



**James Simons Montessori School**

**For Immediate Release**

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## Media Release

### **Pulse of CCSD – Nate Hamric never misses an opportunity to demonstrate the virtue of kindness**

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**Charleston, SC** – Nate Hamric's goal is to learn every student's name at James Simons Montessori School. That's been easy for him because he adores the children there – and they adore him.

Hamric has been the cafeteria manager at James Simons for just over two years.

According to 8th grade journalism student Lamar Heyward, Hamric exemplifies the saying "No act of kindness, no matter how small is ever wasted" - Aesop.

"He never misses an opportunity to demonstrate the virtue of kindness," said Heyward.

From happily serving James Simons students with a smile on his face to regularly communicating with staff, Hamric goes above and beyond to celebrate students and coworkers, Heyward explained.

"Mr. Nate is an all-around team player who provides a pulse to the heartbeat of our school," said Heyward. "When he is aware of staff birthdays, he and his team personally deliver flowers to staff members. They put on display the power of kindness and the real meaning of doing heart-centered work."

#### **His customers are the students**

Hamric came to Charleston County School District's (CCSD) Nutrition Services by way of many years in restaurant and hotel management. Those long hours and the hard work was fulfilling. He eventually settled down and started a family and wasn't able to spend as much time as he wanted with his twin children and his wife.

"The breaking point for me was when I went to pick up my six-year-old twins from daycare and they didn't want to go with me," said Hamric. "They didn't know who I was."

An opportunity presented itself at James Simons and after much prayer and discussions with his wife, he jumped at the chance.

"It's similar to the restaurant and hotel business," said Hamric. "The only difference is that the customers are our students. We work hard to put out quality food and a quality product with every single meal."

Another difference, which is one of Hamric's favorites, is that he gets to build relationships with his customers.

"I have repeat customers in the morning and at lunch, every single day," said Hamric. "That's how I get to know these kids so well."

Some of the students have earned nicknames, and many go running into his arms for a hug or a high-five. Others get jokingly called out for sneaking through the line without saying hello. All of the students get Hamric's ear-to-ear smile.

CCSD's Executive Director of Nutrition Services Walter Campbell often refers to a Martin Luther King quote that he believes all CCSD Nutrition Services Managers know and Nate exemplifies - 'Not everyone can be famous, but everyone can be great because everyone can serve.'

"Nate and his team are great because they do serve our scholars and our district every day, with a smile," said Campbell.

The students notice that.

"Mr. Nate has made a big impact on our school," added Heyward. "He makes us laugh in the cafeteria line. We love him so much."

### **A hungry child can't learn**

Hamric comes from a long line of educators and is honored to work alongside the staff at James Simons.

"It is important that we provide these students with proper nutrition so that the teachers can educate our students," said Hamric. "We make sure they have what they need in their belly so the teachers, who are the real heroes, can do their work and our students can learn."

Principal Elizabeth Dillenkoffer said Hamric goes above and beyond to support James Simons students, staff, and the school community.

"When the school found out recently about an upcoming e-Learning Day due to inclement weather, Mr. Nate and his staff had bagged lunches ready to go with the

students in less than 30 minutes,” said Dillenkoffer. “No matter what, Mr. Nate makes sure all students eat.”

CCSD Nutrition Services is very innovative when it comes to providing variety to the menu. At James Simons, meals often represent holidays and community culture. For example, a Thanksgiving feast is planned and parents and guardians will be invited to attend. Students will learn all about what is being prepared and will have the opportunity to take on roles such as servers, waiters and waitresses. A Gullah Geechee meal is hosted every year and centered on Black History Month celebrations. Throughout the year, guest chefs are invited in to turn recipes and meal preparation into learning opportunities.

Heyward said his favorite meal is a new recipe that was recently rolled out and includes chicken, vegetable pot stickers, and steamed carrots. He added that no matter what is served for the day, he always pairs it with a side salad.

A lot of work goes into making breakfast, lunch, and dinner, as well as preparing 150 lunches for a satellite school. Hamric thanks his incredible staff for all they do.

Their day starts at 5:15 a.m. when they begin preparing breakfast which is ready at 7:15 a.m. Lunch preparation begins at 9:00 a.m. and is served from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Supper is prepared for 80 after-school students and preparation for the next day is completed.

Hamric said he has learned a lot from his experienced staff and hopes he has imparted some of his private sector knowledge of the food and hospitality industry to them. Hamric works the line with his staff every day. It brings him joy to be a part of all aspects of the job.

“My staff has over 45 years of combined experience,” said Hamric. “That’s something to be admired. They all love these kids so much and wouldn’t be in this type of service if they didn’t care about these children.”

Hamric’s genuine personality and kind heart are well-received by students and staff alike.

“I don’t do this for the accolades,” said Hamric. “I do it because I love interacting with the children. It doesn’t matter what kind of mood my day started with, when I get here, their smiles melt my heart.

Heyward is graduating this year and has his eyes on attending Early College High School. He said he will miss Hamric but plans to stop by to visit as often as possible.

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**About the Charleston County School District**

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 49,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military.