



WOODLANDHILL
MONTESSORI SCHOOL

An Education for Life



our history



Woodland Hill Montessori School, one of the oldest Montessori schools in the nation, first opened its doors in 1965, as the Montessori School of Albany. Founded by parents searching for a school that would recognize and develop the immense potential within all young children, MSA provided early childhood education for three to six-year old children. The elementary program was established in 1986, the middle school was created in 2001, and in 2012, the toddler program was added. Woodland Hill Montessori School is one of a growing number of schools in the country offering Montessori education from early childhood through eighth grade and is the only school in the Capital Region fully accredited by the American Montessori Society, the National Association of Independent Schools, and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

Today, WHMS serves over 250 students and families from six counties, covering 49 surrounding cities and towns. Woodland Hill is a diverse and international community with our families' countries of origin spanning the globe. WHMS is committed to serving families of all socio-economic backgrounds through a growing financial aid program and an affordable tuition.

our mission

Woodland Hill Montessori School — a diverse and engaging educational partnership of parents, teachers, children, and community — nurtures a child's love of learning and sense of personal and social responsibility, using the child-centered Montessori philosophy and curriculum to develop the intellectual, physical, spiritual, artistic, and academic excellence inherent in each child.

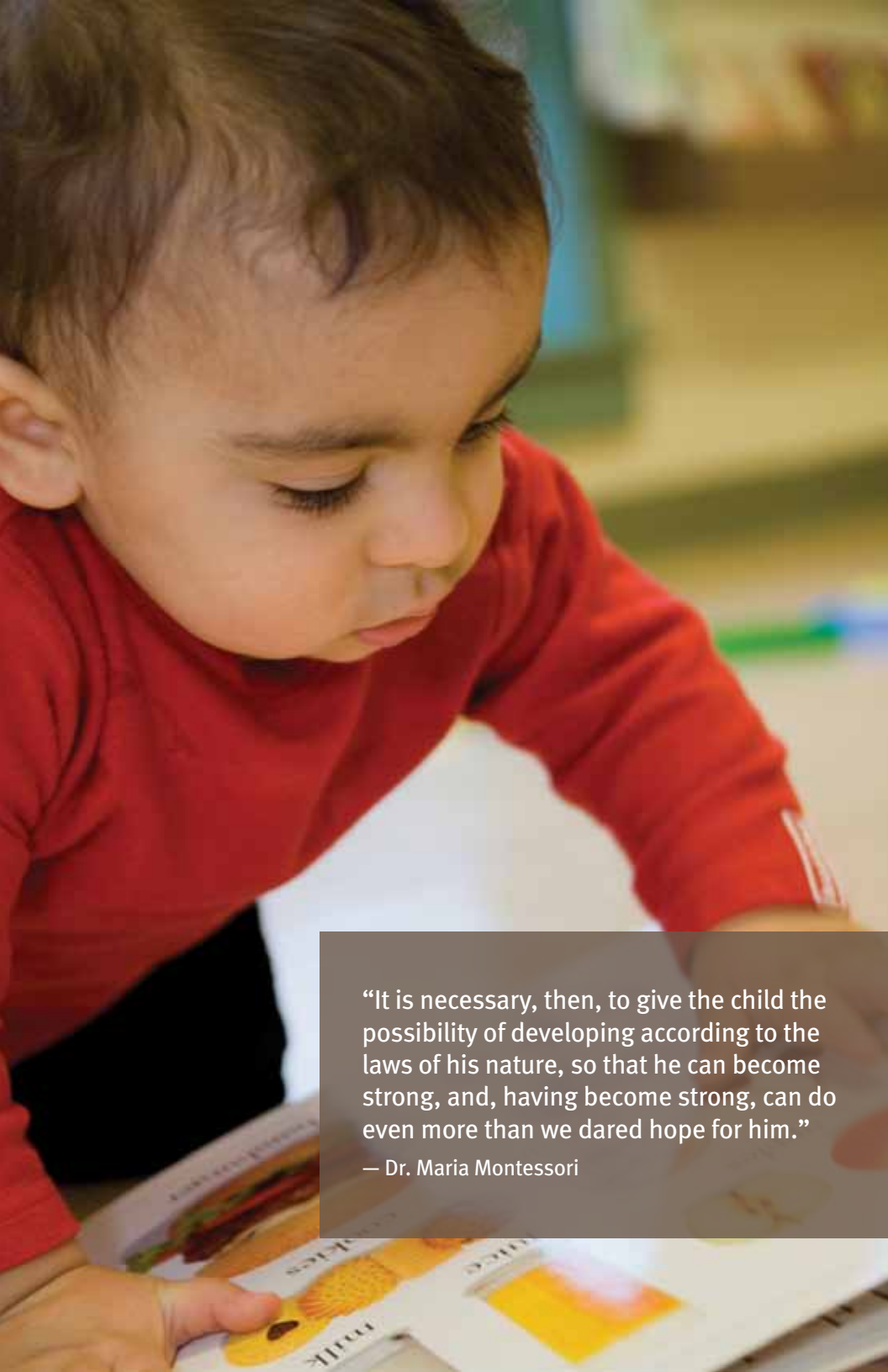
the method

- 👤 The Montessori Method has enjoyed over a century of proven success throughout the world.
- 👤 The Montessori Method is based on Dr. Maria Montessori's careful observations of the way children learn best. Through her research, she discovered that as children grow, they pass through sensitive periods of social, emotional, and intellectual development; these are the ideal times to introduce new experiences and concepts.
- 👤 In a Montessori classroom, learning starts with the child. Montessori teachers are specially trained facilitators in the classroom, ready to assist and direct. Their purpose is to engage and guide the child's enthusiasm for learning, while supporting the child's natural desire to become independent. The teacher observes each child's interests and abilities and creates an environment where these can flourish.
- 👤 Beautifully crafted interactive Montessori materials give children a deep and thorough understanding of concepts.
- 👤 In multi-age groupings, each child works at his or her level in a cooperative setting, creating a strong community.
- 👤 Children are empowered to make decisions and take responsibility from an early age. They are problem-solvers who have the self-confidence to make good choices.

