



Greensboro  
**Montessori**  
**School**

2018-19 SPRING



ISSUE 3





2018-19

## SPRING NEWSLETTER

With classroom routines long mastered, friendships firmly established, and warm days restored, spring was a joyous and dynamic time at Greensboro Montessori School. Our students brought enhanced attention and energy to their work, whether on our main campus or in the natural world on our 37-acre Land campus.



# CHARTING THE COURSE

The challenges of tomorrow's world will require today's students to be more than simply accomplished — they must think independently, act collaboratively, and weigh options compassionately and rationally. Our personalized and hands-on Montessori philosophy champions all of these abilities, while also instilling curiosity, a lifelong love of learning, and a deep respect for others and the world.

With 2018-19 being a reaccreditation year with the American Montessori Society and Southern Association of Independent Schools, we were afforded the opportunity to reflect on who we are as a school today and who we want to be tomorrow. Recent conversations with families, faculty, board of trustees, students, and alumni have all been valuable for our reaccreditation work. And after a year of reflection, we are proud to share with you our newly worded mission and vision statements and our School's long-range strategic plan. We are proud that when we took a closer look, we are both happy with who we are today and excited for where we are headed tomorrow.

Thank you for helping us chart our course forward.



Dr. Kevin Navarro  
Head of School

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## MISSION STATEMENT

We nurture and challenge students to develop the skills and courage they need to unleash their full potential.

## VISION STATEMENT

To provide the best personalized and hands-on educational experience for our students — one that empowers them to positively impact the world.



## LONG-RANGE PLAN

Lead by the board of trustees, three areas of long-term growth for the School have been identified. Goals, priorities, essential resources, and assessment mechanisms have been identified for each area. The cumulative objective of our long-range plan is to secure a healthy and strong future.

***Mission Advancement.*** In order to secure and continue to improve the excellence of our Montessori curriculum, we will direct our focus and resources to advance the School's mission in four specific ways:

1. Assuring curriculum excellence.
2. Articulating our value proposition internally and externally.
3. Developing and supporting faculty and staff professionally and personally.
4. Developing opportunities for increased family partnership.

***Campus Optimization.*** In order to effectively and proactively maintain and develop the indoor and outdoor prepared learning environments at our main and satellite campuses, we will direct our focus and resources to optimize our campuses in three specific ways:

1. Implementing a systems approach to campus management.
2. Designing preventative plans for deferred maintenance.
3. Identifying future infrastructure needs and necessary sources of funding.

***Financial Sustainability.*** In order to protect the financial integrity of the School, while also continuing to spend on curricular programming, we will direct our focus and resources to responsibly and sustainably manage the School's finances in four specific ways:

1. Conducting a growth capacity, tuition market, and enrollment management analysis.
2. Implementing systems for continued and future fiscal responsibility.
3. Identifying and cultivating fundraising opportunities and strategies.
4. Completing a risk and policy assessment.



# PRIMARY

## THE LIFE OF MARIA MONTESSORI

Our Primary 4 classroom began their studies of Dr. Maria Montessori early in the school year. They celebrated her 148th birthday on August 31, 2018, and they continued reading stories about her life well into spring. On May 5, 2019, the students presented a self-written play for their parents entitled “The Life of Maria Montessori.” Every student had a role, one which they had curated to their individual strengths and interests, just as Dr. Montessori would have envisioned.



# UPPER ELEMENTARY

## THE STAMP ACT OF 1765

“In Upper Elementary’s history class, fourth and fifth graders learned about the Stamp Act. We were asked to bring 50 cents to school. Each student used their 50 cents to pay for a sheet of 25 stamps. To show what the Stamp Act was like, we had to put a stamp on every assignment. If we did not put a stamp on the assignment, we would not get credit for it. Some students protested by making signs and putting them around the classroom, but they even had to put a stamp on the protests. We all had a lot of fun doing this.”

— Evelyn, Javi, and Isabella, fourth grade





# FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

On Tuesday, March 5, 2019, students from Lower Elementary hosted an evening presentation for our school community. This “Festival of Light” revealed how light is a unifying theme used around the world to commemorate holidays and cultural traditions. To prepare for their presentation, our first, second, and third graders formed teams, each researching one of 12 countries and its light-themed celebration. From there, they studied the history of the country, its culture, and its celebration of light. They learned about the country’s accomplishments, art, food, geography, religion, storytelling, traditions, and writings.

