

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF WSMS...

Who We Are, What We Do, and What Makes WSMS So Special

The visionary ideas and guiding principles set forth by our founders in 1963 remain the driving force behind what we do and how we do it. Our school continues to reflect the vibrant cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhood and our city. Our commitment to actively involving families in the educational lives of their children, and our pride in implementing the best practices that have evolved in Montessori and early childhood education, have been a constant over the past six decades.

A Montessori education is based on beliefs about human development and human relationships. At its core are foundational principles of respect for each unique person, all life, and the environment. Here, teaching and learning are seen as inseparable, as are self, family, neighborhood, and global community. Self-discovery is deeply connected to learning about others. We emphasize the ability to understand experiences from different perspectives. Learning and growth are what happens when we all work and play together.

We believe that children's intellectual growth is intertwined with their social and emotional development. We guide our children to grow into autonomous, caring, collaborative, life-long learners and problem solvers. Most importantly, children learn *how* to learn. Focusing their attention on an interest, they discover the joy in learning through active engagement. A messy rather than linear process, learning occurs when children are exposed to various intellectual, physical, and social activities and have long blocks of uninterrupted time. In this way, children take responsibility for their learning as they ask questions, seek explanations, and then ask more questions. They learn to make decisions, to challenge themselves, and to strategize.

At WSMS, learning materials are revised and expanded throughout the school year in response to children's changing needs and interests. Practical life materials enable them to learn how to care for themselves and their environment. Sensorial materials, and a rich array of grading and sorting activities, develop children's perceptual and physical abilities and refine their observation skills. Open-ended materials like blocks, sand, dramatic play, and art media encourage imagination, exploration, and self-expression.

We are a warm, welcoming community in which children and adults find friendships and support, and where all are encouraged to ask questions and broaden their understanding of themselves, others, and the world. We think it's unfortunate that some people shrug off preschool as "not necessary"—or "just" daycare, because they don't realize how important these formative or sensitive years are for children and how they establish a life-long love of learning, self-confidence, and self-reliance: a truly great beginning.

We frequently hear from parents whose children attended WSMS, whether it was one year ago, or many years ago. Their (and our!) WSMS children have gone on to new schools knowing how to navigate classrooms confidently, resolve conflicts peacefully, and model kindness wherever they are. One of the greatest compliments and most satisfying endorsements is when an alumni student returns as a parent, choosing to send their child to WSMS. **We're very proud that over the last three years, fifteen alumni students have returned as parents.** We are honored to provide your children with a great beginning and we look forward with unabated enthusiasm to the next sixty years.

WSMS yearbook photos from the 80s and 90s of some alumni students who returned as parents over the last three years.



Ibijoke Akinola



Jordan (Longert) Blitzer



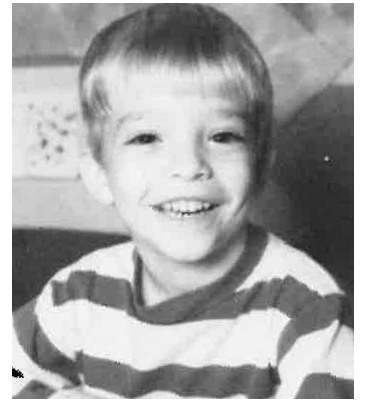
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