

Dear Cornerstone Families,

Welcome to the 2023-24 school year! We are excited to see you and your children back with us on August 30, for the Back to School Fair, and on September 6, for the first day of school. I apologize for sending this long email - we have a lot to share with you after a busy summer of preparations.

Staffing Updates

The summer always brings some unexpected shifts in which of our staff will be returning to Cornerstone.

In Children's House 1, Anna Davis has decided to move to a position closer to family. Megan Green, our Trained Assistant this past year, will take on the Lead Guide role. In addition to her 3-6 AMI training, Megan has a Master's degree from St. Catherine University in Montessori Education and an Elementary teaching license. Claudia Vasquez will return to CH1 in the Trained Assistant role, following her recent completion of the 3-6 AMI Diploma Course.

We are also sorry to say goodbye to Kendra Hunding. Our new Math Specialist will be Kaitlyn Burgess. Kaitlyn has experience teaching social-emotional learning, science, and 4th grade. She recently completed her MA in Early Childhood Education and holds a BS in Elementary Education from UW-River Falls. Kaitlyn is excited to lead our Girls on the Run program (more below!) and we are excited to have her.

Sara Wade, our fabulous Garden Guide, has been accepted into the AMI Training of Trainers program! This is a tremendous opportunity for Sara, and one that is not easily achieved. As part of her preparation, Sara will be completing the 3-6 Montessori training this school year, just next door at the Montessori Center. Sara will be with the children each morning and will step out for the afternoon. We are fortunate to have five Cornerstone staff currently completing their AMI elementary training; Garden children will be in good (and qualified) hands for the duration of the school day.

On a much smaller scale, we are delighted that Antje Veit, our school social worker, has a phone number of her own! She can be reached by text or phone call at 651-895-3571. She is also, of course, available by email at antjeveit@cornerstone-elementary.org or by calling the school number (651-774-5000).

Before and After Care

Both CMS and CMES will have before care starting at 7:30am this year. If your child is in 1st-6th grade, please contact [Lindsay Ruble](#) to register. There are no space limitations at this time for elementary.

Children in kindergarten are able to enroll in the Children's House before care program. Please note that space is very limited and we may not be able to accommodate registrations after the first day of school. In addition, there is a fee for the program, due to the need to maintain

certain ratios. Please contact [Catherine Kennedy](#) or me if you have any questions or would like to register.

After care for kindergartners is also available through CMS, until 5:30pm and for a fee. Again, space is limited; please reach out right away if you would like your child to be enrolled. All children at CMES, K-6th, are also able to register for KidzTyme at the Conway Center. This free program is available to families through independent registration. If you enroll your child and would like them to be on the bus list for the Conway Center, please notify Chris Bewell.

The start time for both schools this year will be 9:00. Children arriving prior to 8:45 must be registered for before care.

In order to allow all Cornerstone staff to participate in the Embracing Equity Training Cohort (more below), after-care at CMS will end at 4:30pm on October 30, December 4, and January 29. We apologize for any inconvenience and appreciate your understanding of this important experience for our teaching staff.

Girls on the Run

We shared in the spring the possibility of bringing Girls on the Run to Cornerstone, and we are delighted to see it happen! If your child, in 3rd-6th grade, would like to participate, please reach out to Lindsay Ruble.

CMES Equity Committee

The CMES Board of Directors approved the establishment of an Equity Committee to support Cornerstone in its efforts to be an anti-racist institution. If you would like to participate on the committee, or have any questions, please contact Sarah Stocco at sarahstocco@cornerstone-elementary.org or speak with her at our Back to School Fair.

As part of our ongoing equity work, Catherine Kennedy, Jess Goff, and I have begun participation in the Embracing Equity Leadership Residency. We meet with skilled facilitators and school leaders from around the country monthly to address particular problems of practice in our organization. The work this year is focused primarily on supporting staff, through training and team-building. In addition, all staff at both CMS and CMES will be completing 10 hours of professional development in anti-racist training cohorts, also through [Embracing Equity](#). We are excited to move forward in our commitment to center equity and justice at Cornerstone and look forward to realizing this effort.

Safe Learning Plan

Covid, while much less of a concern, is still an ongoing presence in our community. Cornerstone's Safe Learning Plan for 2023-24 can be found at our website, [here](#). If you would like to provide any feedback, we are taking comments until August 14.

Lead Testing in Water

New legislation requires that we notify families of lead testing in school drinking water, which must take place every five years at minimum. This year we will be testing the water in all of our drinking sources. If there is lead found, you will be notified immediately. If nothing is found, we will simply post an update on our website. Please review your Parent Handbook (available at our Back to School Fair on August 30) for details of our policy.

Request for Trees

If you are trimming or cutting down trees in your yard this summer/fall, we would love to take them off your hands! Please contact Jessari at jessari@mtcm.org to arrange a drop-off or pick-up.

White Bear Parade

Cornerstone was invited to participate in the White Bear Avenue Parade on September 16 at 11:00. If you are interested in walking as a group, and/or can organize representation, let us know by August 21. We'd love to see families participate!

Picture Day

Photos at this year's Back to School Fair will be taken by Slow Road Photo. Below is some information from them about how to maximize your experience:

Hello, Cornerstone Montessori Families! We are so delighted to be joining you for Picture Day this fall.

Picture Day with Slow Road Photo is a little different, in all the best ways! Get ready for the BEST PICTURE DAY EVER!

- School pictures will be happening at the Back To School Night on August 30th! [Click HERE](#) to sign up for your student's picture time!
- Be sure to add hello@slowroadphoto.com to your email contacts to ensure you receive all the communications and info from us. You will hear from us directly via email on August 24th.
- Please feel free to check out the resources available on our website, including our [Welcome Message](#) and [Parents' Guide](#).
- If you have any questions regarding Picture Day or image ordering and delivery, please don't hesitate to reach out to us directly at hello@slowroadphoto.com.

Thank you for reading all the way through! We can't wait to see everyone at the Back to School Fair on August 30 and on the first day of school September 6!

Alyssa