



# Hampton Roads International Montessori School



## Coming Up In May:

May 7<sup>th</sup>- May 12<sup>th</sup>: Teacher Appreciation Week  
May 19<sup>th</sup>: Professional Day: No school for students  
May 29<sup>th</sup>: Memorial Day: School is closed

## Coming Up In June:

June 5<sup>th</sup>: Kindergarten graduation and 6<sup>th</sup> grade Moving On Ceremony  
June 6<sup>th</sup>: Field Day and Last day of School; 11:45 dismissal for all students  
June 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>: Professional Days: No school for students  
June 12<sup>th</sup>: First day of Summer Session  
June 19<sup>th</sup>: Juneteenth: School is closed

Dear Parents,

We are excited to say that our SAIS visiting team is recommending us for FULL ACCREDITATION! We have met all standards and indicators and they were thoroughly impressed with our school. My favorite quote from their oral report was:

"HRI Montessori staff create an engaging and fun student-centered learning environment where students can thrive. Their teachers foster healthy classrooms where teachers effectively model kindness, respectfulness, and the importance of community. They truly care about the children and the children's education."

We look forward to reading the full report after it has been voted on by the SAIS commission. Thank you to all the staff, parents, Board members, and students who helped create the self-study, participated in the surveys, spoke with the team, and share every day in our community. We all make HRI Montessori the wonderful place it is for children. The validation we receive from organizations like SAIS and the visiting team of educators just reaffirms all we do each day.

This accreditation brings to light the growth and progress of the past 3 years, when we had first started the process of accreditation. We began a new strategic plan with a Board consisting of mostly new members. A pandemic hit, requiring a pivot into virtual learning for 2 ½ months, and some substantial changes in our physical environment and procedures thereafter. We also ventured into new territory with the purchase of a second building requiring construction and adding staffing and students.

And, yet here we are. We have a strong Board, growing as we speak and yet consistent and ever forward thinking. A lead teaching staff that is dedicated to Montessori and their students, and again consistent, all returning next year. Physical security in the purchase of the second building, and now, the purchase of the original building instead of continuing to lease, which is in process. A community that, once again, can gather to enjoy each other's company, smile, laugh, and work together for the betterment of the children.

Over the past two months, the admin at HRI Montessori have been crazy busy and not always available. But during that time, we have seen some amazing things. We've seen children helping children. Staff helping staff. Parents/guardians/friends/Board Members helping staff and children and each other on school days, on days off, over spring break, in the evenings. It has been wonderful.

I want to personally thank all those who came out over spring break to help with the playground in Newport New; the Politos for making and delivering the music wall this week; those who helped with the Spring Fair; those who spoke with the accreditation visiting team; those who volunteered to plan for teacher appreciation; and those who are volunteering next week (it's okay- they don't know what is planned!); those who are sending items in; those who will volunteer for the playground at Hampton (yes, it's coming...); those who have donated to our fundraising and EISTC programs; and those who have shown Lindsey and I grace if we haven't responded to your email (as we may have missed it...).

Our HRI Montessori community is just that, a community, and we so appreciate being a part of it. As we close out this school year, we encourage you to get involved any way you can to be an active part of it. We missed you during Covid and can't wait to have you involved again!

-Ms. Michelle



# Toddler Community



Hello, Toddler Families! We would like to share with you how our Toddler Community shows our love for one another and our school through Grace and Courtesy. Teaching Grace and Courtesy is an important part of our Toddler Community. It provides our toddlers with instructions on how to interpret and react to different social situations and behaviors.



Toddlers are in a sensitive period for learning Courtesy and Manners. We provide Toddlers with the vocabulary they need to show appropriate social graces. We use the terms such as “please” and “thank you.” We try to be specific when we use these words, to help increase vocabulary and letting them know specifically what we want and what we are thankful for. Instead of just saying, “Thank you,” modeling the use of, “Thank you for handing me the towel,” gives them immediate and specific feedback and acknowledgement of their appropriate behavior. Encouraging them to say, “Please may I have the apple,” instead of just, “Please,” and pointing to the apple increases their vocabulary and helps them already to begin using sentence structure.