- 👤 Children are encouraged to exchange ideas and discuss their work freely with others. This balance of self-reliance and collaboration is essential to being a productive, successful participant in the 21st century.
- 👤 Children are self-directed in non-competitive activities which develop strong self images and the confidence to face challenges and change.
- 👤 Believing that children are the hope for peace for the world, Montessori teachers provide opportunities for children to create peace within themselves and the community around them. A strong emphasis on cooperation, respect, and empathy for others underlies the students' experience.



All of our children from the primary program on up have enriched experiences in algebra, geometry, geography, astronomy, botany, zoology, economics, world cultures, history, music, physical education, fine arts, and Spanish. The Montessori approach is internationally renowned for the development of each child's creativity, individual resourcefulness, and potential. Every day, children and adults practice kindness, compassion, mutual respect, and peace.



“It is necessary, then, to give the child the possibility of developing according to the laws of his nature, so that he can become strong, and, having become strong, can do even more than we dared hope for him.”

— Dr. Maria Montessori

the toddler program

young explorers gaining independence

The toddler program (18-36 months) is designed to create a gentle transition from the child's home to their first school experience. Young children have a drive towards independence — “Help me to do it by myself” is often heard by children at Woodland Hill, and in the toddler classroom this growth toward independence is remarkable to behold.

Children walk into the toddler classroom and immediately want to take things from the shelves and use them; curiosity is the first step toward becoming an active learner. Toddlers gravitate toward activities that develop motor skills: running, carrying, climbing, swinging, handling paintbrushes, petting animals, and more. Everything in the classroom is child-sized and designed to promote independence, from the custom-made tables and chairs to the shelves, vases, utensils, and even the toilets. Social skills are another area of tremendous growth for toddlers. Children celebrate classmates' birthdays, learn the names and relationships of people in their families, care for classroom pets and plants, and develop important skills of empathy and being part of a group.

The toddler program at Woodland Hill offers an environment rich in opportunities for physical, sensorial, intellectual, and social learning. The classroom environment, the materials, and the culture of the toddler program are all carefully coordinated to offer children multiple opportunities to grow and mature at a time when both bodies and minds are developing at the swiftest pace in all of life.

