

## **The Gift of Growth**

Dear Parents,

Welcome back and welcome aboard! I cannot wait to see you all! What a wonderful summer of growth and development for our school both inside and out. Our summer camp was a great success providing us the opportunity to see many of you and your children where they experienced “Montessori in the summer.” Our Alumni Junior Camp Counselors added a spark of big brothers and big sisters to our young campers and reminded us of the amazing passage of time. Their transformations from young students at Westmont to leadership roles at Westmont was a wonder to behold. This, of course, provided a glimpse into the endless possibilities awaiting our young students in the years to come.

Another summer highlight included the refurbishment of our all-time favorite train on the large playground. You may recall we targeted our Ray of Light Annual Fund to replace the train at an estimated enormous cost. Thanks to the research and due diligence of our Board Vice Chair and alum parent Dan O’Donnell, we discovered we could purchase the necessary replacement parts and, by so doing, were able to apply more of our funds to classroom materials including a new smart board for our Kindergarten students. The train looks beautiful and new and is ready to be boarded by all our junior engineers. Thank you for your support of this endeavor.



Within our school, we had the pleasure of seeing Auris Vanderbilt and Amanda Fink rise to new positions on our administrative team, as Assistant Head of School and Curriculum Coordinator, respectively. As my summer correspondence explained, they both fit our immediate needs perfectly and we are delighted to use their talents, passion and expertise for the growth of our school and, of course, their professional growth. I am pleased to inform you that they have already made great inroads in their new roles; we are ready for the great Westmont journey ahead.

Our new Early Childhood classroom is ready for its students thanks to the loving and detailed preparation by Ms. Suzy Lombardi. We are pleased to welcome Mrs. Meredith McGuire to assist Suzy this year. We also welcome Mrs. Stephanie Cuzzo as Mrs. Sullivan’s morning assistant, (Stephanie was our afternoon sub and lunch/recess assistant last spring) and known to many of the children. Ms. Susan Ray, a Montessori certified teacher, will also join us and assume the role of morning substitute.

As I read over your goals for your children recently, I saw why our partnership works so well. You want your children to be individuals, to develop at their own pace, to grow socially, emotionally, physically and academically, to be kind and caring individuals who feel good about themselves. That pretty much describes our philosophy of education. And as one of our new parents who happens to be a former Kindergarten student of mine said to me, “My mom said I blossomed here, so I know my children will too.”

What a legacy and like our Facebook posting said, “we are ready.” Here’s to the best year yet for the Westmont Community!

Colette