The day of the event, the students transformed the Gym into a multicultural wonderland. That evening, paper lanterns and twinkle lights provided a warm glow in the Gym, and authentic desserts from all 12 countries set the mood for the students’ presentations. All of their hard work was evident as they presented each celebration through a skit. The students’ sense of accomplishment shone as brightly as the luminaries that lit the pathways leading into the Gym.

To enjoy more moments from this day, visit [gms.org/festival-of-light](https://gms.org/festival-of-light).





# WORLD MUSIC

“Music is where it all comes together in learning. There’s language. There’s mathematics in your rhythms and your patterns. There’s culture. There’s geography. There’s teamwork, social skills, and listening skills.”

— Betsy Bevan, world music faculty

Beginning at 18 months old, students at Greensboro Montessori School receive weekly music lessons. Musical learning is enhanced by weekly singalongs in Primary and regular productions for our Elementary and Junior High students. This spring, students participated in two major productions. Primary students performed for their families and friends at the third annual Primary Winter Singalong on Friday, February 8, 2019. Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, and Junior High students came together for their Combined Spring World Music Concert on Monday, May 20, 2019.









# LEADING THE WAY

We believe our adolescent and preadolescent students are capable of accomplishing incredible things. Throughout the history of our Upper School (fourth through ninth grades), we have been confident in the strength of our program. And, we are always reflecting, growing, and evolving, in order to best meet our students' needs. Through this year's reaccreditation process, positive developments at The Land, and conversations with families and alumni, our faculty and staff have refined our vision of the Upper School program. We have identified many goals and dreams to make our program the best it can be and to help each child unleash their full potential.

A key strategic move to help us accomplish this growth was to create a new position and recruit a director of upper school. The director's main role will be to coordinate and lead the Upper Elementary and Junior High divisions, empowering our faculty to teach at their full potential and to do their best work.

On May 9, 2019, we named Ben Payne as our new director of upper school. Ben is the perfect guide to lead us through the next chapter of our Upper School's distinguished history. He comes to us with a wealth of teaching and leadership experience. His academic credentials and professional background will help him enhance the amazing work already happening at our School, like the integrated curricula, project-based learning, and experiential field trips described on the pages of this edition of our newsletter.

Ben and his wife, Amanda, have three girls, who will also join Greensboro Montessori School in the fall. Amanda is a forensic nurse and a leading advocate for asylum-seeking women. She plans to work as a nurse in Greensboro and pursue another advanced degree in her field.

To learn more about Ben, visit [gms.org/team/ben-payne](https://gms.org/team/ben-payne).





# INCA INTEGRATION

“Over the past couple of weeks, the Upper School has been learning about the Inca Empire. We have been involved in our study through a variety of subjects, including Spanish, art, and environmental education. In Spanish, we have been learning about the history of the empire and have recently made a quipu, an ancient method of recording information so that it could be passed between villages. We’ve also made models of the Inca infrastructure, such as their roadways and bridges. In art, we have made masks also using the geometric architecture style of the Incas. In environmental education, we have been learning about planting one of the staples of Inca agriculture, potatoes.”

— Andrew, seventh grade, and Joshua, eighth grade







# SHIITAKE SCIENCE

Junior High faculty and students recently partnered with North Carolina Agricultural and Technological State University (N.C. A&T) on a research project involving shiitake mushrooms. University researchers gave a presentation to our students on the history, growing, and uses of shiitake mushrooms. They also demonstrated the proper drilling, inoculation, and waxing of the white oak logs on which these mushrooms grow.

Our students are the first group of adolescents N.C. A&T has trained in shiitake mushroom production. The university gave us several different varieties of shiitake mushrooms, and our students will be tracking how each performs, in what seasons they fruit, and other specific data points, which we will relay back to university researchers. And because the logs will fruit for five to six years, future generations of Junior High students will benefit from this partnership with N.C. A&T.

To learn more about mushroom project, visit [gms.org/science-at-greensboro-montessori-school](https://gms.org/science-at-greensboro-montessori-school).





# CONSERVATION IN COSTA RICA

Riding along the Tortuguero Canal in the Parque Nacional Tortuguero, our eighth graders have little idea of the remarkable experience they will soon have ...

