & Sex Education

In the three years that students take this course, they come to understand how much control they have over their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Students are challenged to improve their eating habits by creating a food plan for themselves. They examine their current diet, learn to evaluate the nutritive value of various foods and employ healthy behavior modification techniques to drive position change. To give students a deeper understanding of nutrition, they analyze the tenets of today’s most common food philosophies and debate their merits using scientific studies and other resources to support or refute claims. The business and politics of the food industry is introduced with an emphasis on legislation that has led to our current food system and legislative efforts that aim to reshape it. Students explore how other aspects of their lives including exercise, rest, hygiene, stress and emotions can affect their health and learn the causes/effects of common preventable chronic diseases. They expand their food plan into a lifestyle plan and strive to make further improvements.

Once they have a grasp on the basics of wellness, students engage in discussions on puberty, reproduction, body image and age-appropriate sex education. They are asked to view popular media with a critical eye in order to increase their awareness of the subtle messages about body image and gender roles/identity that are being delivered. Eighth Year students discuss decisions about and repercussions of sexual behavior, abstinence and pregnancy/disease prevention. Broader topics such as decision-making, life planning, interpersonal relationships, violence prevention and drug awareness are also incorporated. Students employ role-playing to identify unhealthy situations, employ negotiation and coping techniques and devise creative solutions to their problems.
Electives

Students at every level have the opportunity of choosing electives in addition to their academic studies and outdoor expeditions. Each student has the option of taking up to one full year or two half year electives. Due to complexities of scheduling, we ask that each student indicate their first and second choice. Every effort will be made to accommodate the first choice. Offerings include the following: Simple Machines, Disease Detective, Crime Busters, Water Quality, Metric Mastery, Experimental Design, Shock Value, Rube Goldberg, Boomilever, Meteorology, Entymology, Write It—Do It

Extracurricular Activities

The extracurricular program is primarily elective, allowing students to choose activities that interest them and to use their talents to the fullest extent in a variety of experiences. Participation in extracurricular activities allows students to build group spirit and expand their friendships. Activities such as drama, ceramics, yoga and public speaking are built into the schedule. Each student can rotate an elective each trimester. Other middle school extracurricular offerings include the following: Intramural soccer—fall; Intramural Basketball—winter; Intramural Running & Track—spring; Ballroom Dancing; Rowing; Band

Special Needs

The mission of The Montessori School’s special needs program – Proactive Educational Assistance – is to identify signs of risk for learning differences; provide referrals for diagnostic evaluations and offer support to Montessori teachers and parents of children with learning differences. Our Learning Specialists work with our staff to introduce modifications and learning strategies for students diagnosed with different neurodevelopmental profiles. If special services beyond the classroom are needed, they are arranged independently between families and the Learning Specialist. A specific goal of this program is to help the student adapt to new situations by fully understanding his/her strengths and limitations and increase their ability to be self-advocates.
Faculty Biographies

The staff of The Montessori Middle School is passionate about the importance of learning as a lifetime habit of curiosity, observation, and thought.

Ramani DeAlwis
MIDDLE SCHOOL DIRECTOR
COUNSELOR FOR HIGH SCHOOL PLACEMENTS, ADVISOR
- B.A. Education: University of Wisconsin
- A.M.I. Diploma: Maria Montessori Training Center Sri Lanka
- Head of School, Metropolitan Montessori School, New York City, Eighteen years
- Montessori Directress at Primary, Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary levels
- Co-Designer, Montessori Administrators Course for AMI National Conference
- Montessori teacher for 30 years

Jason Brasher
ATHLETIC DIRECTOR
- B.A. Studio Art: Eastern Connecticut State University
- Extensive soccer coaching and playing experience
- Physical Education Specialist, The Montessori School since 1998
- Coach, Labyrinth Soccer and Basketball Teams, Running Club and Cross-Country

Patricia Clahar
6TH YEAR MATHEMATICS, WORLD HISTORY, HEALTH & SEX EDUCATION, NUTRITION AND FITNESS
- M.B.A. Columbia University
- B.A. Biochemistry, Harvard University (Dean's List and advanced academic standing)
- Kaplan SAT & SSAT Instructor
- Trained Health, Wellness and Nutrition Specialist
- Personal trainer, kickboxing coach and yoga instructor
- Vast and varied teaching experience with background in mathematics and science and interest in humanities

Meg Drake
LEARNING DIFFERENCES SPECIALIST
- M.A. Neuropsychology of Learning: Northwestern University
- M.A. Counseling: New York University
- Director, PEASS - a program that aims to identify signs of risk for learning differences at an early age and provides support for children who learn differently in Montessori classrooms.
- Presenter, annual workshops at national Montessori Conferences
- Provider of professional development programs locally.
- Meg has been involved in Montessori education for 30 years and with our school for
much of that time.

