

Peace Presentation for Grandparents and Special Friends Day

The national political rhetoric, climate, and actions of the past year have been disturbing to me. I could have been thrown into a deep depression, finding it hard to get out of bed each day, were it not for what we are doing here at Hilltop Montessori School. The events in Charlottesville, just before the start of the school year, especially hit home, as I went to the University of Virginia, and therefore feel a familiarity and attachment to that town. And now there is the incident in Las Vegas, and the challenges in Puerto Rico, again emphasizing how people are viewed and treated differently, and the many challenges we face as a society.

I have gone back to Dr. Maria Montessori's writings and have been reminded of her motivations and discoveries. A hundred years ago she saw that the mechanized approach to education was designed to produce people who blindly followed leaders and allowed themselves to be controlled. She put forth the idea that children could be respected as individuals, given choices in what and how they learned, and be supported by caring adults who served as guides to an environment prepared for their learning. This approach supported children in developing independence along with a deep appreciation and understanding for the connectedness and community that they have with all people, with all living creatures, and with the world and universe. Montessori can be seen as an approach to education, but she also developed it as a methodology towards world peace. She evolved her ideas in the context of World War I and II, and was nominated several times for a Nobel Peace Prize. Many of her comments on education and peace resonate strongly today.

At Hilltop Montessori School, we "teach" peace in many contexts:

- self - developing inner peace and the skills to make peace with others
- environment - instilling an understanding and appreciation for the environment
- cultural - celebrating our differences and knowing our connectedness, compassion for all
- community - living our supportive interdependence

The role that Hilltop Montessori School is playing in supporting the development of responsible citizens, and striving towards peace has kept me going. This was the theme of the message I shared on Grandparent and Special Friend Day along with this **presentation**. I welcome any comments or reflections, by emailing [me](#) or stopping by anytime.

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