They are told there is no moon, so it will be very dark on the beach. They must stay close behind the guide as they walk the beach looking for a mother turtle who has come ashore to lay her eggs. When the first group of students goes out for the search, it's not long before they encounter a giant leatherback turtle, the world's largest sea turtle. They can actually hear her breathing as she works at digging the 3-foot-deep hole where she plans to deposit her eggs.

As she stops digging, the guide asks two of our students to hold each of her back flippers as preparation is made to catch her eggs in a bag, so they can be safely buried in a hatchery near the turtle research station. Once all the eggs are deposited into the bag, and before the turtle begins to cover the nesting hole, one student is asked to measure the length and width of the turtle. Another student is asked to measure how far the nest is from the ocean and how far the edge of the jungle is from the nest. Another student is recording the data on a chart to be used for research.

Each student has the opportunity to touch the leathery back of the turtle. Then the bag of eggs is tied to a long pole, and two students carry the pole back to the hatchery to be kept safe from predators, including poachers.

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As a culmination of their Spanish language studies, 12 eighth graders traveled to San José, Costa Rica in May of 2019 and stayed with host families from The Summit School.

To learn more about our 15-year partnership with The Summit School, visit [gms.org/cultural-immersion](https://gms.org/cultural-immersion).



# FACULTY FOCUS

As educators, we are always watching for chances to learn: observing students or other teachers, having that unexpected conversation with a colleague, or connecting with professionals and new theories through professional development — conferences, workshops, speakers, graduate classes, and Montessori certification. We spend significant resources on professional development because we believe our School is only as good as our faculty and staff are.

This summer, three of our teammates will deepen their understanding of Montessori education, expand their knowledge of childhood development, and further refine their teaching and leadership skills. Stacy Cosson, Tim Goetz, and Dr. Kevin Navarro will attend Montessori training for their respective roles at our School. Their educational experiences are made possible, in part, by funds raised through the 2019 Green & White Bash, which added over \$18,000 to the School's budget for professional development for faculty and financial assistance for students.



**STACY COSSON** will continue her early childhood Montessori certification from the Center for Guided Montessori Studies. The 18-month program includes rigorous online coursework, a 120-hour summer session in Morrisville, North Carolina, followed by a nine-month practicum. Stacy will graduate in the summer of 2020.



**TIM GOETZ** will continue his secondary teacher Montessori certification from the Center for Guided Montessori Studies. This 20-month program includes participation in an online cohort of adult learners, two summer sessions in Morrisville, North Carolina, and a nine-month practicum. Tim will graduate in the fall of 2020.



**DR. KEVIN NAVARRO** will begin his Montessori administrator credential at the Center for Montessori Education in New Rochelle, New York. The 16-month program includes four weeks in-residence in New Rochelle, combined with a practicum and case study at our School during the 2019-20 school year. Kevin will graduate in the summer of 2020.





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## SAVE THESE DATES

### **GMS AT THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM** MONDAY, JULY 15, 2019

Join us for this free, relaxed, summer get-together hosted exclusively for Greensboro Montessori School. We'll have the Greensboro Children's Museum to ourselves from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Look for more details hitting your inbox soon.

### **ALUMNI BBQ** TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2019

Our annual Alumni BBQ will celebrate the classes of 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015. This evening event will bring together our college-aged alumni community for reminiscing and reconnecting. We'll send a formal invitation in early August.

### **GMS AT THE HOPPERS** FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 2019

Join Greensboro Montessori School for the Grasshoppers game and FANomenal Friday Fireworks on Friday, August 16. The game begins at 7 p.m., and we'll have a block of tickets in section 109. We'll launch ticket sales with our group pricing in early August.

### **CLASSROOM OPEN HOUSES** TUESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2019

Our classroom open houses are designed for enrolled families to visit their classrooms before the first day of school. We invite all current families to visit campus Tuesday, August 20 anytime between 9 to 11 a.m. We look forward to hosting you.

### **FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL** WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2019

The first day of the 2019-20 school year is Wednesday, August 21, and it is a half day for all classrooms, with All-Inclusive CASA open until 6 p.m. We will follow this schedule for the first three days of school to allow for afternoon Parent-Teacher Conferences.

### **FALL FESTIVAL** SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2019

Welcome one and all to our largest gathering of the year. Plan to join our community for a fun-filled afternoon on our athletic field. We'll have activities for the whole family, including inflatables, games, music, face painting, food, Maria's Market, arts and crafts, and more!