



Malcolm C. Hursey Montessori
School

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Media Release

Second grader from Malcolm C. Hursey Montessori raised \$400 for sensory room

North Charleston, SC - School communities throughout Charleston County School District operate as families as they take care of each other, support each other, and create opportunities for each other. Proof of the commitment staff and students have for each other at Malcolm C. Hursey Montessori School stands out through the Bulldogs' new sensory room.

During this past summer, second grader Joshua Flovin believed his fellow students needed a dedicated space where his classmates and schoolmates could self-regulate, so they could be better prepared for learning and interacting with others. Joshua was preparing to compete in a youth triathlon at the James Island County Park in late July. His age group did a 100-yard swim, followed by a three-mile bike ride and a one-mile run, and he thought that would provide a chance to raise money for the sensory room. Thanks to donations from family, friends, and community partners, he raised \$400 and donated all of it to his school to help purchase equipment for a sensory room, which is accessible to all students at Hursey.

"We are so proud of Joshua and his compassion and generosity for our school community," said Principal Dr. Timothy Schavel. "It is exciting to see this sensory room open up at Malcolm C. Hursey Montessori to help our students regain focus, calm themselves, and develop social skills with others."

Joshua's efforts concurred with a DonorsChoose project, led by two Hursey staff members, special education teacher Christi Lotz (and the school's current Teacher of the Year) and instructional coach Danielle Saia. Saia started the fundraiser project with DonorsChoose in June 2024. Combined with Joshua's donation, the project raised a total of \$2,247.00 to fund the sensory room.

"Starting this DonorsChoose project to help build a sensory room in my own school was really important to me," explained Lotz. "I have seen firsthand the positive impact a sensory space can have on students because I use this method in my own special education classroom. This sensory outlet will help our students to develop their senses, encourage problem-solving, and can help them absorb and retain more information. I am really thrilled to see this open up so that all students can have access to it."

Hursey Montessori's new sensory room has nearly 30 new items for students to use, including a sequin sensory wall frame, a rocking chair, resistance bands, and color-changing LED smart lamps.

"This space allows our students to reset their minds and body so that when they return to their learning environment their chances to be successful with achievement and healthy social-emotional interactions have increased," said Saia. "I have seen how powerful a sensory space can be for students in need of it and feel enthusiastic to see this project take life at Malcolm C. Hursey Montessori."

The school hosted an unofficial opening of the room on Friday, November 8, 2024, allowing local media outlets to see the space and speak with Joshua and staff members about the project.

For more information, please contact Danielle Saia at danielle_saia@charleston.k12.sc.us.

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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 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 50,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse portfolio of educational options and specialized programs delivered to the students of CCSD through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools and programs. Rich educational opportunities for students include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; military; dual credit; and many more.