

## There Will be Snacks!

"I think there will be snacks" was all my wife needed to say and I was there! What started as a brief afternoon 'date' with my wife, soon turned into a profound experience with what would become our new community.

We knew there must be a place where our son (Samuel) would be challenged, respected and learn emotional, physical and practical life tools to suit his development. With two working parents, our mission was to find a place that went against the 'norm' and yet felt completely normal for us. We knew there must be a place where his needs would be met. We found that, and more, in abundance here at The Montessori School.

When we sat down at our observation, we saw children moving with ease, speaking with kindness, exploring independently, resolving conflict on their own, appreciating nature and choosing the lessons they wished to work on. The teachers held back and took in what each child needed. Instead of someone talking at them, their ideas were being heard and their interests fostered. They also chose which snacks to eat and when! My kind of place!

Perched upon the tiny chairs, our tears quickly dropped to the floor. It felt like home. We were enamored with the philosophy, pedagogy, materials, community and overall warmth. To us, it felt almost unbelievable that such a wonderful place existed. The independence we observed was astonishing. The diversity of students was evident and welcome. The quality of the teachers is so deeply inspiring. The intention behind every strategy can be so meaningful.

People constantly comment on how polite our son (Samuel) is, how he cleans up after himself, how eloquent he is. He strives to be an active participant in our family and in life. He makes his bed and puts his dishes away without being asked. He even helps to feed his little brother. Montessori principles continually seep into home life and we get to learn just as much along the way. It's only our second year here and our vision is to continue to support both of our boys in the best way we know possible, to continue to provide a pathway toward independence and social responsibility. We've found that here.

As parents we all strive to foster our future leaders, and what we witnessed during our observations was a mere glimpse of the sense of wonder and depth of kindness that pours forth from Samuel on a daily basis. Some may say it has to do with his person or parents, but humbly speaking, I now believe that it has more to do with the daily environment he has in "his extended home with his extended family at the Montessori School". I am grateful to my wife for taking me on that 'date'. The impact it continues to have on our lives is more delicious and rich than any snack I've ever bitten into.

We all have much to be grateful for each day. Wishing you a heartfelt and bountiful holiday season.

Scott  
(Sam "the mayor's Dad")