

Judi Bauerlein Letter

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Dear Members of the Monticello Montessori Community,

I have just had the privilege of spending three days at your new Montessori Charter School. For over fifty years, I have been connected to the Montessori world in many capacities: as a parent, a teacher, a teacher trainer, an AMS Board member, a consultant, and as a grandmother! One of my joys is to visit Montessori schools that are just beginning and to experience the excitement of such an adventure.

My experience at Monticello Montessori was a rich one. Your new green facility has many marvelous features. The large windows allow for light-filled rooms and unobstructed views of your gorgeous mountains and neighboring farm. The structure of the classrooms creates quality work spaces.

I visited each classroom, all of which are well equipped with quality Montessori materials. Each teacher was effectively working with students, teaching, observing, supporting, and guiding. The classroom assistants were fine partners with the teachers and were actively participating in all of the classroom work.

I am not going to go into detail about each of the environments but I do want to make special mention of Celinda's environment with Baby James. The first day I observed in this room I was happy to see how Celinda could have James in a snuggly and still work with the students easily and effectively. I recall when one of my parent volunteers brought her baby Blair into my classroom. The students became immersed in his life as we measured, weighed, and monitored his new "skills". Fellow Montessori teachers who have also brought their baby to class agree with me that the students are being given a priceless gift. Dr. Montessori created the "Silence Game" by asking the children to be as still as the baby who was asleep in her arms.

The second day I observed in Celinda's class, a young boy was in the reading corner giving James his bottle and speaking softly and lovingly to him. What a beautiful sight.

The conversations that I had with Dave, your administrator, and my observations of him working with teachers, parents, students, and staff and talking about Montessori were impressive. You are fortunate to have a leader who understands the essence of Montessori, is a visionary, and also a caring, supportive person.

I was invited to come to Monticello Montessori to do an observation of David Gerritsen whom I taught when he was 9-11 years old at the Montessori Public school

in San Mateo, California. I was delighted to have the opportunity to see one of my past students now working as a fine Montessori educator.

I enjoyed meeting many of the parents at the meeting Tuesday evening. I hope you realize how invaluable your support is to the success of your school. Back in 1975, parents in SanMateo, California requested a Montessori alternative and created one of the first public Montessori schools in the country. These parents took a chance with this new idea and they realized that Montessori education embraced principles that supported the needs and developmental stages of the whole child. Their support, work, and trust were honored as our program grew and their children flourished.

There are now over 300 Public and Charter Montessori schools in our country. I have visited quite a few of the schools and have educated many the teachers. It takes time for the seeds that are planted, the procedures that are new, the curriculum that promotes critical thinking, and the practice of being a responsible students and members of the community to take hold. I hear parents ask, "But are our children learning?" Your children are learning how to learn, how to be responsible students, how to manage time effectively, how to work peacefully with others, how to be grateful for all that has gone before them and with all of these qualities, your children are being given a strong, well researched, academic program that is being validated by current brain research and abundant success stories.

I am thankful for the time that I enjoyed in your school and with all of the staff and students. I wish you well on your Montessori journey.

In peace,

Judi Bauerlein