**Descriptions of Events at The Montessori School**

What follows is a brief description of the significant events that occur annually at The Montessori School. Please check the school calendar for the dates of each of these school events. The Administrative Team is delighted to answer any questions you may have.

*Should I bring my children?*

*One of the hallmarks of our Montessori School is our orientation to the entire family. Many of our school events are designed for participation by both children and adults. Likewise, there are certain events that are designed for adult participation and not appropriate for children and others that are designed just for our students.*

 **Annual Meeting**

All parents and Staff are invited to the Annual Meeting for presentations by the Board of Trustees Executive Committee, distribution and review of the Annual Report, and an opportunity to ask questions about current and future plans for the school.

**Artist in Residence**

During the school year, an artist’s work may be featured throughout our school. For some visits a morning reception for parents may play a part. Children have a chance to meet the artist and view the work throughout the time the work is on display.

**Auction**

Our school’s Spring fund-raiser features dinner as well as a live and silent auction. This evening, beautifully and thoughtfully prepared by a committee of Montessori parents and Staff who work throughout the year, is a capstone event of the school year – a rousing social event for parents and Staff, and an essential source of revenue for our school.

**Back-to-School Nights**

These are evenings planned by your child’s classroom teachers and are essential beginning-of-the-year gatherings for Montessori parents. This is an opportunity for you to gather with other parents in your child’s class and talk about the coming year. Aspects of Montessori philosophy are discussed as well as details of everyday life, classroom traditions, expectations, plans, and answers to your particular questions.

**Book Fair: The Grammar Box**

Each year a book fair provides our school community with the opportunity to purchase reading material for toddler through adult. This exists as a service to the families at our school and is not a fundraising event.

**Childcare Provider Observation & Workshop**

As we recognize the importance of each of the caregivers in your family’s life, and our on-going work to bridge the school and home environments, we schedule a special week of observation for au pairs/caregivers. The week concludes with a morning workshop for caregivers facilitated by a member of our staff which includes philosophical discussion and practical tools for continuity between school and home.

**Choral Performances**

At various times during the year, The Montessori Chorus performs. Students in our Elementary and Middle School program participate in our choral program and with voices raised in multi-part harmony and sophisticated, joyful song, this is an obvious extension of Montessori discipline, focus, diligence respect and pride.

**Cocktail Party**

Early in the fall, the adults in our community gather for our annual cocktail party which is the formal welcome to families new to our school. The full staff is introduced and there is a brief presentation by the Board of Trustees. This is a wonderful social time for all adults to gather and toast the new school year.

**Commencement**

All Montessori families are invited to attend the commencement ceremony of our graduating 8th Years as they beautifully articulate the culmination of a Montessori education.

**Conferences**

Parent/Teacher conferences are held in the fall and spring. It is here that we deepen our collaboration on behalf of your child, looking at his or her development from our various places. You will receive notices when observation/conference time is approaching, and you will be asked to reserve times with your child’s teacher. Prior to conferences parents are asked to observe (see Observation description below).

Conferences are tightly scheduled and last approximately 30 minutes; please respect the schedules of others and arrive and depart promptly. While we expect parents to arrange child care during conference times, if there is a problem and you find you are unable to make arrangements, your Primary, Elementary or Middle School-aged Montessori-enrolled child(ren)may join our Late Day Program during the time of your conference for a fee.

**Fall Clean - Up Day & Alumni Homecoming**

On a designated Saturday morning in November, Montessori School parents, children, staff and alumni gather to care for our school grounds. Over the years, in addition to planting bulbs, preparing garden beds for winter, we’ve built simple stone walls, helped construct our play yard and worked on the brick labyrinth. Following Clean-Up, everyone is invited up to the soccer field where we cheer on the annual Montessori School Alumni soccer game.

 **Elementary Student Presentation Nights**

Two wonderful evenings: one for Lower Elementary parents and another for Upper Elementary parents. These evenings are specially prepared by the children who share current work and best-loved materials. We ask that childcare for siblings is arranged for this evening .

