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CORNERSTONE

MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Fall 2022 Newsletter

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Off to a Great Start!

We are now well into our 2022-23 school year with parent/teacher conferences right around the corner! After smoothing out a few hiccups with buses and meals at the start of the year, things are running smoothly. We continue to navigate Covid-related health and safety issues daily, including masking (now optional) and quarantine/isolation. We so appreciate the support and efforts of all of our families and school community in keeping everyone healthy and safe!



Staffing Update

We are proud to note that CMES was able to retain 100% of its staff this summer, in spite of the Covid-19 pandemic! Many public schools have reported significant staffing losses as the pandemic wore on, and the nationwide teacher shortage is well publicized. We are grateful for the leadership of our Head of School, Alyssa Schwartz, and for the dedication of our entire Cornerstone team in serving our students. Thank you!



Two positions at CMES did need to be filled: a math specialist and a social worker. These positions have proven to be critical to the academic success of CMES students, over the last four years. We're pleased to report the positions have been filled and we are quickly getting back on track! Providing targeted math intervention for children and mental health supports are both critical to our goals of meeting every child's needs and serving the whole child.

After School and Summer Programs



Children enrolled at CMES this year have been invited to participate in the free [KidzTyme after school program](#) at the Conway Rec Center. We very much appreciate the partnership with the Sanneh Foundation in reserving spaces for our children; we know how hard it can be for families to find constructive and fun activities after school hours.

And speaking of constructive and fun, we had great success with our CMES summer programs in 2021 and 2022! The programs were led by licensed teachers, with AMI training where possible, and served about 90 children each summer. Activities included writing plays and going to a local theater, and learning the history of bread and visiting a local bakery! While these programs were funded with Covid-relief money, we are applying for grants to continue this success next summer.

Ongoing Initiatives

The CMES Board of Directors continues to work through two important initiatives via two separate task forces.

The Equity and Inclusion Task Force completed the first phases of its assignment, hiring a consulting firm to inventory our current school environment through an equity lens. The next step will be to provide a summary of findings, along with steps we can take right now and steps we will take over a longer period of time to achieve our vision of an equitable, diverse and inclusive environment. Presentation to the community is anticipated for December, 2022.

The School Expansion Task Force is looking at various other schools that have added grades 7 and 8 to their curriculum. The Task Force is assessing the need, as well as the financial and physical feasibility, of adding these grades to CMES. The Task Force is also looking at whether an additional K-3 level should be added. A time-frame for these decisions is being developed.

Give to the Max!

Like most public schools, we rely on grants and gifts to help us provide special programs and resources for our children. This year, CMES is hoping to raise \$4,000 to continue funding for a [COMPAS Artist in Residence](#). COMPAS is a non-profit arts organization bringing art and artists to the community. We have been able to use Covid funds to bring an artist into our classrooms once each month and OUR KIDS LOVE IT! We can continue this program with your help!

Giving is super easy! Go to www.givemn.org, scroll down to “Donate” and look for CMES. In addition to your donation, \$500 can be contributed to CMES if you win one of the random drawings that take place every 15 minutes on November 17th. There is also a random drawing for \$500 each day from November 1–16. Spread out your donation for more chances to win!

Whether you give \$5 or \$500, we are grateful for your gift in any amount.



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