



Looking to the Future by Allyson Creel

After the last day of the school year we prepared the classrooms for our summer expansion project. We carefully boxed up all of the elementary materials and awaited our parent volunteers to help move them and all the shelves into the existing Children's House. They fit perfectly into half of the Children's House! Our new workroom became a holding area for materials which will soon occupy the newly constructed, second Children's House classroom. My thoughts returned to May of 2013. . .

Six years ago, the seed of Keystone Montessori School was lovingly planted. It was tended to by a host of supporters who fed it, watered it, and nurtured it even though they were not able to see the roots solidly growing underground. Parents came and enrolled their children. Teachers made materials and created a classroom where these children would develop and learn. Very quickly the plant grew and poked its head above ground. More families came and the staff grew. Branches appeared on the plant and new opportunities for families were created. Just like the children inside its walls, Keystone Montessori School was developing and growing. Our school continues to blossom and with that comes change and expansion as we fulfill our vision of bringing Montessori education to more children.

In Dr. Montessori's terms, we are entering our next "Stage of Development"! Her vision for the education of children is grounded in scientific observation and empirical evidence that human development occurs in stages – each stage lasting roughly six years. Her method is centered around creating distinct learning environments which meet the needs of children during these stages which span from infancy through adulthood. Dynamic and solid Montessori schools are reflective of Dr. Montessori's core principles, and as such, are (and should be), a living and evolving place with organic processes and natural progression, developing in stages. Keystone Montessori School continues to evolve; it turns out that these stages mirror Dr. Montessori's vision of human development.

This fall we will begin our seventh year with the opening of a second Children's House environment. I am proud of our thoughtful and intentional growth. Development and growth require openness, flexibility, strong communication, and patience. We are grounded in Dr. Montessori's pedagogy and we are guided by our mission statement - it is the vision of the developing child which unifies our school. I am excited to be a part of the evolution of Keystone Montessori School.

Dear Friends of Keystone,

Now we are six! And just like the 6-year-old child, Keystone Montessori School is getting larger, stronger, more exciting, and very eager to face new challenges. A wonderfully satisfying school year is over and a new year of great promise is on the horizon.

From the very beginning one of our goals has been to establish a school that is joyful. Growing a school community of families, friends, and staff that enjoys being together in support of children is essential to the success of the school. Our community is now flourishing. In fact, we often hear from prospective parents and visiting teachers, "We just love the vibe here!". It is indeed a good vibe that is generated by our entire community, a community that continues to grow, and continues to expand its understanding and appreciation of authentic Montessori practice and the importance it plays in the lives of children.

Once, when I was teaching, I overheard an administrator declare "It's the program that's important, not the teachers." I couldn't disagree more! The two must go hand in hand. Outstanding, talented, dedicated teachers ignite an outstanding program and without them, a school will wallow in mediocrity. The teachings of Dr. Montessori can't come to life without a knowledgeable staff. Fortunately, at Keystone I get to work with knowledgeable, energetic, and creative individuals. They arrive at work every day ready to give their all and to provide the children with the best experiences possible. They understand the principles of authentic Montessori practice, they embrace those principles, and they utilize them daily. Our staff is the consummate example of excellent team work and I am delighted to work alongside them.

We began this past school year in a big way by spearheading the Charlotte presentation of "The Brain Storming Tour". This tour brought two well-known Montessorians, Dr. Stephen Hughes and Dr. Laura Flores-Shaw to town for an evening's presentation at Queens University Conference Center. This very successful collaborative effort among several area Montessori schools was originated and guided by the staff of Keystone, and resulted in an interested audience of over two hundred people. Introducing more of the public to Montessori education is a challenge that constantly encourages us to move beyond the physical confines of the school.

Keystone's efforts to provide support to our city community resulted in our creating the "Warm the Heart, Warm the Soles" clothing drive to assist the children of A Child's Place. A Child's Place offers help to children who have been displaced by family circumstances and have become homeless. Wanting to involve the Keystone children in a project to help others, a call went out for donations of new winter coats and new shoes for the children of A Child's Place. The Keystone community responded fast and generously! Nearly all of our families made contributions to this clothing drive and we were able to donate 63 coats and 28 pairs of shoes. And that was on short notice! This coming winter, I am confident that our community will be able to accomplish even more!



So, now as a six-year-old, we are excitedly anticipating the next adventure. Keystone will expand this fall with the addition of a new primary classroom. Our enrollment continues to be strong and with this addition we will be able to invite more families to join our Keystone community. So, what does this expansion currently entail?

Sedgefield United Methodist Church has agreed to lease the entire lower level of their education building to Keystone. With their permission, renovation work began two days after the school year ended. Walls have been removed, a new load-bearing beam is being installed, and a wall is being rebuilt. New flooring, an expanded fire alarm system as well as plumbing and electrical modifications round out the picture. Oh, and a new closet is being built. (That particular item is on every teacher's wish list!) A wonderfully generous company, Biesse America, is donating custom-made shelving for the new classroom and a Fun-Raiser was organized and executed in just six weeks to help defray the costs. Due to the hard work and lively participation of the entire Keystone community, over \$15,000 was raised on a Saturday night in May in support of this expansion. We are most definitely moving forward!

So how about the staffing for this new classroom? Funny you should ask! I will step back into the classroom and return to the joys of table washing and sandpaper letters. My assistant will be Teresa Hanlon, whom you may remember worked with me previously for two years as my assistant. Her children joined Keystone in 2014, but she has been an active participant in our community even before that. Teresa has always been intrigued by the Montessori philosophy, so when an opportunity came up for her to take the AMI training, she seized it. We will work alongside one another this upcoming school year, but the following year she will assume the lead teaching position. I will return once again to the office, where it too is busy, but not nearly as endearing as the classroom. I am thrilled about having the chance to grow our community and being able to introduce more children to a joyful way of learning. From my vantage point, Keystone is well on its way. Keystone is most definitely a strong, energetic, bold, and growing six-year-old!

Thank you so much for being part of our Keystone community, whether you are close by or far away. Your continued support has been crucial to the success of this school and to the success of all the Keystone children.

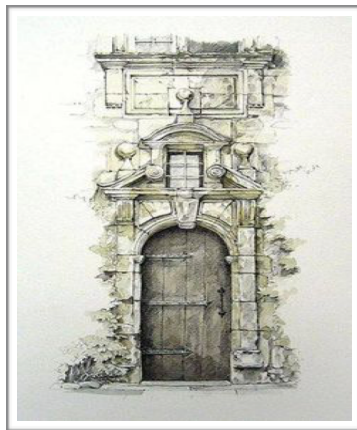
With great appreciation,

Hawley Hoggard



The San Lorenzo Fund

of Keystone Montessori School



Over two years ago we created a tuition assistance fund named The San Lorenzo Fund. We believe that education can change the world, and we believe that the Montessori approach is the best method to accomplish this. Children deserve to learn in a manner that is joyful, logical, effective, and respects their natural development. They should learn in an environment of love. All children, regardless of their family's financial situation, deserve this.

We hope that you will seriously consider making a tax-deductible donation to The San Lorenzo Fund of Keystone Montessori School. We know that with your help we can empower many more children.

"There is a great sense of community within the Montessori classroom, where children of differing ages work together in an atmosphere of cooperation rather than competitiveness. There is respect for the environment and for the individuals within it, which comes through experience of freedom within the community" -Dr. Maria Montessori



We appreciate the continuing support of the congregation of
Sedgefield United Methodist Church. As always,
their acceptance and understanding have been instrumental to Keystone's success.

Keystone Montessori School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Keystone Montessori School is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization

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