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MONTESSORI MATTERS

MONTESSORI ACADEMY OF LONDON EXPECT MORE FROM EDUCATION Issue 18 – May 2018

Engagement Matters

A message from Tina Sartori

Engagement. It matters in so many aspects of our lives, but for children in school, it plays a vital role in their educational journey. So how does this happen in Montessori? And what does "Engagement" look like?

Engaged within the classroom

Engagement means to become involved - to capture and captivate. This naturally happens in Montessori because of the many characteristics of a classroom, that are intentionally put into place for the developmental level of the student, as they grow over the three years they will be in that space. Just by walking by a Casa classroom, you could see 18 students engaged in 18 different things.

When a student walks into a classroom that is designed specifically for their age and level of development, they assume a status of responsibility, and experience a high level of comfort for learning and spending an entire day in that space. It sets the stage for a positive work environment, a key element in being engaged — they belong.

When students are given an extended work cycle of 2.5 to 3 hours, it allows for them to get into what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi calls "Flow" - a highly focused mental state, where nothing else seems to matter. This happens frequently in a Montessori classroom. Students can be found concentrating for extended amounts of time (depending on age) while experiencing the true joy of learning. Not because someone is lecturing them about it, but because it is their own experience and inquiry that is leading them to their discoveries. This process allows them to be fully engaged in their learning.

"The child is endowed with unknown powers, which can guide us to a radiant future. If what we really want is a new world, then education must take as its aim the development of these hidden possibilities."
~ Maria Montessori, "The Absorbent Mind"

Engaged within the community

As a result of the engaging atmosphere of our classroom environments and the idea of Montessori's cosmic education: that all things are interconnected and part of a bigger plan, where all elements are working together for our world. It doesn't take long for our students to become engaged in the community that surrounds them.

Whether it is Junior High students assisting in our Toddler and Casa programs or creating partnerships with the veterans at Parkwood, or our Upper Elementary students baking for the Men's Mission, or our youngest students bringing in food for the London Food Bank, they all recognize importance and can appreciate the impact of being engaged with our own neighbourhood and beyond. Engaged students are the perpetual motion in striving towards a better world. Thank goodness we have over 330 of them. •

ARTexpo 2018 is the kick-off event for our 50th Anniversary Celebrations. Join us!

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A sense of service

Montessori education inspires engagement in community that reaches far beyond the classroom.

In the school's efforts to prepare children and young adults to engage the world as active citizens and successful leaders, Montessori alumna Emily Putherbough thinks we're doing quite well, thank you very much. Emily, who is currently finishing up her Masters in Health Science at Western University, says, "I really believe that Montessori taught me to care more about what goes on in my community and the world."

In the classroom, she says, they would regularly discuss the news and current events. "This made me aware of what was going on outside my own personal 'bubble.' I carried this awareness and interest throughout high school and my undergraduate degree, and continue to do so today."

Emily is waiting to hear about admission to medical school (she has already been accepted to the accelerated nursing program at Western), and says that her education at Montessori – and its focus on the value of service – has shaped her life. "When I think about it, my life is almost completely centred on helping others. Montessori's annual Remembrance Day Ceremony planted the seed that eventually led me to join the Canadian Armed Forces as a reservist almost seven years ago, and I remain an active member today alongside my schooling. Furthermore, the value of service also led me to the realization that I belong in a career in medicine."

This sense of the value of serving one's community starts early as students in the multi-age classroom collaborate to learn from one another in the classroom. "I remember always interacting with my peers and teachers. I remember helping others with their work, and receiving help from older students." Emily says she also recalls volunteering in the Casa classrooms as an Elementary student, and then taking her volunteerism into the larger community in the upper years. "Experiences that I remember most vividly include volunteering at the food bank, tree planting, and putting on a performance at a retirement home.

Emily Putherbough's commitment to serving her community — and country — was inspired by her time at Montessori House of Children.

"Today, I am an avid volunteer for many organizations, most notably as a Medical First Responder with St. John Ambulance of London."

