



## A tale of 100,000 honeybees



Hour photo/Matthew Vinci

Eli Busch, a 6th-grader at Montessori in Wilton, holds a smoker as he helps take care of the bee colony on the grounds of the school.

# Montessori School students learn how to be beekeepers

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WILTON — Bees have a tendency to frighten many people, but students at the Montessori School are embracing the flying insects and their contributions to nature.

Students in Montessori School's upper elementary classes (grades 4 to 6) have become beekeepers. The students built a beehive at the school at the end of last school year and are maintaining a colony of about 100,000 honeybees.

"These children will have the opportunity to move from seeing bees as pests, to exploring the place of bees as pollinators of the food we eat and their role in supporting the health of our gardens and trees," said Ruth Hurwitz, communications director of The Montessori School.

"In exploring the hive, our children will gain new understandings of ecology, math, and biology. They will see the complex society residing in the hive and will learn what it means to be an environmental steward."

Montessori School students spend time learning about bees and taking care of them.

"We've been trying to build a whole community around the hive. Our teacher will take a small group to feed the bees with sugar water," said Eli Busch, a sixth-grader.

"We call it bee soup," adds fifth-grader Valentina Gomez.



Hour photo/Matthew Vinci

Montessori School upper elementary students have built a beehive at the school property and welcomed a colony of honeybees. In exploring the hive, the children gain understandings of ecology, math, and biology.

Sugar is often used in bee feeding as a substitute to honey.

"Perhaps, in time, our bees may also provide us honey and wax, which will be a resource for the classroom," said Hurwitz.

The school became inspired to start the beekeeping project after Busch's father fascinated students with beekeeping presentations he made at the school.

Busch has had beehives in his backyard since he was five years old. Today, he has five beehives at

home.

"It all started because everyone in my family was terrified of bees and my dad didn't want that to be the case," Busch said.

The last few winters have been brutal to honeybee colonies, as many have died at alarming rates. Declining bee populations pose a threat to agriculture globally.

"Without bees there's almost no life because everything is pollinated by bees," said fifth-grade student Miles Katz.