



"PEACE LIKE A RIVER"

What an amazing start we had to our year. Whilst we still have some transitional tears, they dissipate when the children enter the classrooms. Our returning students are eagerly finding their way into new work and, although tentative at times, our new students are finding their rhythm and settling into a comfortable routine. Much of this is due to the peaceful prepared environment, and the great patience extended to every child every day.

Our theme for our school this year is "Peaceful Living", and what a great way to launch it by participating in the United Nations International Peace Day on September 22. On that day, our children joined with children across the globe and sang songs of peace that went on for 24 hours across different time zones. We witnessed a beautiful show of community spirit as the children gathered on the playground, joined hands in song, blew bubbles for peace and placed their individual painted rocks on our new Peace Rock River, inspired by the song *Peace Like a River* and Mrs. Fink. Ironically, the United Nations theme for this year is "Together for Peace, Respect and Dignity for All," a perfect companion theme for our school.

Our children know that peace is celebrated every day not just on one day of the year. Inherent in our philosophy is the culture of grace and courtesy. Dr. Montessori, having experienced the Second World War, believed that peace was the work of education and developed a peace curriculum. Every day our children are expected to interact respectfully with their peers, their teachers and their environment. All our classrooms have peace tables or peaceful places where our children can reflect, calm their minds and bodies and regroup. We utilize a Peace Rose to facilitate children finding their voice and using words to solve conflicts. Lessons include instruction on social graces. We role model respect and kindness, we show empathy and sympathy and hold community meetings to discuss social issues at their level. We teach children to be fair, to be kind, to be helpful, to be patient and to be tolerant. We give them the words they need to express their feelings and declare peace.

We look forward to growing our peace rock river in the days to come as our toddlers complete and place their painted rocks. We know that our children are well on their way to being ambassadors for peace. Kindness is contagious and a smile can light up a room. Like a river that meanders to the sea, our children's peaceful acts can permeate our world. Here's to a peaceful future for all!

Colette