We also show Grace and Courtesy to our toddlers by greeting them in the morning with a handshake or a hug. Although other forms of greeting are used in our society, we caution you when using them with toddlers. A high 5 may seem harmless, but a toddler high 5-ing another student who is not receptive or does not expect it becomes a hit or a slap. Knowing when hitting is appropriate and when it is not, is not easy for a toddler. A handshake or a hug takes time, which is also important to a toddler. Getting on their level to look them in the eye and take the time to shake hands or hug is precious to them. In Montessori, we focus on using gentle hands when we interact with our friends and with the items in our environment.



Toddlers also show Grace and Courtesy by sharing a book or an activity together. Helping to keep our environment clean by sweeping, cleaning the tables, and putting their work away after they are finished shows Grace and Courtesy by taking care of shared spaces.

By teaching Grace and Courtesy, toddlers are able to develop and refine social skills while also building self-esteem and independence. Grace and Courtesy will provide our toddlers with the social skills they will carry for life. Maria



Montessori states: “A child who becomes a master of his acts through repeated exercises of Grace and Courtesy, and who has been encouraged by the pleasant and interesting activities in which he has been engaged, is a child filled with health and joy and remarkable for his calmness and discipline.”





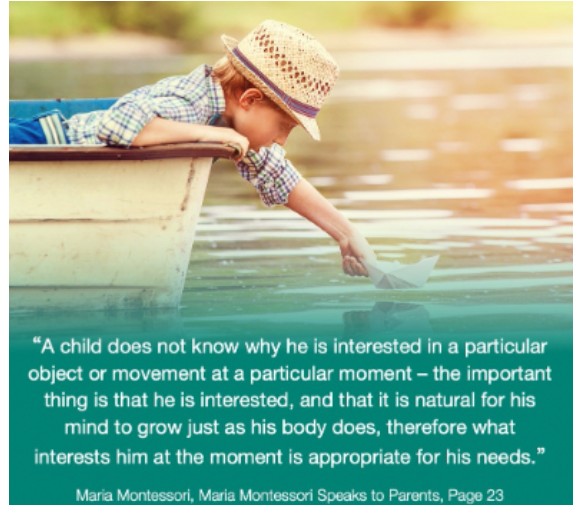
# Children's House

What is Cosmic Education in Early Childhood?  
And how can you complement our efforts at home?

In a sense, all children are scientists, and yes you read this right! They are scientists, they genuinely want to know what is happening around them and within them, and to know why. The first knowledge children accumulate grows from direct experience rather than from guided learning. However, over the course of their education, children absorb an increasing amount of knowledge through presentations and classroom work, as well as from literature and other media. Regardless of the source of knowledge, science can help children interpret their experiences, and move toward understanding of the world around them and to find their place in it.

Our school supports children in their quest to understand the world and themselves in several ways:

- It allows the children to explore the world directly, within the prepared Montessori environment and in the larger world
- It demonstrates the scientific method as the means to explore the world objectively
- It provides an organized scientific account of the world covering all of the major fields of study



In the Montessori environment, children receive support in their quest for knowledge by working on simple activities under their guide's guidance. Whether making a sandwich for lunch or planting a garden, every activity is an opportunity for the children to learn about the world, themselves, and how the two fit together, in other words, their place in human culture. Guides introduce topics in a conversation manner, initiating discussions with children in almost any situation.

Cosmic Education is based on the idea of the interdependence and interconnectedness of living things. While this may seem like an abstract concept for our younger learners, cosmic education can be offered through experiences found in the Montessori prepared environment. “Cosmic” in this sense means comprehensive, holistic and purposeful. Montessori believe that children that are exposed to a cosmic education have a clearer understanding of the natural world and, thus themselves and their place in it. Cosmic education plays a significant role in the Montessori Children's House (3 - 6) classrooms by enhancing the existing connections between the children, their senses, and the natural world; making this an indirect way to prepare the children for the elementary level. Cosmic education is not a specific curricular area, nor simply a method of delivering content. It is meant to permeate every child's educational experience in the Montessori classroom and so it begins in the early childhood program by building on the child's natural connections with the earth, nature and other people.