the primary program

nurturing a love of learning

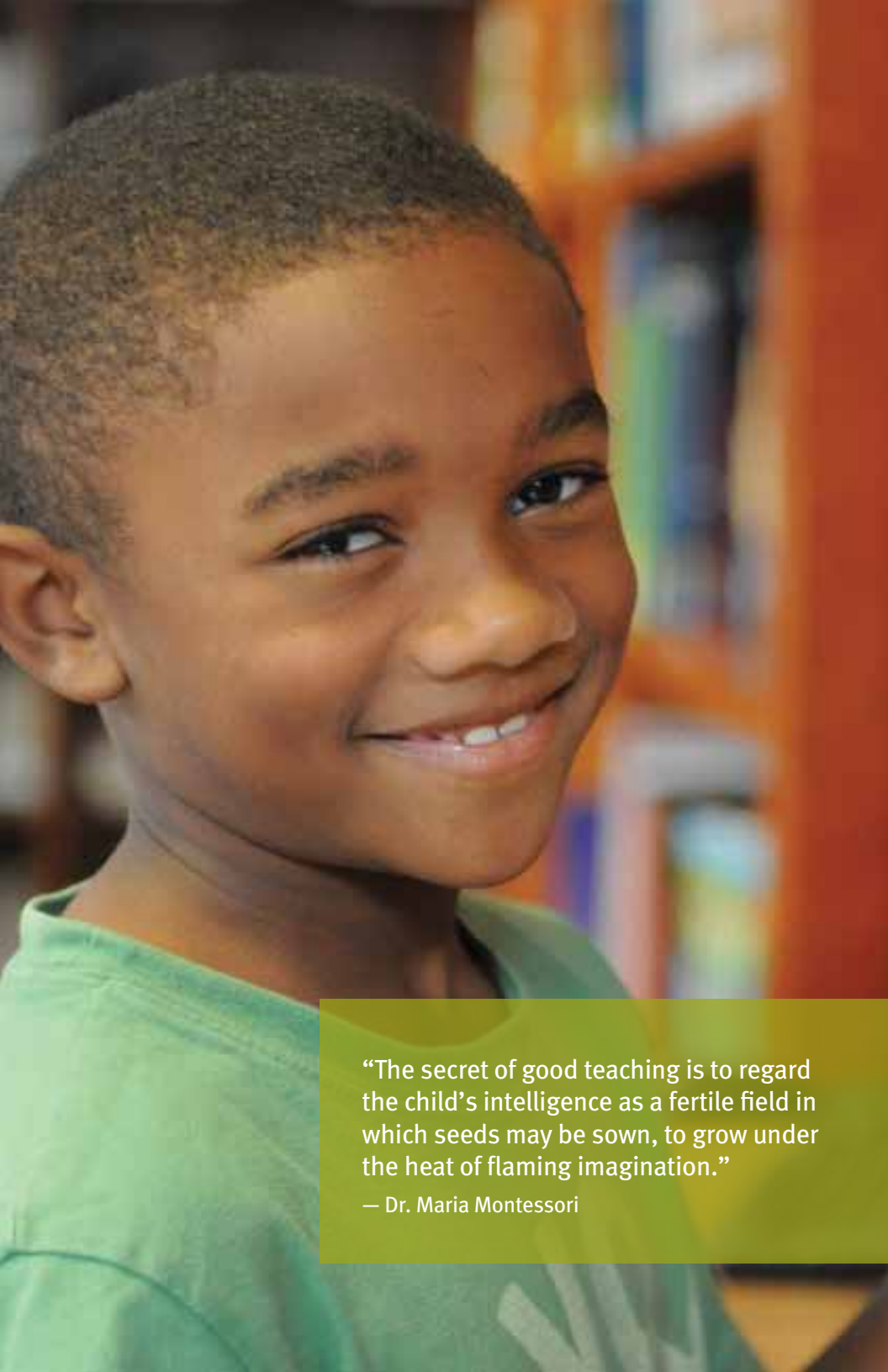
At the primary level (ages 3-6), our educational program is based on the premise that young children flourish in an enriched learning environment with gentle guidance and the freedom to work at their own pace. Children learn by doing and our beautiful, engaging classroom environments encourage joyful discovery, foster independent learning, and offer opportunities to develop deep concentration. The specifically-designed Montessori materials let children explore the world through their senses, through touch and motion, and by observing and engaging with others.

The Woodland Hill primary curriculum incorporates pre-reading and math skill development, science activities, geography and cultural studies, sensory exercises, and environmental education along with additional opportunities in music, art, physical education, and Spanish. Teachers guide students through the curriculum as children are ready for each new challenge, introducing lessons and then letting children practice what they have learned. An emphasis is placed on the process rather than the product of learning, our aim is to develop a love of work and a joy of learning.

The third year or kindergarten year in the primary classroom is a special one; parents marvel at their kindergartner's accomplishments and confidence. Whether working alone or with others, children have acquired an impressive level of focus and obvious pride in their work. The Woodland Hill primary program is the perfect preparation for the challenging work at the elementary level.



“The most important period of life...is the first one, the period from birth to age six,” said Dr. Montessori “For that is the time when man’s intelligence itself, his greatest implement, is being formed.”



“The secret of good teaching is to regard the child’s intelligence as a fertile field in which seeds may be sown, to grow under the heat of flaming imagination.”

— Dr. Maria Montessori

the elementary program

freedom to discover while developing
a strong sense of reason

The elementary program, divided into lower (ages 6-9) and upper elementary (ages 9-12) levels, is designed to develop independent thinkers and learners. At this stage of learning, students are filled with wonder and curiosity as they seek answers to the larger questions about the universe, the human purpose, and social justice. Elementary students are also exploring their social surroundings. The self-focused independence of the younger child gives way to a demanding search for identity within a group and the world. During uninterrupted blocks of time, a child can choose to work alone, with a peer, or in a small group. Students work at their own pace within expectations established in collaboration with their teacher. This fosters important time-management and organizational skills as well as a sense of accomplishment and purpose. Whole group instruction and meetings are also part of the Montessori classroom experience.

