

## Sun and Stars Montessori School

# Philosophy

At Sun and Stars Montessori School, we believe that the partnership between family and school is the cornerstone upon which a child builds self-respect, joy, confidence and a sense of interconnectedness with others.

### **Our parents . . .**

We strive to strengthen the connections with our parents, through education, training, information sharing and interaction within the environment and in support of the school. Sun and Stars Parents recognize the importance that early years education plays in their child's future. With that knowledge, parents make a clear commitment to use their time and resources to the best of their ability, to support the students at Sun and Stars Montessori School.

### **Our families . . .**

We recognize the partnership between the child, the school and the family and strive to maintain a strong partnership on behalf of the child. We believe that the foundation for a successful future for children emanates from a supportive relationship between the school and family.

### **Our children . . .**

Montessori believed that as important as physical development is to life and the body, psychic development is to the mind and spirit of a child. Some define spirituality as 'the peace one feels with oneself and the outside world.

The spirituality of a child involves his or her heart and inner spirit. Appreciation for living things and understanding one's feelings and those of others, are concepts that can only be experienced through emotional nourishment, patience and unconditional love. At Sun and Stars, we believe that teaching children about the world – its practices, language and geography and how to respect those within it, will allow the child to embark on a journey which leads to tolerance and peace. This is our goal for the child. This is our vision, lived through and led by our children. This is our hope for the world.



## **Our approach . . .**

### **Child Directed / Child Responsive / Child Pro-Active Education**

Montessori believed that the teacher must follow the leadings and urgings of the child, in preparing curriculum. This means that the teacher must be present, listening to the interests within the classroom (Child-Directed Education), responding to the needs of the classroom (Child-Responsive Education) and being prepared to teach the things which will prepare the child for the future (Child Pro-Active Education).

A Montessori school is a place of constant, living education! Within the same month then, one might see a lesson on ladybugs, raising one's hand to speak, washing a table, the continent of Australia and the sounds of a, t and c. While some children may create a volcano, others are observing the habitat of an ant, preparing a dish, creating fractions using a tortilla or speaking Spanish.

It is the collective goal of the staff to respond to the inner urgings of the child, and the need to provide active education, in a way that captures the curiosity, and opens the door to an unquenched thirst for knowledge.

In a concrete learning environment, this also means that children will learn, but may not continually bring papers home. It is important that the parents learn about the materials in the environment that their child will use to facilitate their educational journey within a Montessori classroom.

## **Our support of individuals and families...**

As advocates of the child and family, we recognize the importance of supporting all families. Sun and Stars Montessori School does not discriminate on the basis of family composition, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, cultural or religious choices, differing ability, socioeconomic status, or age.



## **Education for Peace**

Our policies regarding curriculum and behavior are designed to reflect a spirit of inclusion, and something Montessori called “Education for Peace”. It is our hope to build

communities of children who will practice peace, understanding, and tolerance, which will break down barriers of injustice in the world.

We believe that peace needs to be taught and modeled in the classroom by teachers and in the home by parents. We encourage parents to set the example in the home, by refraining from including violent TV shows and inappropriate play at home. Our expectation is that children will use appropriate language and actions, and they may be sent home when there are problems of that nature.

### **Emphasis in Cultural Subjects**

Apart from our commitment to provide a real Montessori environment, Sun and Stars Montessori School enhances its curriculum to encompass what Montessori described as the full development of the child. At Sun and Stars Montessori School we do this with an emphasis in the arts and cultural subjects.

The curriculum includes cooking, gardening, art, music and movement. The children will use those talents and the education derived from the classroom to learn about their community and their world. This understanding may include sharing themselves through music or gifts with others around them.



The cultural curriculum is one that is ongoing throughout the school year, in which we focus on a different continent, highlighting specific countries. When we feel that there is a special topic that should be addressed, we may substitute that within our cultural curriculum.

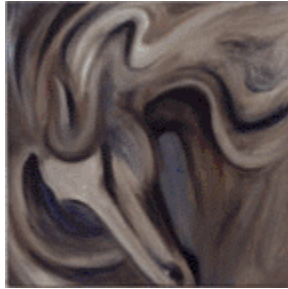
We may choose to focus on living creatures on our planet, including the sciences in our understanding of our world, to learn about animals, insects and other creatures.

We invite parents to make a presentation about the music, dance or art of a country, or to loan or donate photos, living creatures or artifacts for the classroom.

## **Emphasis in the Arts**

We believe an important component of a good educational institution is to provide programs of artistic, aesthetic and academic excellence while allowing the child to continue their journey for knowledge, personal expression, understanding, peacefulness and communication.

We feel that the arts can provide each student with a feeling of individual worth and importance, as well as compassion, understanding and respect for the worth and dignity of others.



We also feel that it is important that through the arts, the child will have an opportunity to beautify the world. We enjoy child centered art, and encourage parents to donate art ideas, assist us with framing child art for our walls, or assist us with a special art, dance activity or cooking project in class.

## **Our Goals for the Children that attend our Montessori school are:**

### **Fostering an abiding curiosity**

In a rapidly changing society, we will all be students at some time in our lives. A deep, persistent and abiding curiosity is a prerequisite for creative learning. By providing the child with opportunities to discover qualities, dimensions, and relationships amidst a rich variety of stimulating learning situations, curiosity is developed and an essential element in creative learning has been established.

### **Developing habits of initiative and persistence**

By surrounding the child with appealing materials and learning activities geared to his inner needs, he becomes accustomed to engaging in activities on his/her own. Gradually, this results in a habit of initiative – and essential quality in leadership. “Ground rules” call for completing a task once begun and gradually results in a habit of persistence and perseverance for replacing materials after the task is accomplished. This “completion expectation gradually results in a habit of persistence and perseverance.”

**Assisting each child in building a habit of concentration**

Effective learning presupposes the ability to listen carefully and to attend to what is said or demonstrated. Through a series of absorbing experience, the child forms habits of extended attention, thus increasing his ability to concentrate. For this reason, children will not be forced to participate in group activities such as art projects or in music times (circle) while actively engaged in other self-learning activities. Children who wish to continue doing quiet work during circle, for example, will be given the freedom to do so.

**Developing a positive attitude toward school**

Most learning activities are individualized because the child finds the activities geared to his needs and level of readiness. Consequently, he works at his own rate, repeating the task as often as he likes, thus experiencing a series of successful achievement. In this manner, he builds a positive attitude toward learning himself.

**Helping each child develop self confidence**

In the Montessori school, tasks are designed so that each new step is built upon what the child had already mastered, thus removing the negative experience of frequent failure. A carefully planned series of successes builds upon inner confidence in the child assuring her that she can learn by herself. These confidence building activities likewise contribute to the child's healthy emotional development.

**Fostering inner security and sense of order in the child**

Through a well ordered, enriched but simplified environment, the child's need for order and security is intensely satisfied. This is noticed in the calming effect the environment has on the child. Since every item in the Montessori classroom has a place and the ground rules call for everything in its place, the child's inner need for order is directly satisfied.