As children learn how all living things are interdependent, they come to value the integrity of all life and a peaceful approach develops naturally from this understanding. The role of the Montessori guide is to help the child learn, practice and develop the skills required to be peaceful citizens of the world, at home parents and caregivers play the same role. One way in which Montessori guides do this is modeling peaceful behaviors themselves, the same behavior they wish to see in the children.

Some ways the Montessori guides can set an example are:

- Speaking in a calm voice, quiet voice
- Moving calm, quiet fashion
- Giving the child plenty of time to do things on their own
- Using words and actions that show respect for the child and the child's experience, and in turn expecting to be treated with respect
- Obtaining a child's permission before assisting in any work this child is doing

Most children 3 - 6 years of age are very much absorbed in experiencing their immediate environment, they feel close to and connected with the natural world. Spring and Summer time are the perfect seasons to continue supporting your child's cosmic education at home, by modeling expected behaviors and also by providing many opportunities and experiences with nature to help them retain their connection with the natural world. Any three-year-old laying in the grass will see much more than an adult can see! Our role, as adults, is to not interfere with the experiences but to allow it to happen.



Many experiences and objects can provide rich content for cosmic education. For example: examining a block of wood, can guide the children to make the connection between the material or object and the world around them, by touching, lifting and smelling the wood, children can assess in a general way whether it is hard or soft wood, how heavy it is, and whether it is from a deciduous or coniferous tree, where the tree grew and in what part of the world; if the wood came to be a block, children can think about what tool might have made the shape, where might have been purchased, etc.

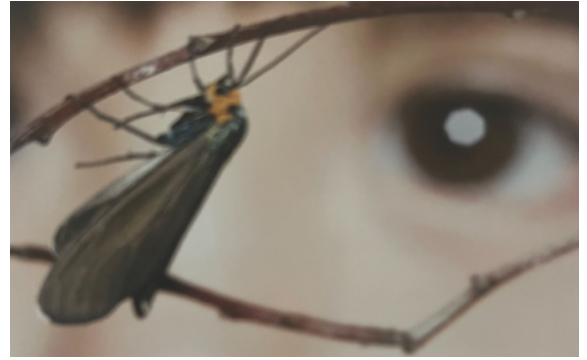
Introducing topics as they arise naturally, Dr. Maria Montessori quoted: "We discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being", Montessori guides and parents or caregivers can initiate conversations with children in many situations, such as walking, planting a garden, going to a park, going to the beach, visiting friends and family, road trips, etc., or just lying in the grass. Teaching within a cosmic perspective means seeing each moment in the present as an extension of the past and a prelude to the future, seeing the entire universe, both natural and manufactured, as existing and in the present as a unified system. Each moment is an opportunity to understand the connectedness of the universe. "When children come into contact with nature, they reveal their strength". Maria Montessori.



Continue encouraging cosmic education at home by exposing your child to many outdoor experiences and making the connections in between nature and daily life. Here are some activities that promotes cosmic education:

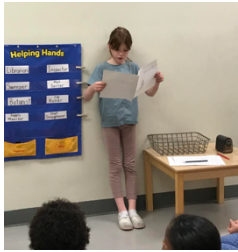
- Going for a walk and then sharing a snack that you and your child can prepare together.
- Visiting a farm and talk about how living things work together, children love the life cycle of animals.
- Visiting a farmers' market, talking about the produce you see and preparing a snack together with fresh produce.

- Having a garden serves as an excellent real-life analogy that can be used to explain how all living things work together.
- Recycle.
- Make your own compost and talk about how organic material provides food for other living things and how it helps the soil.
- Planting your own garden, buying the seed or plants together, planting flowers and vegetables, arranging a schedule and assigning responsibilities for tending and watering plants or gardens.
- Preparing and eating seasonal foods.
- Sitting in silence and experiencing the sounds, smells and sights of each season.
- Making a nature tray, basket or table, with seasonal items for indoors. Include a magnifying glass if possible and allow your child to bring items to add for further observation.
- Have daily talks about the days of the week, reviewing the date, day of the week, month and year.
- Talk about time and help the children become familiar with analog clocks.
- Talk about the daily weather, what clothing items you will wear based on the weather, what items do you need if you are going to the park or the beach, allowing your child to help in the process of packing and cultivating his/her independence.
- Exploring by touching different surfaces will help your child build their vocabulary.
- Explore maps of the continents, naming the continents and oceans.
- When celebrating their birthdays explain how a birthday signifies the completion of a single orbit of the earth around the sun, an orbit that began on the child's last birthday.
- Make a timeline of your child. You can make a timeline of your child's day or a timeline of your child's life. Timelines are a valuable concrete representation of events shown in a chronological order, thus reinforcing a sense of time and order.
- Create a family tree, and talk about where in the world is your coming from? Where is that country located on the globe? What does it mean to be a family? Etc.
- Learning about animals, talk about how animals' life cycle, where they live? You can make a bird feeder and set up an observation station for bird watching.