The elementary core curriculum, called “cosmic education” by Dr. Montessori, includes language arts, math, geography, history, botany, zoology, and earth science. Classes in art, music, Spanish, and physical education are an integral part of curriculum. Teachers ensure that each child is working at a comfortable yet challenging level. Smaller student to teacher ratios allow our faculty to carefully observe each child at work and evaluate their learning styles and written work.

Our elementary program cultivates a love of learning and enjoyment of school. A wide-reaching curriculum coupled with in-depth exploration results in students who are well prepared for the rigors of middle school.

the middle school

the courage to question

Dr. Montessori characterized adolescence as the “Third Plane of Development,” noting that “the chief need of the adolescent is the strengthening of self-confidence.” Woodland Hill supports young adolescents in their academic, social, and emotional growth by encouraging students to explore and discover their place in the world through a broad and challenging curriculum, community service, and field trips. In addition to the core academic subjects in math, science, social studies and language arts, middle school students work with specialists in Spanish, Latin, art, music, and physical education.

The Woodland Hill middle school program (ages 12-14) promotes academic excellence and supports the development of each student’s unique potential by providing a learning environment where each child is respected, caring adults guide and instruct, and small group work strengthens interpersonal skills.

Our small size allows the class to embark on a variety of field trips that are an essential part of the program. Through these off-campus experiences, students’ learning is applied beyond the confines of the classroom into the larger community. Woodland Hill middle school students gain the confidence to think independently and act responsibly, to question issues, examine ethics, and explore all the changes adolescence brings. The two-year integrated, interdisciplinary curriculum makes the Woodland Hill middle school program both practically and personally meaningful.

Given our focus on developing the whole child with high academic expectations and an emphasis on critical thinking as well as written and oral communication, parents can be certain that their children are well prepared for the competitive environment of high school.



“Education should no longer be mostly imparting knowledge, but must take a new path, seeking the release of human potentials.” — Dr. Maria Montessori

our teachers

Woodland Hill is well known for the quality of our teachers. Years of experience and extensive Montessori teacher education make them exceptionally qualified to help children realize their personal and academic potential. Our teachers show an extraordinary dedication to students and their families. The lead teacher prepares the classroom environment, selects and arranges materials based on the developmental needs of the children, and works with the assistant teacher to create an exemplary learning environment.



All Montessori lead teachers have Montessori certification in addition to a bachelor's or master's degree; the average teaching career of a Woodland Hill lead teacher is 15 years. A Montessori teacher treats children with patience, understanding and respect. Through skilled observation, he or she is attuned to the growth and development of each child as an individual and strives to prepare the environment and learning activities to meet the child's needs individually while carefully balancing the needs of the classroom community as a whole. There is a collegial atmosphere among faculty at Woodland Hill; they share ideas, materials, and support one another.

our students flourish at woodland hill and beyond

Equipped with a strong sense of self, a mastery of skills, and a desire to learn, Woodland Hill students continue their education successfully in all of the area's public and independent secondary schools. We survey Woodland Hill alumni and parents annually to determine how their experience at Woodland Hill affected their subsequent education. The core curriculum at each level of our program exceeds New York's mandated learning standards, preparing our students very well for the next step in their education.



goals

The Montessori curriculum varies at the five levels of our school, but the goals are consistent throughout the program:

- 👤 To enter into a partnership with parents in the education of their children
- 👤 To encourage the self-motivation and self-discipline that will lead to a life-long pursuit of knowledge
- 👤 To lead children to the mastery of precisely identified intellectual, social, and physical skills
- 👤 To help children develop a positive self-image as the key to the development of their full potential
- 👤 To foster open minds, compassion, and respect for themselves and others
- 👤 To balance self-reliance, independence, and responsible freedom with the skills of working cooperatively
- 👤 To instill in each child a sense of duty and personal responsibility for the world in which we live
- 👤 To spark in our children imagination, wonder, humor, and joy

The Montessori approach to education creates an environment that nurtures a lifelong learner, one who finds joy in the search for, and process of, learning. Montessori children are not only accepted at the nation's finest schools, but find acceptance wherever they go. Many of the tenets of the Montessori philosophy have been embraced all over the world, in public as well as private schools. We hope that you will discover this is the way for your child to learn- for all time. Learning is one of life's most rewarding journeys. We invite you and your child to share it with us.

Woodland Hill Montessori School does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, national, or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or financial aid programs.



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Educating Children Ages 18 months to 14 years old