**John Gibson**  
**OUTDOOR EXPEDITIONS**

- B.A. Liberal Studies: University of California  
- M.SW.: Fordham University  
- 20+ years of teaching Outdoor Education to students from ages 8 to 18  
- Expedition Leader at Whitby School, Rippowam Cisqua and the Montessori Middle School and Director for student programs at the Mountain workshop

**Linda Krulwich**  
**MATHEMATICS**

- B.A. Sweet Briar College (awarded Physics Prize)  
- Graduate work in Education: Fairfield University Master of Education Program  
- Extensive teaching background in Mathematics and Science at The Wooster School, The Landmark School and Fairfield Country Day School

**Carolina Martino**  
**SPANISH, ADVISOR, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, STUDY SKILLS**

- M.A.T. Education: Sacred Heart University  
- Initial Elementary Education Certification (K-6)  
- Cross Endorsement - Bilingual and Spanish, Sacred Heart University  
- B.A. Spanish, Minors: Art and Psychology  
- Bi Lingual Teacher Grades K-5, Marvin/Brookside Elementary Schools, 2006-2007  

**Erin McCarthy**  
**6TH AND 7TH YEAR LANGUAGE ARTS, SIXTH YEAR GEOGRAPHY & ECONOMICS, 7TH YEAR U.S. HISTORY**

- M.Ed. Manhattanville College  
- B.A. English Education (minor in Creative and Professional Writing), Manhattanville College  
- Montessori School Upper Elementary Language and Literature Specialist 2012-2013

**Cara Roure Johnson**  
**SCIENCE, ADVISOR, OUTDOOR PROGRAMS**

- Ph.D. Anthropology: University of Connecticut  
- Dissertation funded through National Science Foundation: Pre-Human Behavioral Adaptations in the Middle Pleistocene of East Africa.  
- Post doctoral fellowship, University of Connecticut, Department of Anthropology  
- Extensive teaching experience with particular focus on laboratory courses in lithic technology, human osteology and the human fossil record.  
- Published research findings in Sedimentology, Journal of Human Evolution, Journal of
**Anthropological Archeology**

**Leila Shields**  
**EIGHTH YEAR LANGUAGE ARTS**

- B.A. English: Yale University  
- Upper Elementary Teacher, Whitby School, Greenwich, CT  
- Writer for the Oxford Companion to the Garden, Second Edition  
- Associate Editor, Condé Nast, Allure Magazine  
- Associate Editor, Condé Nast, Women's Sports & Fitness Magazine

**Rob Silvan**  
**CHORUS**

- B.S. in Music: Mercy College  
- B.A. in English: Iona College  
- Music Director, Talmadge Hill Church 1995-present  
- Founder, Director, KEYS (a non profit that provides underserved Bridgeport school children with piano, cello and violin lessons - www.keysmusic.org)  
- Writer, choral arrangements  
- Thirty years choral and piano teaching and thirty five years as band founder and director

**Mark Stephenson**  
**ART**

- B.A. Art Education: Southern Connecticut State University  
- A.A. Studio Arts: Norwalk Community College  
- Artisan in many media for fourteen years  
- Elementary Art Specialist at The Montessori School

**Terry Ullman**  
**FRENCH**

- B.A. French: Smith College (including studies at La Sorbonne, Paris France)  
- M.B.A.: McGill University  
- CT Teaching Certificate: Western Connecticut State University  
- French Specialist at The Montessori School since 2000
Mission Statement

To respect children as self directed individuals and foster their growth toward independence and social responsibility

To adhere to the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori and maintain the standard of the Association Montessori Internationale

To create a joyful, diverse, and family-oriented community which provides an atmosphere that supports the growth of the child

To inspire the child to live both passionately and compassionately in a global community