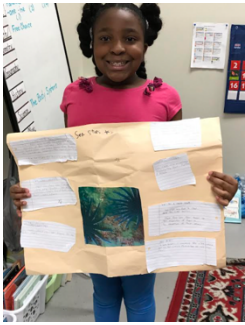
Dr. Montessori understood the importance of taking children outside. Yes, bringing pieces of nature into the classroom has value, but taking children outside helps them form a meaningful relationship with those objects in their natural environment. When the child is outside, all of her senses are stimulated. Surrounded by the big outdoors, children can explore by touching, seeing, hearing, and when safe, even tasting. This awakens the senses and calls the child to come explore, creating a sense of awe and wonder that will be important throughout her/his life.

Take advantage of the weather and the valuable time you will have to spend with your child during the summer break to continue practicing independence and the premises of our Montessori education, as caregivers we have the responsibility of "following the child" needs and to capitalize on sensitive periods of growth and development to set up our children to be successful and responsible citizens.



# Lower Elementary

Hello Parents and Guardians. Happy Spring! We are so pleased with the progress that our Lower Elementary students have made this school year, and we are excited to share some updates with you.



In language arts, we have been focusing on building strong reading skills. We have been working on fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary, especially that which directly ties into the curriculum. The students have been exploring different genres of literature and have been working on writing reports to present to their fellow classmates.

In mathematics, we have been delving deeper into concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and fractions. The students have been using classroom manipulatives to reinforce their understanding of these concepts. Older students are starting to break free from concrete materials to the abstract by using only paper and pencil. In Montessori education, concrete hands-on learning materials make concepts real, and therefore easily internalized. The student works abstractly when he or she has internalized the pattern and no longer needs the Montessori materials. The daily use of Math Minute drills and flash cards help to solidify their knowledge.



In science, we talked in great lengths about Earth Day. Earth Day is an annual event that occurs on April 22nd and this year marked its 53rd anniversary. It is a day to raise awareness about environmental issues. Students were introduced to the three Rs - reduce, reuse, and recycle. Examples were solicited by students and discussed. Children gained a greater understanding of how they can help to save our planet. Dr. Montessori's vision of Cosmic Education was for children to understand the impact just one individual has on the earth. By developing a heightened awareness and sensitivity to environmental issues, children understand the delicate interconnectedness we all share. She believed that the future of the planet rests with the education of the child.

*The child who has felt a strong love for his surroundings and for all living creatures, who has discovered joy and enthusiasm in work, gives us reason to hope that humanity can develop in a new direction.*

-Maria Montessori, Education and Peace

In our cultural studies, we continued learning about different cultures and traditions around the world. Before spring break, we discussed the Islamic holiday called Ramadan. Students learned that during this month long tradition, people fast or refrain from eating and drinking while it's light outside. However, once the sun sets, families gather together for big meals. People also have a morning meal before the sun rises. Another holiday discussed this month was Easter. Students explored and discussed why this holiday is the holiest day of the year for Christians. Children engaged in activities and crafts pertaining to both holidays.

Thank you to all of you that came out and supported our Spring Fair. Children had fun petting animals, jumping in bounce houses, playing games, making crafts, etc. As always, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns. We appreciate your continued support and partnership in creating the best plan for your child's education.



# Upper Elementary

Hello Upper Elementary families! It feels like every time we look at the calendar that the weeks are flying by, we're so excited to ring in May together, however! Our school year may be winding down, but we are doing anything but that over here at school!

