



# THE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

## Dresher, Pennsylvania

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**HEAD OF SCHOOL**  
**Start Date: July 2022**  
**[themontessorischool.us](http://themontessorischool.us)**



**Carney  
Sandoe**  
& ASSOCIATES



## THE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

### Mission

*The Montessori School educates children using the authentic Montessori approach—a multi-sensory curriculum that allows for individualized teaching and for students to learn and be challenged at their own pace as they develop academically. As a community that fosters self-confidence, leadership, and respect for self and others, TMS encourages students to grow as self-motivated, intellectually engaged learners who will serve their larger communities as both accomplished students and ambassadors of peace.*

### Values

- *Respect for self, for others, for our world*
- *Integrity in everything that we do*
- *Patience with the development of the child*
- *Recognition that each of us is an ambassador of peace*

## OVERVIEW

The Montessori School (TMS) is located in Dresher Pennsylvania, a beautiful Philadelphia suburb about 45 minutes northwest of center-city. The Montessori School is a PAIS accredited institution that is recognized by top-tier middle schools in the region for consistently producing exceptional students. The toddler program runs from ages 18 months to 3 years; the Children’s House from ages 3 to 6; Lower Elementary grades 1-3 and Upper Elementary grades 4–6. Typical enrollment of about 125 students dipped during the pandemic to about 100 students, but it is already on its way back to its enrollment “sweet spot”. The physical facility can accommodate up to 180 students and there is reason to be optimistic about future growth. The school is culturally diverse with as many as 25 different languages spoken at home. There are Russian, Turkish, Indian, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese families, to name a few.

Over the past several years, the school has received a great influx of energy with a number of trained and eager new faculty. Several regional Montessori training centers like Chestnut Hill College provide ample opportunity for faculty and staff professional development; the school has had no trouble finding qualified Montessori teachers. There is no question that the students are receiving an outstanding and joyful Montessori education. The 7 acre campus underwent a significant renovation six years ago, but like any school, TMS has facilities ambitions for even more.

After a successful 14-year career, Head Laurie Stulb has notified the board of her desire to retire, at the end of this year; the board is searching for a new Head to fill her position starting July 1, 2022.



## STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

Among many strengths, the new Head will find:

- An eager, dedicated, caring and well-trained Montessori faculty (one parent summed it up: “The passion of our Guides is children. Everyone in our school does it with great love and care about the children.”)
- A fascinating diversity of cultures and nationalities among students and their families
- A solid balance sheet with a history of responsible financial management
- A school community that is often described as, “having a family feel”
- A true commitment to Montessori methods, pedagogy and values
- Strong school-parent communication
- A committed and supportive Board
- A campus on seven beautiful acres with access to nature trails, soccer fields, play structures, large shade trees and more
- Wonderful students who are developing their full potential as introspective, respectful, and engaged leaders

## THE SCHOOL

Formerly known as New Horizons Montessori School, The Montessori School (TMS) was founded in Fort Washington in 1970 by a group of parents determined to provide quality Montessori education for their children through sixth grade. Now in Dresher, on a seven-acre campus, TMS is still one of only a few Montessori Schools in the Philadelphia area with an Upper Elementary program. It offers a Toddler section (18 months–3 years), Children’s Houses (3’s, 4’s and 5’s), Lower Elementary (Grades 1–3) and Upper Elementary (Grades 4–6) classes, as well as before- and after-school Extended Hours Programs.



The environment at The Montessori School is respectful of the child’s unique path of learning. Recognized for its effective curriculum developed by Dr. Maria Montessori through 40 years of scientific research, TMS equips children with key learning skills identified for success in the 21st century. The Montessori method incorporates multi-age groupings of children that are directed by teachers who facilitate the concept of individualized learning. At TMS, children stay in their groupings and with the same guide for 3 years, building a deep sense of trust. Besides its academic curriculum, children benefit from programs in Environmental Science, Library, Music, Physical Education, Spanish and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

When children are part of TMS, they are part of a mission to impact the world and act as stewards of the earth. As a “green” school, The Montessori School strives to decrease the carbon footprint and increase earth friendly choices. The Montessori School does engage students in many practical approaches to energy efficiency and environmental stewardship, but the care and respect for the environment that students take with them is a natural product of the Montessori method, and the carefully curated environment they enjoy inside the school.

TMS enjoys a diverse community of students, families, and staff, and supports differences of gender, race, religion, family structure, socio-economic level, age, sexual orientation, and learning styles. With a belief that full educational excellence is best accomplished within an environment of peace and respect The Montessori School strives to maintain a collaborative environment rooted in the mutual sharing of experiences, ideas, and unique qualities where these exchanges are appreciated and encouraged.

All faculty members are credentialed Montessori teachers, which means they have had extensive post-graduate education in child development, Montessori curriculum and philosophy. Additionally, they have been awarded the appropriate Montessori credentials for the age groups in which they teach. The Montessori School is accredited by the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools (PAIS) and is a member of the American Montessori Society (AMS).



## ACADEMICS

The Montessori School is dedicated to providing a quality education based on Maria Montessori's principles and is faithful to her methods. Encouraged to achieve their maximum potential, our students expand their cognitive and emotional intelligence in an atmosphere of freedom and peace that feeds their spirits. The school's program promotes an understanding of Montessori pedagogy among the members of its family and in the community at large.

