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# CORNERSTONE

MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



## Fall 2020 Newsletter

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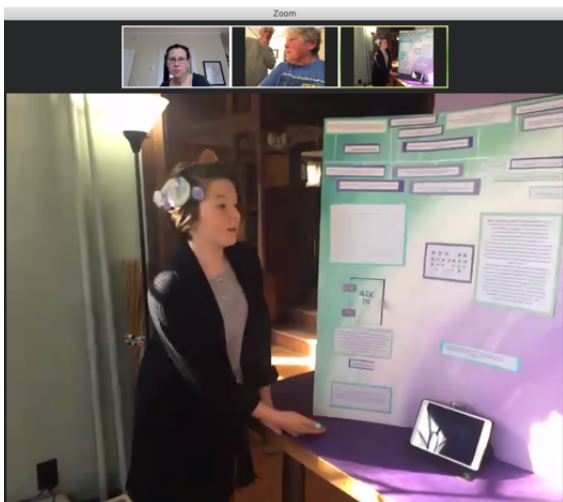
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## Mission Statement

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School's mission is to support children from culturally and economically diverse backgrounds living in or near St. Paul's East Side through a rigorous and high-impact Montessori program that empowers them to make positive decisions, develop self-discipline, and create a true sense of responsibility for themselves and others in their community.

## Moving Forward



When we released our last newsletter in February, we had no idea how much and how quickly our world would be changing. Everyone – teachers, administrators, parents, staff – scrambled



We continue to seek input from our Cornerstone families, especially through our monthly survey. And we never stop looking for ways to create new and meaningful learning experiences for our Cornerstone children.

to comply with the sweeping scope of “distance learning.”

Now well into the new school year, distance learning is, at least for now, the norm at Cornerstone and most other schools in the state and the nation. We are building on strategies and processes that worked and discarding - but learning from - those that didn't in the spring.

We are extremely grateful to Head of School Alyssa Schwartz and all of the Cornerstone staff for their extraordinary efforts to creatively and effectively do their jobs under challenging and rapidly changing circumstances. Their flexibility and ability to pivot quickly has been amazing! Supporting their efforts is critical to helping our students and our community at this challenging time.

## From Our Children



We did not get a chance earlier this year to acknowledge our June graduates! The comments below are just a few from Cornerstone children graduating from sixth grade, as well as those transitioning from Lower to Upper Elementary – they are so inspiring and heart-felt.

- “Cornerstone is so awesome because they take you in when you really don't want to go to school and let you realize there is nothing to be scared of...”
- “I want to thank people at Cornerstone for just being here...I want to change the world!”
- “Montessori produces really smart children. The people there are just so kind and helpful!”
- “...this close-knit school community helped me see the importance of doing challenging and complex work...”
- “I hope I can inspire the world in a

good way!”

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## Equity

The killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis reverberated around the world this summer. The CMES Board’s three-year Strategic Plan launched in the Fall of 2019 included “Equity” as one of four key initiatives (along with Access, Community and Sustainability). The Board and staff continue to seek meaningful ways to open our eyes to institutional biases both within and outside of our school, and to find solutions that will help our children and our community grow and thrive together.

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## Distance Learning

Distance learning changed our approach to Montessori, as parents, friends and siblings became an even greater part of our children’s daily work. We are so grateful to the family members who are helping children access their online learning content, practice reading and math facts, and assist our staff in guiding the children in a new and unexpected way. Early in distance learning, Liesl Taylor, our Director of Elementary Pedagogy, shared with parents opportunities for children to recognize the value of hard work – an important part of Montessori education. Thanks to Liesl Taylor for this contribution:

“Often children immediately seek adult approval...We instead want to emphasize the value of hard work and growth and an intrinsic sense of well-being from having worked hard. [So you could say to your child:]

- “I noticed how long you concentrated. That must have felt so satisfying.”
  - “You stuck with it even after you became frustrated; that kind of approach will take you so far...”
  - “You really embraced that mistake as an opportunity to learn something new.”
  - “That was a struggle. I struggled with my work today, too – we know we grow our brains every time we struggle. Let’s take a break and come back to this with more energy.”
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## Donate to Cornerstone



CMES is grateful for the donations we receive from individuals and foundations who truly value education and our school community. Unlike other public school districts, charter public schools cannot issue bonds to raise money for needed projects, so we depend on you, our friends and supporters, to help out. Here are some things from our wish list that may guide your giving:

- \$10,000 would allow us to hire a consultant to conduct an equity audit of our school or to offer an additional 100 hours of social work to our children;
- \$5,000 would help us pay for materials (like fraction wheels to help with math!) for children to have in their homes to help enhance distance learning, or allow us to send ten staff members to the AMI/USA Refresher Course;

If you or someone you know would like to donate to CMES, just click the **DONATE** button below which takes you to GIVEMN to process, or just write us a check made out to “Cornerstone Montessori Elementary.” **And please remember Cornerstone Montessori Elementary on “Give to the Max” day, Thursday, November 19, 2020! It is a chance to add to your own contribution through hourly**

- \$25, \$50, \$100 or more would help fill our library with culturally responsive and inclusive books or buy winter clothes for some of our children. Our library is used even (or especially!) during distance learning.

**drawings and special events.** (For more information go to [www.givemn.org](http://www.givemn.org).)

DONATE NOW

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## From Maria Montessori

*When individuals develop normally, they plainly feel a love not only for things, but for all living creatures...Love is not the cause but the effect of normal development in the individual.*

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