

Editor [Jaimie Cura](#) jaimie.cura@patch.com

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Montessori School Hosts Open House Tonight

Approaching their 50th anniversary, the private school thrives as a part of the Wilton community.

By [Heather Borden Herve](#) | [Email the author](#) | 5:45 am

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If you're only familiar with a public school classroom, you likely haven't experienced a greeting like the one you receive in a Montessori elementary classroom. Stepping foot into one classroom at [The Montessori School](#) in Wilton, a visitor is welcomed by a student with a handshake and the offer of a cup of tea.

The Montessori School, a private school based on the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, operates its lower school out of its campus on Whipple Road. The school celebrates two anniversaries in 2014—the school will turn 50 years old and also will mark 25 years in their current location.

The school is hosting an Open House at their location this evening, January 23 at 7 p.m.

"People move to this town and to this area so that their children can go to school here. This is an internationally known and respected Montessori school. It's comprehensive—very few [Montessori schools] go toddler through middle school," said Ruth Hurwitz, the Montessori school director of communications. "We recently had a family that relocated to this area from Japan for this school."

Montessori programs place a child's needs at the center of the learning process. At every developmental stage—from 18 months to the teen years—the children are regarded as self-directed individuals, born to be learners and challenged according to the individual's potential.

Observing a classroom at the Montessori-termed "Primary" level, students between the ages of almost-three through five years can be seen working alongside one another. They work independently or with one another, using materials and tools developed by Dr. Montessori—echoes of which are seen at each of the increasing levels as children get older. Math counting boards are simpler at the younger ages; they increase in complexity and introduce higher-level concepts with a look and feel that's similar to what children encountered in earlier years.

There are some primary differences between a Montessori classroom and that of a typical public school class. "It's a prepared environment, that's the biggest piece, which allows students to go and choose work they've had lessons on and work on their own pace. They have three years in one classroom—you can work at your own pace and more with what suits you, with more individual focus," Hurwitz explained.

She added that individual pace is emphasized, but that the overall focus is on the entire community of the school.

According to Mary Zeman, the head of school, that approach goes for being a part of the wider community outside as well. "We're committed to being a school that's accessible to a wide range of families. It's part of our original charter, we're a school that values diversity and inclusivity. We serve children from 23 area towns, including New York state. That said, we're very aware of our responsibilities of being a school in the town of Wilton. Our families shop in town, we're grateful for the town's resources and many families move to Wilton to be near the school."

The school in Wilton is accredited by the Association Montessori Internationale (the international accrediting board for Montessori schools) as well as by the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools.