



MONTESSORI OF MACON

EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD FOR A WHOLE WORLD

NEWSLETTER

Session #2 | December 2022

DECEMBER 2022

9.....Last Day of Session #2
 12-16..... Winter Camp
 19-JAN. 2 Winter Holidays
 No School

JANUARY 2023

3..... First Day of Session #3
 16..... MLK Holiday - No School
 30 23/24 Financial Aid Applications Open

FEBRUARY 2023

27 Financial Aid Applications Due

MARCH 2023

3.....Last Day of Session #3
 6-24..... Spring Camp
 27 First Day of Session #4



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Crossword Answers
 DOWN
 1. Conakry
 2. Hungary
 3. China
 4. Zimbabwe
 5. Prague
 7. Nigeria
 9. boomerang
 11. Napoli
 12. Yemen
 13. Confucius
 14. Australia
 17. Egypt
 19. France
 20. Gabon
 21. African
 22. Israel

FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

A BEAUTIFUL WORLD

by Michele Scott



"Last week we received from a friend in our church a flier advertising an international festival at the Montessori school. We had a blessed couple of free hours on Sunday and decided to visit the festival. It was the best decision we could have made. Words cannot describe the sights, sounds, and smells of this wonderful gathering. There were many nationalities represented, dance demonstrations, tables with food samples from many countries and everywhere children playing happily together. After weeks of dreadful news and suffering, it was a joy on a beautiful October afternoon to be a part of such a celebration. Thanks to Rebecca Moody and all of the people at the Montessori School for inviting us for a wonderful, life affirming time. Here in the heart of Georgia, miles away from ground zero, is indeed a snapshot of our beautiful world."

The Macon Telegraph, October 26, 2001

Our annual Culture Fest event was created after the tragedy of September 11, 2001. The horrific events and aftermath were felt throughout our country, and our MoM community was no exception. For many across the country, that tragedy caused people to pull together and want to support one another. However, for some, the events polarized groups of people based on culture, religion, and beliefs.

Diversity, in all of its forms, has been a long-standing core value for Montessori of Macon since its inception in 1991. For a small school community in central Georgia, we have always been fortunate to have families from different parts of the world, different religions, different family compositions, and just about every other difference you can imagine.

One of my favorite memories highlighting our cultural diversity is our first Toddler class on our original campus at St. Francis. Ms. Deidra was the teacher, and we had 9 students. Almost half of those students were from a different country - France, Colombia, India, and China. Can you imagine all the different languages flowing in that classroom? Can you imagine the variety of foods at lunch? Can you imagine the family traditions shared amongst those families? What a beautiful world indeed!

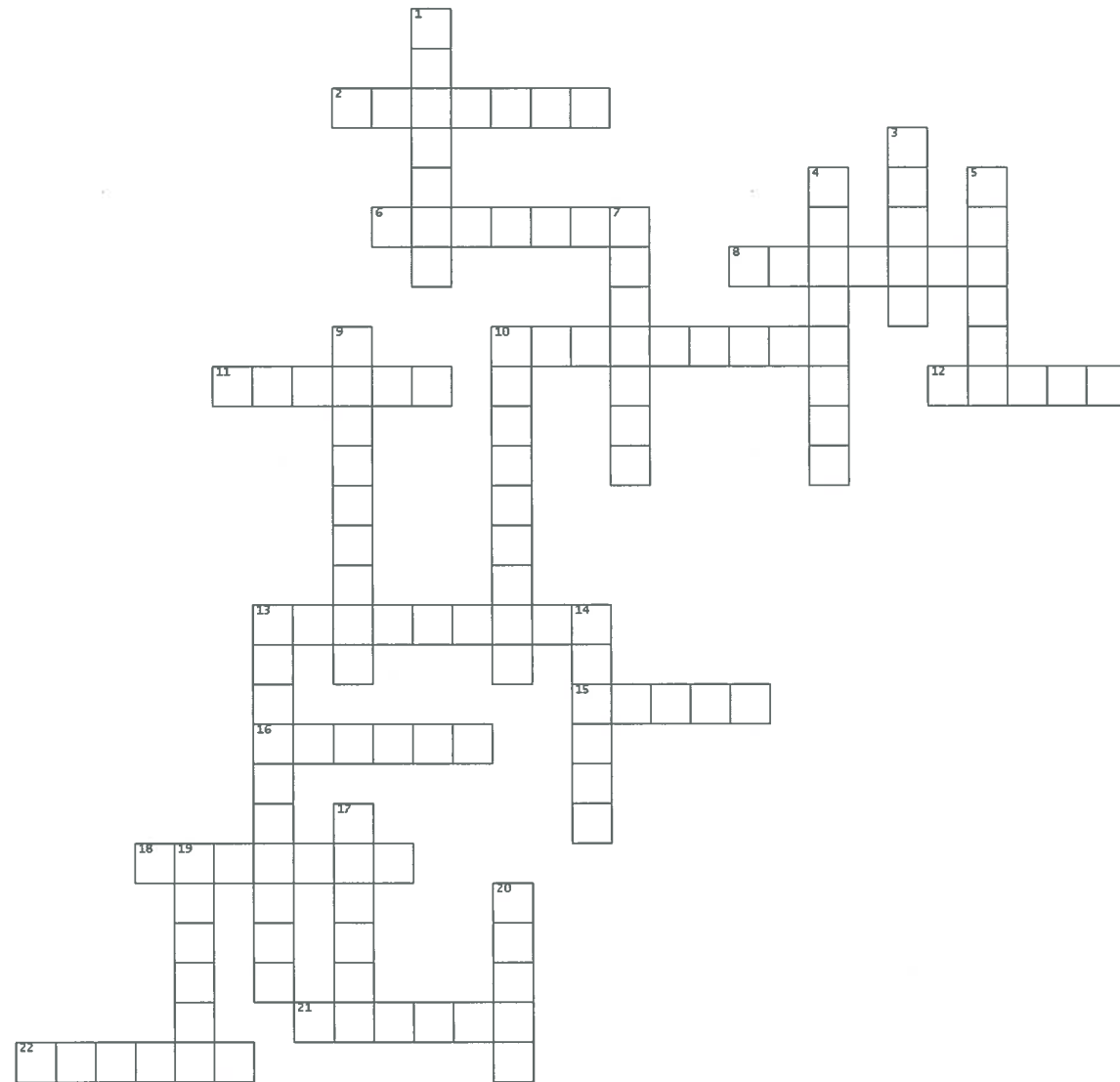
Within our classrooms, we honor diversity in all of its forms. Maria Montessori believed that helping children form a broader view of the world would give them a global perspective and promote international peace. Therefore, within our classrooms, cultural studies are presented with the utmost care and respect to help our students learn about the world beyond where they live. Cultural lessons are also taught in context to help organize the information and ultimately allow the children to make a connection with cultures, climates, and people different from them.

We celebrate and learn about different cultures throughout the year in our classrooms and as a community at our Culture Fest event. All of this work serves as a beautiful and important reminder to our students that across the globe, we have differences, we have similarities, and most importantly we can live peacefully together!



CELEBRATING COUNTRIES & CULTURES

HOW MANY OF THESE FUN FACTS CAN YOU FIGURE OUT?



ACROSS

2. where the Rubik's cube was invented
6. one of six countries without a written constitution
8. only country to require students to take chess lessons
10. has the highest sand dune on the planet
11. the birthplace of pizza
12. home of "Manhattan of the Desert"
13. Institute that introduced our school to the Chinese instrument, Pipa
15. bread was invented here around 8,000 BC
16. bagel was invented in this European country
18. dance performed by Hiyiya Dance company during Culture Fest
21. birthplace of chocolate
22. claims to have invented the modern cherry tomato

DOWN

1. this Guinea capital is the wettest capital on Earth
3. holds the world's largest human population
4. home of Victoria Falls, one of the largest waterfalls in the world
5. has world's oldest operating astronomical clock
7. has over 520 spoken languages
9. is a tool that is thrown and comes back to you
14. world's sixth-largest country
17. most popular Chinese eating utensil
19. most visited country in the world
20. country that is home to around 80% of Africa's gorilla population



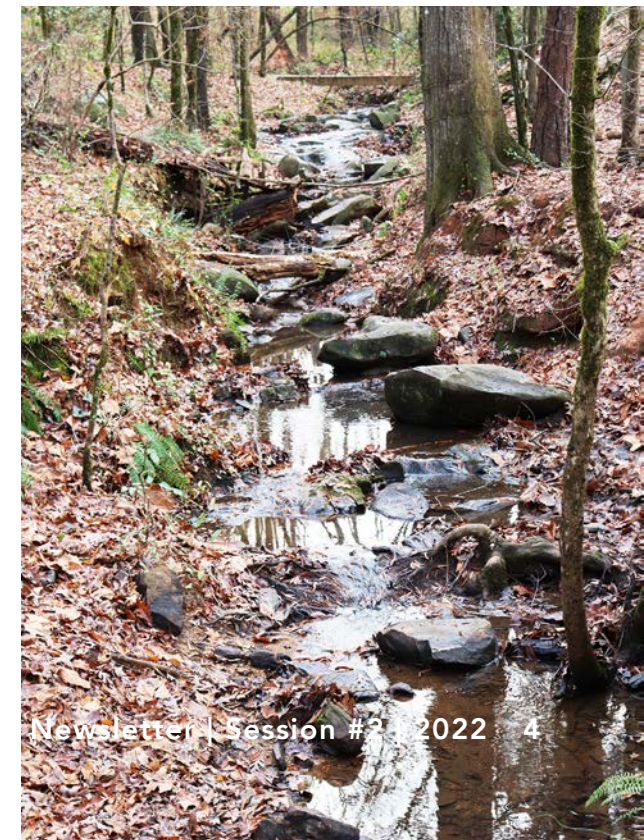
Discovering Wonderous Spaces

by Sherry Singleton

I can mark when I first set foot on the Montessori of Macon campus. Considering my brief time here, it's striking how quickly the campus has become a safe haven for my imagination and inspiration. It's a place where children are warmly welcomed and patiently guided into a curious world of structured learning. The tapestry of this Montessori school's unique environment is perfectly woven with the foundational stitches of realistic rules, self-care, and practical learning and beautifully balanced by the bright threads of outside play and exploration.

Recently, I happened upon a personally undiscovered section of the Montessori of Macon campus and discovered a most relaxing and mysterious retreat. The MoM nature trail became a portal to my childhood, a door

Cont. pg 13



TODDLER 1

18 mos. - 3 years old
Ms. Deidra & Ms. Carla



It May Be Practical... ...But It Sure Is FUN!



Why so practical? Have you ever wondered why your child is pouring beans for the 100th time or why, in every picture, it looks like they are doing chores all day long? Well, the explanation is simple. They love it!

Seriously though, Maria Montessori was a genius. She understood that children naturally seek to engage in purposeful activities, and they will do them over and over again. Through observation, she noticed children were more interested in doing tasks generally done by adults rather than playing with toys. Our children are constantly watching and observing our every move, waiting for the chance to imitate our actions. I'm often reminded of this when I catch myself walking throughout the classroom, observing with my hands behind my back, when suddenly, I notice a child imitating my steps with their hands behind their back as well. As cute as it is, it's also an excellent reminder to be careful of what I model.

Through practical life activities, children get to engage in activities that mimic our daily lives as adults. We do a daily task and don't think twice about it. For us, it's just part of the long list of tasks to be done. However, for children, it is an entire learning process. Children can develop motor control, hand/eye coordination, independence, the ability to concentrate and develop a sense of responsibility through repetition of these practical activities. When a child engages in practical life activities, they learn how to follow directions and step-by-step sequences. This allows them to develop confidence, self-discipline, and problem-solving skills. These skills are necessary for building a solid foundation for success that will carry them throughout life.

I know it's hard to believe that all of this can come from simple activities, such as pouring beans or spooning walnuts from one bowl to another. Still, children learn to think for themselves and do for themselves. Our goal is to prepare them for life, not only academics. Building a solid foundation from the start sets the course for success throughout their journey in life. So the next time you see a picture of your child doing yet another practical-life lesson, such as pouring, spooning, washing a pumpkin, wiping up a spill, filling a pitcher with water, serving themselves at the snack table, arranging flowers in a vase, learning to pull up their pants, or simply washing their hands, just remember they are working hard and with a purpose. This purpose allows them to take care of themselves and their environment. It's preparing their minds and developing motor control, concentration, awareness, independence, and a sense of pride. So do your best to encourage them and allow them to help with the process of completing a daily task as much as possible.



TODDLER 2

18 mos. - 3 years old
Ms. Moira & Ms. Hannah



EXPLORING WITHIN BOUNDRIES IS ALWAYS A SUCCESS

Session two is in full swing, and all our toddler friends have been busy exploring the classroom and each other. We welcomed a new friend, who is settling in beautifully and have been excited about fall and the upcoming holiday season.

One of the most frequently asked questions I receive from parents is how we discipline the students. Maria Montessori was very clear about not interrupting a child hard at work. However, redirection is necessary if one of the "three D's" (dangerous, destructive, or disrespectful behavior) is occurring. We use positive

redirection to avoid saying no, which isn't desirable to anyone, without giving in to every desire. By redirecting the child, we provide them with alternate and appropriate ways to achieve their desired goals.

When a child is having trouble staying seated during lunch, we gently remind them that they sit down to eat. We explain that moving while chewing food may cause them to choke. They also make less mess when they eat at the table, instead of wandering around with their food. We reinforce our expectations by helping the child

clean up any messes caused by not sitting down. We remind them frequently that they sit down to eat. Learning takes practice and repetition!

Positive redirection offers positivity within natural experiences and prevents shaming our unconscious learners. Toddlers have an innate need to learn what they can and cannot do, and using positive redirection defines this for them. This limit setting offers our toddlers security and keeps their learning positive. When we show them these alternate choices, we empower them to choose wisely.

Positive redirection offers them an optimal understanding at a developmentally appropriate level. When we use simple and concise language to redirect them, we also provide them with a language-rich experience.



PRIMARY 1

3 - 6 years old
Ms. Paula & Ms. Whitney



enthusiasm into the holidays that other people celebrate worldwide from January to November, especially our classroom members.

After a few years' hiatus because of Covid, our school once again hosted the annual Culture Fest, an excellent opportunity to get together and learn from one another. The Primary building also celebrated our Thanksgiving Feast off-campus during the evening; it was a fun celebration for all families. And, of course, our traditional Fall Festival was full of candy, games, face painting, and treats.

It has been a busy second session, full of memorable experiences and meaningful opportunities to build secure connections with peers, adults, and the environment. This has allowed the children to engage in learning and work independently with self-motivation. This is possible because of the consistency, clear expectations, and welcoming environment Montessori provides.



We Have Been Filling Up On Memorable & Meaningful Experiences

As a Montessori teacher, one of my core values is ensuring every student feels welcome and celebrated in our classroom.

I love this time of the year because it allows us to honor our individual cultural traditions. In our classroom, quite a few holidays fall during this time. However, many significant holidays for people of other religious or cultural groups still happen at different times of the year. Rosh Hashanah and Passover, for example, are two of the most important holidays for many Jewish families. They occur in September and April/March, respectively. Ramadan is another example, a month-long religious holiday for Muslim communities happening around March or April each year.

In our classroom community, we find out how important a particular holiday is to the people who observe it and whether it falls in December. We then try to place as much importance and



Culture Is Brought To Life in the Montessori Classroom

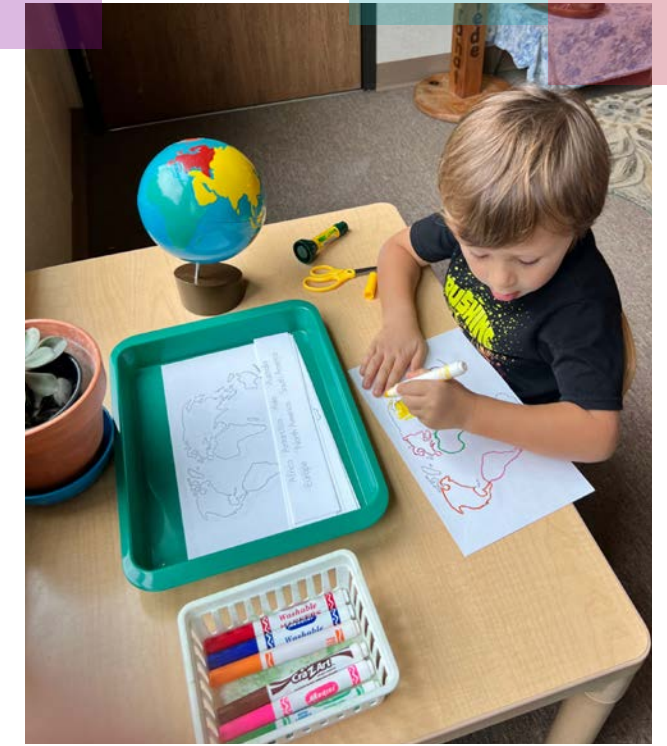
Growing up, history was taught through textbooks alone. Cultural studies were the same. We would be expected to memorize chapters and lists of vocabulary words. Read, study, take a test, and then we were on to the next chapter. There was no tangible context for most of what we learned about other cultures. If it wasn't in the textbook, it was almost as if it didn't exist or even matter in the real world. Maria Montessori believed that learning is enhanced when one can find connection and meaning behind knowledge.

Montessori is very well known for her observation of "Sensitive Periods" of a child's life. These are blocks of time in a child's life when one characteristic of their environment is of the most interest to them. Montessori's fifth Sensitive Period is revealed through an interest in social aspects of life; community, relationships, and a desire for contact with others. By combining the inherent desire of a child to feel a sense of community with historical and cultural studies, children feel a connection to the world around them.

Through exposure to music, dance, food, clothing, animals, art, and stories from around the world, the child has context for what exists outside of the culture they were brought up knowing.



I am so happy we could all gather for the school's annual Culture Fest this year. It brought not only a sense of community but a little glimpse into one of the many aspects that make each of our families unique. The diversity of our community is a gift to our children. Our differences make this world more interesting, and we enjoy celebrating those differences throughout the school year in our classroom. As our students grow and develop, I hope they may always celebrate those differences in the way Maria Montessori intended.



Maria Montessori believed that learning is enhanced when one can find connection and meaning behind knowledge.



Cont. from pg 4

back to the wonder and excitement I found in *The Boxcar Children*, the ultimate child's survival guide. I was there; the bubbling stream, the giant trees filled with burls that resembled mysterious faces, and the rocks beneath my feet told the story of a weary farmer settling, long ago, this new land for his family. It was perfect. Best of all, this peaceful oasis, the nature trail, provides the ideal playground for discovery, supplemental learning, and just plain fun!

While the nature trail's beauty was a new treat to me, I realized the students, teachers, and parents have been exploring all of these great spaces for years now!



In March of 2017, a MoM high-school senior, Austin Youngblood, began an Eagle Scout project to transform the wooded property next to his classroom. Spring break provided the opportunity to carve a walking path from the brambles and vines that litter the wooded hillsides. Soon, he added a wooden footbridge over the creek and wooden benches so all explorers could enjoy the oasis. And, for our Elementary and Middle School students, an oasis it continues to be.



Three quick years later, we found our school navigating the uncharted territory of a global pandemic: COVID-19. Everyone—teachers, students, staff, and parents had to adjust to a new form of learning. At times, it seemed there were more challenges than solutions; however, facing challenges together allowed us to adapt and grow.

MoM's nature trail had become a source of inspiration for teacher and parent Tanner Coleman as he looked to resume much-needed art classes. He required a classroom space offering fresh air, plenty of room, and imagination-inducing supplies for creative art lessons: a dedicated space during the pandemic. Through that process, Tanner has created several outdoor classrooms along the trail and utilized the surrounding nature to create beautiful art scapes. He has delicately



woven wild, unruly Silver Thorn through surrounding trees to create enchanting and imaginative spaces that provide peace and opportunities for creative education and play.

As we return to a sense of normalcy, parents and children are rediscovering the secrets of the nature trail and, like Tanner, want to see the path improved. Amanda Yi and her brother, John, are two such advocates. In speaking with Amanda recently, I asked her, "Why are you putting so much effort into this space on the school campus?" Her response was quick and heartfelt: "When I was in school, I was lucky to have just a playground or blacktop to exercise on, or sometimes it was just walking circles in a gym. It felt a great deal like herding buffalo. My husband and I take our kids out hiking all the time, trying to show them stuff and having



backyard discoveries. Having that at school is something special, and it's important to me to continue fostering that love and curiosity of nature in my kids and the MoM community."



Tanner, Amanda, John, and several other willing parents and friends of MoM have volunteered their time to make the trail a space for meditation and discovery for all explorers.

Please take some time to go and explore this beautiful oasis, and as you soak in the beauty, imagine ways you could help enhance the trail for our MoM students. Also, if you would like more information on helping maintain the trail or wish to talk about other ideas you may have for it, please contact me at ssingleton@montessoriofmacon.org.



LOWER ELEMENTARY

1st through 3rd Grades
Ms. Gyni & Ms. Katherine



There Are So Many Wonderful Reasons To Celebrate!

Lower Elementary students love a celebration! In our classroom, the holidays are part of our calendar work and provide a spark of interest for inquiry into our own history and that of other people and cultures. We are interested in the origins of holidays, how they have been celebrated throughout history and how the observance of holidays differs from place to place.

One of the favorite activities of our youngest students is to build a calendar for each new month, placing the days accurately in order and labeling the holidays for that month. In October, Columbus Day allows us to discuss early European history and the explorers, while Indigenous Peoples Day inspires us to look at the age of exploration through the eyes of those already living in North America. Finally, we read the book *Encounter* to help us visualize the dramatic impact of the Europeans on the lives of Native Americans.

Marco Polo, the Vikings, and Leif Erikson are popular topics. This year, we were fortunate to have Erin Kelley, Avy's mom, visit us in the persona of the wife of a Viking. She brought examples of



clothing, jewelry, chain mail armor, weapons, and other items that were typical of that period. Through her descriptions, we learned a little about what life must have been like for these early people of Northern Europe.

As we move into November and prepare for the Thanksgiving holiday, we enjoy learning about the many Native American people groups who populated the Americas.

As an introduction to American history, we think about what inspired the European colonization of the Americas. Much of our learning about history is through reading biographies, which help us to imagine ourselves in these past times and places.

The December holidays are overwhelming favorites. Because so many faith traditions have celebrations during this period, it allows us to discuss the diversity of religions across the globe and bring it home to our community. We discuss the importance of respecting different beliefs and lean into finding similarities in our belief systems rather than focusing on the differences. Ultimately, we are all invested in spreading love, joy, and peace.



The Theme This Session Has Been Exploration

In Upper Elementary, we explore several continents a year, allowing students to be exposed to all the continental cultures of the world during the 3-year cycle. We explore many aspects of a region for a session or two, including reading stories about their cultures, cooking food, and completing art projects. Students also spend time individually researching countries that interest them.

During this session, students learn all about Australia and Oceania. First, each student is assigned a country or territory. Then, they research that area throughout the session. This includes learning about the country's government, economy, history, and geography. They utilize many resources, including the CIA World Factbook and online sources. After completing their research, they create a PowerPoint to share with their classmates during group time.

We read fiction and non-fiction stories from Australian and Oceania cultures throughout this time. We have read Aboriginal tales of the *Dreamtime* and Maori legends of their gods and goddesses. We are currently reading the *Whale Rider*, a novel about a girl's struggles to become the next leader of her Maori tribe.



In addition to research and read-aloud books, the students can try art projects inspired by the area. For example, we have created dot paintings about Australian animals in the manner of Aboriginal painters, made pendants representing Maori symbols, and drawn Samoan tattoo designs.

Finally, this year we had the opportunity to prepare a food dish for Culturefest! In our classroom meetings students represent their research country by talking as the inhabitants of their researched country would.

During one class meeting, students split into small groups to research foods from their countries. Each group agreed on one item to propose we make for Culturefest. After each group shared their dish ideas, we voted on the top three. Then they spent the Friday before Culturefest practicing cooking skills to make our dishes: a chocolate marquise, Malaysian sweet and spicy meatballs, and Micronesian coconut pudding. We hope you were able to try the dishes at Culturefest!



MIDDLE SCHOOL

7th & 8th Grade
Mr. Shelby & Ms. Susan



It's Learning that's Practical and Lifelong

The Middle School has worked to find unique and vibrant recipes for Culture Fest in past years. This year we focused our efforts on a dish steeped in southeastern history that also highlighted the Montessori of Macon (MoM) mission – to educate the whole child for the whole world.

The students ultimately decided to prepare deviled eggs from the school's chickens. It was a perfect decision. The dish is not only delicious but also reflects the school mission and the hard work of the farm program in Middle School.

Since the beginning of the school year, the Middle School students have spent a segment of their time in the classroom learning about running a farm and selling their wares. One of their favorites is the opportunity to raise and care for chickens. The students visit the coop daily

to feed and water the chickens, collect, clean, store the eggs, and package them for sale. Their commitment and responsibility have become a source of pride and purpose, which imbues our students with a sense of empowerment necessary for developing a mature psyche.

Raising chickens and harvesting their eggs also promotes good stewardship of our planet. Local food, in addition to being fresher and more nutritious, uses fewer fossil fuels. Why? Because locally grown food does not have to be transported long distances or stored at safe temperatures over long periods like commercial foods. Our chickens are also more humanely treated than chickens raised in industrial "farms."

The students' drive to provide fresh eggs to our school community also strengthens the bonds within the community through sharing the eggs



and the stories and values behind how they get to your plate. Humans connect over food because we all share this basic need to survive; we share our values through our need to thrive.

As you enjoy our eggs, whether in the muddy buddies you buy at the Market one Friday afternoon or if you are eating one of our eggs scrambled for breakfast, may the mission and values inherent in the production of that egg inspire you in your own life. Plus, it makes the egg just taste that much better!

Anyone can support our efforts to bring sustainable, fresh eggs to our campus by simply purchasing eggs from the middle school. Just email Mr. Shelby Phan at sphan@montessoriofmacon.org and let him know you would like to buy a few dozen. In addition, chicken feed and pine shavings donations also help offset the rising cost of chicken care. Any donations are greatly appreciated and can be dropped off at the middle school building during the morning or afternoon carpool.



A few of our students had this to say about their experiences caring for the chickens, preparing the eggs for sale, and working the Market:



Yedidyah: "I have learned that you have to be detail oriented to be successful in this business. The experiences and lessons that I am getting from our egg and market business can be applied to any business that I work in in the future."

Tercio: "This experience has taught me how to wash eggs. It is a very delicate process, and you have to pay attention to make sure it gets cleaned thoroughly because if they are dirty, then people won't buy from us in the future. It has taught me that I can be careful and trust myself to do something difficult."



Elijah: "If I ever want to run into the woods and sustain myself, I know how to work with chickens to help me to survive."

Bryan: "If I decide to want to rely on myself for food, then I have experience working with chickens that will help me meet that goal."



Dominic: "It takes a lot of fine motor skills to correctly clean and handle the eggs. You have to find your balance. I think that this can be helpful in my career as a drummer."

Montessori of Macon's Mission

"To Educate the Whole Child for a Whole World."

By the whole child, we mean the social, emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual aspects of being human. By nurturing the wholeness of our children and fostering respect for each other, nature and community we prepare them for a life of continued joy that will contribute positively to a whole world.



MONTESSORI OF MACON
EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD FOR A WHOLE WORLD



AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY®
education that transforms lives
Member School

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