Upper EI has been busy in a variety of different ways. We are always thrilled to find new and engaging ways to have our students participate in opportunities to flex their responsibility, as well as to engage with wider parts of our HRIMS community. We have had the pleasure to have student volunteers from Upper Elementary spend time reading to students in our toddler classrooms. We're incredibly proud to say over half of our class has signed up to lend their own time to our school's toddler communities, reading to and engaging with their students as mature leaders within HRIMS. We have received many rave reviews of our class' performance and efforts, and we are continually pleased by the excitement surrounding this opportunity from our students.



We have also decided to round out our latest cultural studies unit as any good ancient Grecian should, with our very own classroom olympics! Students participated in a nearly week-long series of events, pulling from a variety of athletic feats that had their origins all the way back in ancient Athens. Students competed in



homemade shot-put throws, (thumb) wrestling competitions, a long-jump, as well as a homemade javelin throw to round out our events. Students had the opportunity, on an event-by-event basis, whether they wanted to keep their scores private, and compete for their own highscore, or compete against their peers to be put on a leaderboard for each event. This was a week full of fun and friendly competition in our classroom, and we are ever proud of our students for being such good competitors and good sports alike.



We are so proud of our entire class for being in the publishing stage of our persuasive writing essays, and are so excited to send them home soon for you all to see what your students have been working hard at writing. On the coattails of this work finishing, however, we are diving head first back into literature circles in our language work these days. Our class is currently split into peer groups reading either James and the Giant Peach, a classic by Roald Dahl, or A Wrinkle in Time by the wonderful Madeleine L'Engle. Our groups self-determine amongst themselves how much they choose to read each week, then meet with

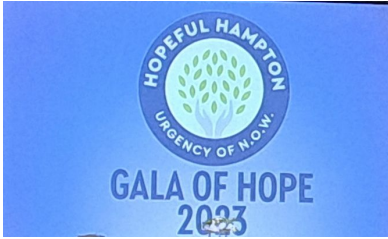
their peers at the top of the next week to discuss what they read. This time around, however, we are also introducing roles into our literature circle groups, where each individual in the group has a different thing they are looking for or working on while doing their weekly reading. Whether it is looking for interesting vocab words, coming up with discussion questions, or illustrating important scenes from the book, students are immersed in their stories and excited to share the work they are creating with their peers each week.

We hope you are all staying safe and staying cool in these warmer spring months, and we are looking forward to great things to come this month as the school year begins to move towards its end. What a wonderful year it has been thus far!

Sincerely, Ms. Meg and Ms. Linsky



# Newport News and Hampton Campus Updates



HRI Montessori was acknowledged at the Hopeful Hampton Gala of Hope as a Multi-Year Participant and Supporter of the Youth and Young Adult

Opportunities Summer Youth Employment Program! Hampton City is taking the initiative in programs to combat youth violence by establishing community initiatives, creating community events, and forming community alliances. If you are looking for volunteer opportunities and events to make our community a better place to live and play, please visit [www.hampton.gov](http://www.hampton.gov).

Hampton Roads International Montessori School.....	Michelle D'Antonio
Hampton Senior Center.....	Susan Elswick
Hampton Sheriff's Office.....	Sherriff Karen Bowden
Hampton Victim Services.....	Karla Crump - Reaves, Tyrone George
Healthy Families.....	Chenequa Hayden
Healthy Families - SAP.....	Jason Samuels
James T. Wilson Fishing Pier.....	Lynn Waldrop
Jobs for Life.....	Charles Cheek & Gail Robert-House
Little England Cultural Center.....	Randall String
National Park Service.....	Aaron Firth



## Newport News Music Wall!

Please remember that you can help support HRIMS by doing your every day shopping by: **[purchasing gift cards through the RAISE RIGHT program \(raiserright.com\)](https://raiserright.com)** on your phone or computer and use them to pay for your shopping or give them as gifts!

Hundreds of stores give percentages up to 15% to HRIMS! Stores like Amazon, Lowe's, Target, Walmart, Macy's, your favorite grocery stores, and so many more! It only takes a minute to choose Hampton Roads International Montessori School as the nonprofit you will be supporting with your gift card purchases now and throughout the year.