

DECEMBER ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS ~ Emily and Katie Yosh



WESTMONT DAYS



Katie entered the Westmont halls as a quiet toddler of 2 years old. An observer and thinker, Katie blossomed in the toddler classroom, coming alive in her counting and scooping work. We knew Westmont was a perfect fit for Katie when we'd pick her up from the toddler playground and she'd hide from us because she didn't want to leave. We chose The Westmont Montessori School for Katie because we believed in the Montessori approach to early childhood education. What we didn't know but soon learned was the value Westmont brought to that approach. Westmont became a home for Katie. This was a good thing for us; I was pregnant with Katie's younger sister, Emily, during Katie's first year at Westmont. When Emily came along, I depended on Westmont to be that nurturing and caring environment for Katie when I needed those extra few hours with my newborn. Westmont was like family; when I needed help, I knew Katie was in a place where the entire staff treated her like their own child.

Emily came along in 2011, and it wasn't long before we knew we had a child with a very different personality on our hands. Accustomed to an introverted child in our Katie, we had to quickly adjust to our extroverted, never-sit-still, fearless Emily. We knew Westmont would be just right for Emily, too, as she would be able to spread her wings in an environment that encourages a child's individuality yet offers the discipline of learning and growing alongside children of different ages and energy levels. Emily blossomed in the practical life area of her classroom and loved to do counting work, which, like Katie, developed her math skills. Still, her favorite times were had on the playground where she never stopped running and smiling.

Katie and Emily, now 8 and 6, are happy and successful in their respective classes at St. Joseph School in Mendham. Both girls study tae kwon do and are currently red belts gearing up for their brown belt promotion test. The self-confidence and discipline they gained in their early years at Westmont is undoubtedly on display when they're kicking, punching, and breaking boards. Katie is excelling in math and STEM, and was one of only three students in her class chosen to attend a one-day enrichment program in Morristown for students who have a natural ability for mathematics. We attribute her love for math to her early days at Westmont, where STEM-related activities were nestled in the classroom in the most unique ways, and where Katie was encouraged to choose the work that spoke to her. Emily's teacher has told us that she is a "natural leader" both in the classroom and on the playground where she is nurturing and encouraging other students to get involved and join in the "fun." Always there to give you a smile, Emily thoroughly enjoys school and is eager to participate in all that the teacher introduces. This love for exploring new ideas and Emily's passion to bring her friends together is something we know she acquired from her Westmont days. When asked today what they remember about Westmont, the girls will rattle off their work in the classroom with big smiles and enthusiastic descriptions.

Today, when I drive passed Westmont, my heart tingles with pride and joy. I can still see their little faces with big smiles running to me on the pick-up line. We will cherish the memories of our Westmont years forever. And, if you ask me to think about those days a bit longer, you may see tears well up in my eyes. Those precious, magnificent, and life-shaping days for our daughters in the walls of The Westmont Montessori School are forever in our hearts.

Written by parents, Gail & Bill Yosh