**Grandparents’ Day**

Grandparents (and surrogate grandparents) of Montessori School students spend the morning at school! Grandparents of Middle School students are invited to school the Wednesday morning before Thanksgiving and grandparents of children at our Whipple Road campus are invited to school the Friday morning before Memorial Day. As extended members of our Montessori family, it is important that they come to better understand Montessori. They share breakfast, visit the school and spend time with their grandchildren in the classrooms.

**Harvest Festival**

We host our Harvest Festival at the end of October for students and staff. Around the campfire, we share stories and songs and a lunch of homemade soup. Our Middle School coordinates this annual autumn tradition. Boxes for collecting for UNICEF are distributed to all and the celebration usually ends with dancing in the leaves as we celebrate New England harvest on this sunny autumn day.

**Middle School Integrated Project Day**

Students select a topic of their choice (which have varied in the past from the history of pearls to the New York Stock Exchange) and then integrate their study of this topic across six subject areas. Research is conducted over a six-month period and is then orally presented to Montessori parents and students on our Whipple Road campus.

**Middle School Marketplace**

Born of the Middle School’s Economics study, Marketplace empowers students to test their entrepreneurial skills. Each student selects a product that they must design and produce, develop a business plan that includes the number of items they need to sell to reach their financial goal and project potential earnings. Marketplace Day takes place on our Whipple Road campus and money earned goes toward the 8th Year’s outreach trip.

**Morning Forums**

These morning events for parents are part of our Parent Education series and offer an opportunity for conversation about universal topics of child development as they connect to Montessori philosophy. Typically, these events occur monthly – on Fridays at our Whipple Road campus and on Tuesdays at our Middle School.

**Moving Up & Moving On Ceremonies**

Intimate classroom-hosted ceremonies are held in the spring of each year for Toddler, Primary, Lower and Upper Elementary children who are completing their program cycles. Our Commencement is the formal, community-wide ceremony that honors our 8th Year graduates. In addition, on the last day of the year, Montessori School children and staff gather on the labyrinth for a special ceremony of closing and honoring all those who are moving up or moving on.

**Observations**

Parent observations are scheduled in the fall, prior to fall conferences. Observing is a critical component to your understanding of your child’s learning experience in Montessori. If you wish to observe the classroom or confer with the teacher at times other than those listed on the school calendar, please leave word for your child’s teacher. Observations are also scheduled for parents with students who will be moving onto the next program level. Parents are expected to observe classes at the next program level in order to gain a better understanding of how your child’s work relates to what has gone before and what lies ahead.

**Orientations**

Parents who have a child entering our school for the first time, or moving into a new program attend an orientation. These meetings offer information pertinent to your child’s life in this new environment, and to your growing relationship with our school.

**Parent Association Meetings**

The Parent Association is comprised of all parents at The Montessori School. Active parent participation in our school is encouraged and recognized as a highly valued part of the life of our community. On the second Thursday of every month, representatives from each classroom meet to discuss the planning and implementation of our many school events. All parents of the school are welcome, and encouraged, to attend these meetings.

**Parent Education**

Parent education opportunities are crafted to help parents better understand Montessori philosophy and practice. Evening, morning and week-end events hosted by Montessori School staff offer parents further insight into the life of the classroom and our school. From time to time we host outside consultants and guests who speak on parenting and cultural topics of value to our school. We are proud of the active participation of so many of our parents in this aspect of the community of our school.

**Pasta Potluck Picnic**

Each September, in honor of our Italian roots, Montessori families gather for a delicious pot luck picnic feast and live jazz music on the lawn. This is our first community celebration after summer ends.

**Primary Parents Morning**

A wonderful opportunity for dads and moms to share time in the classroom with their Primary aged child. This hour is a time for parents to “follow their child” as they share current work and best-loved materials. We encourage you to leave other siblings at home and make this a special and unhurried morning of appreciation for your child’s Montessori experience from their perspective.

**Science Fair**

The Science Fair is a long-term research project undertaken by the elders of our school. Students spend months designing and conducting research and then preparing a presentation on their chosen experiment. Their work culminates in a presentation for both parents and students in the gym at our Whipple Road campus.