This emphasis on community is so deeply engrained in the Montessori philosophy and our program, that sometimes we take it for granted as a school community. Yet it is something special and unique that should be celebrated! Our greater community is enhanced through caring students and graduates who embody our school's mission to prepare children and young adults to engage the world as active citizens and successful leaders.

Emily echoes the sentiment, adding, "Not only did Montessori make me aware, but it also taught me that every event matters. In other words, just because something does not affect us directly, it is still significant. I believe this helped me to develop empathy and compassion for others, which furthers my desire to help those in need. The school and teachers taught me that I can make a difference if I truly put my mind to it." •

Celebrate with us!

Friday, June 1, 2018

ARTexpo 2018 6-9 pm

We kickoff our 50th Anniversary weekend in The Mercato Room at Brescia University College.

Saturday, June 2, 2018

Open House 10 am-2 pm

Stop by our Downtown locations for a visit to see how the buildings have (and haven't) changed over the years.

Family Fun Day 10 am-2 pm

In Piccadilly Park Big Game Roadtrips will host our all-ages activities! Food will be available for cash purchase in the Elementary Courtyard. Bring your friends!

Golden Anniversary Gala 6-10 pm

SOLD OUT. Thank you to all current and alumni families who purchased tickets to this exciting event. See you on June 2! •

Join the Alumni Circle

Give the gift of Montessori education.

Thank you to everyone who has donated to the Alumni Circle! In case you missed it, in April we sent a letter home from one of our Alumni, Ben. The letter explained that we are launching an Alumni Circle of giving to the Financial Support Program this year.

Montessori education is an incredible gift, one that not every family can afford. To help offset the cost of tuition, Montessori Academy of London offers qualifying families support with their tuition payments. This year alone, the school has helped with the cost of tuition for 29 students.

The Alumni Circle gives the gift of Montessori education to children and youth by directing alumni donations to the school's financial support program.

The Ann Marie Harding Financial Support program reduces the cost of tuition for families who are committed to Montessori education, but cannot afford the full amount. As we contribute to the Alumni Circle together, we will make an incredible impact on the Financial Support program.

It's not too late to donate and be listed as an Alumni Circle member. A donation of $25, $50, $100 or more will help future students continue with their Montessori education so they can enjoy all the same benefits we have gained from our experience at the school.

Visit **www.montessori.on.ca/alumni** for more information. •

Thank you, Sponsors!

Our 50th Anniversary Weekend would not be possible without the incredible support of our Sponsors. We would like to send a heartfelt thanks to the following supporters:

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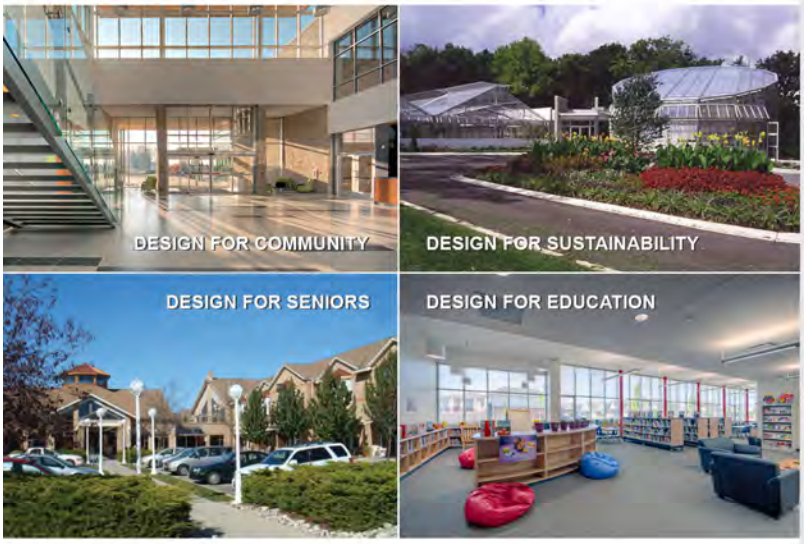

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50th Anniversary info: **www.montessori.on.ca/event/50th-anniversary-weekend/ #mhcmaLDN50**

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