

MOUNTAIN

# LAUREL

*In praise of our learning communities*

2015-2016

[MountainLaurelMontessori.org](http://MountainLaurelMontessori.org)





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Mountain Laurel Montessori School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion or ethnic or national origin in the administration of its educational program, admissions policy, or other school administered programs.

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The rigorous scope of intellectual, artistic and creative content supports children who succeed in the next stages of their academic journey.

#### Q: What about discipline?

#### Q: Why does Montessori put so much stress on freedom and independence?

**A.** Children touch and manipulate everything in their environment. In a sense, the human mind is handmade, because through movement and touch, the child explores, manipulates, and builds a storehouse of impressions about the physical world around her. Children learn best by doing, and this requires movement and spontaneous investigation.

Montessori children are free to move about, working alone or with others at will. They may select any activity and work with it as long as they wish, so long as they do not disturb anyone or damage anything, and as long as they put it back where it belongs when they are finished.

Freedom is a second critical issue as children begin to explore. Our goal is less to teach them facts and concepts, but rather to help them to fall in love with the process of focusing their complete attention on something and mastering its challenge with enthusiasm. Work assigned by adults rarely results in such enthusiasm and interest as does work that children freely choose for themselves.

The prepared environment of the Montessori class is a learning laboratory in which children are allowed to explore, discover, and select their own work. The independence that the children gain is not only empowering on a social and emotional basis, but it is also intrinsically involved with helping them become comfortable and confident in their ability to master the environment, ask questions, puzzle out the answer, and learn without needing to be “spoon-fed” by an adult.

#### Q: Is this approach still relevant to contemporary education?

**A.** Current brain-based research is verifying Dr. Montessori’s original ideas about how the human develops and how to support a child’s learning to her highest potential. Current education theorists support the aspects and outcomes of a Montessori education where the goal is to (1) assist children in becoming independent and adaptable to the changing circumstances of modern life and to (2) contribute to the cultivation of human beings who would work towards a more peaceful world.

The qualities of a young person who has grown up in a Montessori environment include: creativity, adaptability, and independence in both thinking and in managing one’s life, and a strong concern for and dedication to the future of humanity.

Students in a Montessori environment learn to be resourceful, to find the information they need when they need it. They learn to collaborate with others to find the best solutions to problems. They learn to speak their opinions and listen openly to the views of others. They speak with confidence in public, they apply their skills creatively, and they understand diplomacy. They comfortably work side-by-side with people of all ages.

**A.** Self-discipline develops through work that is motivated by interest, developmental need and community living. Montessori students engage in personally challenging and developmentally meaningful activity, through purposeful work. The child develops self-regulation through positive experiences, learning how to make choices, and to develop accountability for self, environment and community. From the very beginning, the child is given an appropriate amount of freedom within consistent and clearly defined limits. They are free to practice the skills of independence such as: social language, care of self and others, respect, supported by the nurturing guidance of trained adults when needed. The physical and temporal environments are also designed to support: order, respect, grace and courtesy, collaborative learning communities and positive attachments with their guides. Adaptation and independence naturally develop within the intentionally designed experience where joyful engagement is the goal.

Montessori children demonstrate a strong ability to be self-directed, empathetic and responsible members of their community.

#### Q: How do Montessori graduates do?

**A.** Because Montessori fosters the ability to pursue one’s interests in great depth, and to have strong commitment to one’s environment and community, many students are publicly known for their accomplishments and contributions. Many others are leading successful, fulfilled, and happy lives as responsible citizens contributing to their communities on seven continents around the world.

Some Montessori students who are publically recognized include:

- **Joshua Bell**, American violinist
- **Jeff Bezos**, founder of Amazon.com
- **Sergey Brin** and **Larry Page**, co-founders of Google
- **George Clooney**, Academy Award-winning actor
- **Julia Child**, first world-famous television chef
- **Katherine Graham**, owner-editor of *The Washington Post*
- **Prince William** and **Prince Harry**, sons of Charles, Prince of Wales
- **Helen Hunt**, Academy Award-winning actress
- **Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis**, former editor, former first lady
- **Will Wright**, designer of The Sims video games





## DAVID SEMMES

January 5, 1928–January 1, 2015

Father of MLMS 10-year veteran elementary teacher Deryn Semmes Winchester,  
Grandfather of MLMS graduates Brooke and Clayton Hatcher

David was involved in Mountain Laurel Montessori School for the last 15 years  
of his life, not only as a grandparent but also as a regular donor.

A well-loved equestrian in Rappahannock County,

David worked many years as an attorney in the CIA before retirement.

He always said he supported MLMS because the work of the school was the most  
important work in the world and the greatest contributor to world peace.