

February 2020

New Westminster Montessori Society

RAISING LEADERS OF THE FUTURE

Annual General Meeting

You are invited to attend the NWMS AGM on
Wednesday February 26th

at

6:30 pm

at

Waves Coffee House

@ 6th & 6th (Uptown New West)

We encourage parents who have children enrolled in the Montessori program to participate and join the society. We have volunteer positions available to fill this year. In order for the Montessori program to continue in the public school system we need dedicated parents like you.

WHO IS QUALIFIED TO JOIN THE NWMS?

A parent who has a child enrolled in the Montessori program

Someone with an interest in people

A person with good communication skills

A parent interested in our community

INTERVIEW WITH A MONTESSORI KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

Ms Codesmith, you are known and respected within our community as a very talented teacher. It is interesting to know how people end up doing what they are doing. I am wondering how you first became interested in Montessori education and teaching in general?

Ever since I was a teenager, I was interested to work with children. I was a camp counsellor for a few summers. A number of years later after going to university, I had a couple of jobs working with students. One of the jobs was as a lunch supervisor at an elementary school and my afternoon job was working at a community center running childrens' programs. One day we had an open house for other community center employees to see our centre. I met a teacher who had just completed the Montessori Teacher program in Toronto. I had always been thinking that perhaps I could be a teacher and she suggested I look into the course. It was summer 1984 and the course started that September. I had heard about Montessori so was intrigued to learn about it. As they say, the rest is history. I attended the course for a year and became a Montessori teacher.

Working with Kindergarten students, what do you find most challenging? What do you find most rewarding (or love most)?

It is very rewarding to teach a group of kindergarten students. It is especially amazing to see the various ways in which they learn and go about their activities. I am always so pleased to see their faces light up when they have grasped a new concept or been able to do something on their own. It is music to my ears when I hear a little voice say, "I did this all by myself." The challenging aspect of working with K students is that they all come into the class in September with various backgrounds and school experience. It is hard work to teach the routines, the expectations of working in the classroom, and how to work on their own or with others. Focusing and listening skills are big events for little ones. However, after 6 to 8 weeks, it is amazing to be able to step back and watch them all work in the classroom as a community.



How do you cope with handling that many students and their numerous needs being the only teacher for that class?

With a class of 20 children, they begin to learn patience if they have to wait a minute or two for me to come and see their work. The children become more independent and able to do things for themselves though they know they can ask for help when needed. I also rely on the students to work with and/or learn from other students. They are learning that each one of them makes up the large group and they begin to understand what it means to be a community together.

Children are unique individuals who learn at different paces and may not be likely to master the exact same concept or have the same interests at the same time. As the child interacts with their activities, it is amazing to see the learning taking place.

How would you concisely describe the Montessori Program to a person who is completely unaware of the method?

The Montessori program offers students the opportunity to engage in activities that are of interest to them at a particular time. Children learn through their senses and the Montessori activities invite the child to touch and work with activities to master skills in various curriculum areas. Individualized learning enables the student to gain focusing skills, independence and confidence. There is joy in the classroom when the students are engaged and working,

There is a lot of choice built into the program within the structure of the classroom. Students make their own choices and can work with an activity as often as they like.

Do you usually have all the funding needed to support all Montessori students for learning e.g. Field Trips?

I am always amazed and appreciative of the work the New Westminster Montessori Society does to raise funds for the Montessori classrooms. Also a big thank you to the parents who support and give their time and donations to the Society.



What is your style of teaching for the kids?

Most people know me as a firm and fair, yet kind and dedicated teacher. I make sure the expectations are set in the classroom at the start of the year. The students know that there are always choices to be made at school, as in life. Basically, they become aware of what they need to do and that when mistakes happen it is a process from which to learn.

Could you give a couple of examples of projects that they are doing?

We do a few inquiry-based projects in the second term on hibernation and in the third term, we engage in a study about frogs. Other projects that come to mind are various science experiments that will occur in the classroom.

Is there a special thing you do with them?

I love to dance! So we have been doing some aerobic dance workouts as part of our daily physical activities. We also like to sing as a class.

When was the first time you felt proud as a teacher?

Such a difficult question to answer as I have many moments of feeling proud as the days, months and years of being a teacher go by. I do remember as a first year teacher working with another teacher and a class of 40 students ages three through six. It was sometimes challenging to get their attention. I will always remember my colleague saying to me that getting the students to focus is all in the tone and level of your voice. I tried to have a lower more calm tone of voice during a circle time and I was so amazed that it worked. Class management is key in having students ready to listen and learn which in turn leads them toward being successful and proud of their own achievements. I was so proud of myself that day long ago. In fact, I am proud of all of my achievements as a teacher over the last 35 years! In addition, just recently I was pleased and proud to have two students from my first class at McBride 2007/08 come to pay a visit. I was so touched that they remembered their days with me in Kindergarten.

Devon Codesmith currently teaches Kindergarten at Richard McBride Elementary School in New Westminster

Interview by Chelsea Ezeagwuna



New Westminister Montessori Society

What is the New Westminister Montessori Society?

We are parent volunteers and our purpose is to provide additional funding to promote the Montessori approach to education and child development within the New Westminister School District. We are a non-profit society and we are hoping you will join us.

NWMS MEETINGS

You are invited to attend the NWMS meetings on:

Wednesday, February 26, 2020

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

Wednesday, June 24, 2020

Meetings are held at

Waves Coffee House 599 6th St., Uptown New Westminister

At 6:30pm

For more information:

Visit our website <http://newwestmontessori.ca>

Email: newest.montessori.society@gmail.com

Find us on Facebook [New Westminister Montessori Society](#)