### **Toddler (18 month – 3 year)**

The Montessori School Toddler program represents the youngest age level in TMS's educational community, as a foundation for the child's development of personality and human skills. Children in the Toddler program are immersed in an environment prepared with activities which help develop coordination, control of movement, concentration, sequence and order. The enriched language environment, including daily use of natural outdoor space, supports the child's linguistic phase of language development. The practical life work, using child-sized materials, fosters their emerging independence and promotes great satisfaction and self-confidence. The opportunities for uninterrupted, purposeful activity establish the Montessori framework of learning for the child that is built upon throughout their time at The Montessori School. TMS offers half-day and full-day options for this age group.



### **Children's House (3 - 6 year)**

Children's House is a three-year program for children ages 3-6 years. The curriculum is sequenced to coincide with the development of prerequisite skills so children are bolstered by their success at every turn. Once a lesson has been presented, the child is free to choose this work at any time and to engage in this activity until completely satisfied. Uninterrupted work time is essential for the developing child who is better served by pursuing an inner need than by conforming to an externally mandated activity. The classroom is arranged into five curriculum areas: Practical Life, Sensorial, Math, Language and Culture. Within each of these curriculum areas there are specific activities for every age and skill level. All curriculum lessons and related Montessori materials have specific direct and indirect aims. Leaps in learning are seen, especially in the areas of math and language, as the children complete their kindergarten year in this classroom. Children continue to care for their indoor and outdoor environments while building confidence and resourcefulness.

### **Elementary (grades 1-6)**

The Elementary School is divided into two programs, Lower Elementary (grades 1-3) and Upper Elementary (grades 4-6). The child at these levels is able to abstract, asks how the world works, uses his imagination, makes moral judgments and has great interest in socialization outside of his home environment. The elementary classroom is an environment which will spark the child's imagination, encouraging the desire for independence and allow the child to grow socially and academically. Lessons in language, math, culture and science are given in a way that encourages the students' observations, questioning, and exploration of the world they're familiar with as well as the world at large. The global approach exposes students to a multitude of different cultures and serves to prepare children to be global leaders of the 21st century.

Intentionally designed materials, which concretely represent abstract academic lessons, support the child's movement toward abstraction of concepts. Within the curriculum, spontaneous activity and freedom with responsibility allow children to engage in constructive work of their own choosing. Their interest allows them to exercise deep concentration. They agree to act responsibly towards the community and environment; they are held to this standard by their peers. The elementary classroom provides the setting for children to explore and develop social skills. Those include the need for respect of self and others as well as grace and courtesy while communicating, negotiating and cooperating, which their developmental need for community and belonging dictates.



## THE ARTS AND PE

The children at TMS participate in several of arts and wellness programs, allowing for skill development in self-expression, creativity, teamwork, and independence. Basic foundational and motor skills are introduced in Children's House and students continue to build upon those skills throughout the Elementary Program. Art programs include painting, sculpture, music, and computer graphics. Elementary physical education helps build a love for physical activity, a healthy interest in keeping fit, and an appreciation of the emotional well-being that regular physical activity can provide.

## DRESHER, PENNSYLVANIA

Nestled in a quiet community approximately 45 minutes from downtown Philadelphia, the area offers an outstanding quality of life, including an abundance of year-round outdoor recreations (e.g. hiking, camping, and skiing), with easy access to the historic and cultural resources of the city and a low cost of living compared to New York or Washington, D.C. (both of which can be reached in a couple of hours).



## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGE

- The school is still in the process of rebounding from COVID. This includes:
  - The curtailing of daily personal connections that has left many in the TMS community eager to re-establish a sense of community and teamwork in service to a common inspiring goal.
- Marketing and outreach have been less of a focus as the current administration is consumed with myriad daily tasks. The new Head will have support from the board to build out the administrative team to overcome those obstacles.
- Internally and externally, the school would benefit greatly from a charismatic leader who can promote the Montessori way of education to parents as well as to the community at large.
- Montessori continues to evolve and it will be important for the next Head to stay current with emerging thought and practice so that TMS remains an exemplar of an excellent Montessori program
- While the Board has been an excellent fiscal steward, the school would benefit from ongoing board development and strategic additions of skill sets not currently represented.
- As with most independent schools, TMS finds a number of students in need of learning support. It will be important to continue to provide professional development for the classroom guides as well as enhance the learning support staff as that population of students grows.





## DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Among the attributes successful candidates will possess are:

- A passionate educator who is both a leader and an effective manager. Able to inspire the whole school community with a common vision, and organize it to deliver on that vision.
- Ideally, Montessori training and experience. If not, then a willingness to undertake Montessori certification. An educational philosophy compatible with Montessori principles and values.
- Experience with and a love of PK-middle school students and education.
- Experience as a classroom teacher is highly desirable.
- The ability to multi-task, shift gears quickly, and address issues with a bias for action.
- Financial acumen sufficient to work with the board and business office to design and manage to a balanced budget.
- Experience working in a best-practices relationship with a board of trustees.
- Multicultural experience and competency
- Familiarity with the practices of tuition and financial aid.
- An energetic, charismatic presence that is an engaging face of the school, who is prepared to market the school effectively.
- Highly organized and able to function well with lean administrative support.
- Proven ability to identify, attract, retain, evaluate and develop excellent faculty and staff.

## TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing interest in this position;
- A current and comprehensive résumé;
- A statement of experience with Montessori, and/or educational philosophy you feel is compatible with Montessori principles and values;
- A list of five professional references, including name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will be contacted only with the candidate's permission) to:

### **Skip Kotkins**

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