



Nightingale Notes

January 2019

February

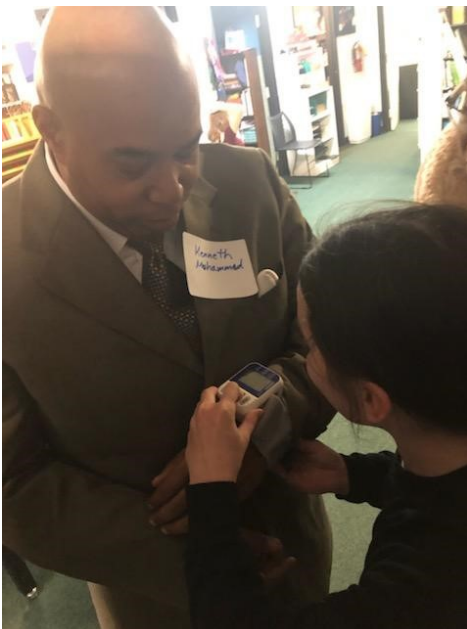
- 4 Schuster Presentation with *Owls* at NM
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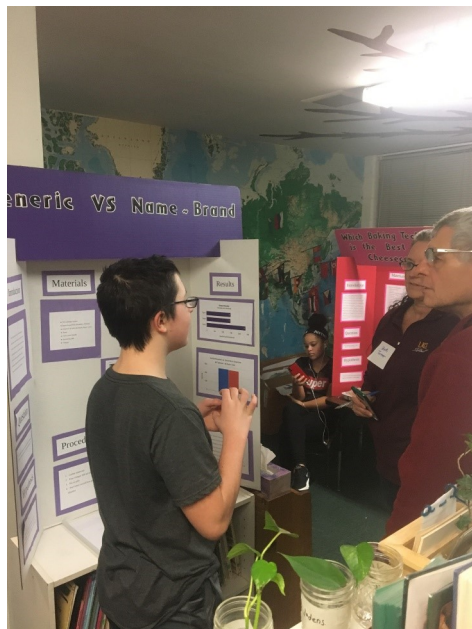
- 2 Cincinnati Montessori Society Conference
- 21-22 **No School - Waiver Day**
- 21-24 American Montessori Society Conference
Washington DC
- 28 **Owl and Chickadee Farm Day**

A Big Thanks to Our Volunteer Judges for Coming to Hear 50 Presentations!

John Derr, parent of *Eagle, Olympia, Owl, Lola and Falcon, Penelope.*
 Nathan Burns, parent of *Eagles, Luke and Daniel*
 Michelle McWhorter, parent of *Eagles, Olivia and Evan*
 Karen Faust, NM Newsletter Editor
 Jesse Genetin, parent of *Alumna, Alisha*
 Beth Turner, Aunt of *Chickadee, Romeo*
 Melissa Groveman, parent of *Owl, Jeremy*
 Curt Orahood, Domestic Partner, Head Chef Stephanie W.
 Kira Phillips, NM Alumna
 Cindy Sandlin, grandmother of *Hummingbird, Leo, Chickadee, Lucy, Eagles, Eli, Ella, Charlie and Rylee*
 Jacob Siemer, husband of Owl teacher, Cristina
 William Price, Central State University Science Professor
 Rich Begel, parent of *Owl, Jeremy*
 Carolyn Kimbro, parent of Owl teacher and **NM Alumna, Alicia**
 Kenneth Muhammad, Graphic Design
 Shae Smith, Resource Officer for Dayton Public Schools



Science Fair judge takes his pulse.



Brandon shares his findings with the judges.



Jasmine presents to the judges.

2019 Science Fair

New Additions



The new year brought a new addition to the **Hummingbird and Chickadee** classrooms. We would like to officially welcome **Kasey Hamman** to our team! **Kasey** has over 15 years of experience working with preschool age children. **Kasey** works with the **Chickadees** in the morning and the **Hummingbirds** in the afternoon. She has enjoyed

getting to know all the students and looks forward to continuing to watch them grow!

Sarah Sandlin, parent of **Eagles, Eli and Ella**, has joined the **Chickadee and Owl** teams 2 days a week. **Sarah** brings many talents but currently she shares her love of the outdoors and math as she works in the **Chickadee Courtyard** and helps **Owl** students memorize their addition and multiplication facts.



2019-2020 Registration Deadlines!

If you will be applying to attend NM for the school

year 2019-2020 please have all registration paperwork submitted by the date that corresponds to your child's program:

Jon Peterson Scholarship - Deadline: February 4, 2019
Autism Scholarship - Deadline: February 15, 2019
Ed Choice and Expansion Scholarships - Deadline: February 28, 2019 (Those applying for financial assistance for Ed Choice applications are available in office. Families will be responsible for form and mailing it to ODE)
Tuition - Deadline: March 8, 2019

If you have siblings that will be joining us (new) this fall please call immediately to obtain all needed documents and to secure a spot on the waitlist. **Students on the waitlist will move to the enrollment list after the final deadline of March 8, 2019.**

All Financial Documents are YOUR RESPONSIBILITY and you will need to communicate directly with the Ohio Department of Education. NM can provide a copy of the Income Verification Form upon request.

Thank You!

Capital Campaign Donations:

Dr. Huma Bashir, parent of Alumni, **Hira, Humza and Hafsa**, donated \$5000 and is actively working on our Capital Campaign Committee!

Jim Hilborn, Capital Campaign Consultant pledges \$100 a month for 3 years! He truly believes in our mission!

Mr. Ross McGregor and Dr. Cathy Crompton chose us as one of their charity contributions and donated \$500!

Robert Tolliver, brother of staff member, **Sandra Gibson** donated \$500

Christina Walters, mother of **Eagle, Gianna**. donated \$600
100% **NM Staff Support** with Pledge Amount totaling \$11,085

Microsoft, current employer of **Alum, Cole Taylor**, now lists us as an official charity and has started accumulating some donations.

An Anonymous **Facebook Donation** of \$650

Thanks for the Support

Big thanks to **D Rea and Kaci King**, parents of **Wing, Austin**, for bringing their farm skid loader to remove our latest big pile of snow quickly and easily at the 2525 N. Limestone location!

Big thanks to **Marilyn Riley** for sharing her winning discount on a **Tower Garden** for **NM** (see article and picture in the Wing section).

Bo and Maria Wagner, parents of **Wing, Beck**, for donating a Pizza Lunch during Explore Week

Chad and Anissa Younts, parents of **Wing, Chad**, for donating burgers for the Explore Week Campfire Cooking!

Seton Brown, **NM Alum** and youngest son of **Sheila Brown**, donated an **Oculus Rift**, a virtual reality system that completely immerses you inside virtual worlds. We plan to soon explore many places with this state of the art display system and optics!

Thank you to all **NM families** that thought of the **NM Staff** and brought delicious goodies and fruits to share before the winter break. It is always exciting to discover a small treat in our staff room during the day!

A Dedication for the Samantha Julia Welsh Great Hall

By: Maria Taylor and Mike and Pichi Welsh



Our **NM Community** has been gifted with a beautiful portrait of our Sammie to hang in our Great Hall at the 2525 N Limestone location upon completed renovations. **“It has always hung in a very prominent place for all to see”**. Currently the portrait hangs in the office at the NM High Street Location.

Each visitor I have had, some that knew Sammie and some that are learning about her amazing spirit and soul just today, have been deeply moved by the glowing beauty of the person that emanates from the portrait. Her spirit, her memories and her infectious smile radiate daily. Please feel welcome to stop in and you too can see the true beauty of her soul and feel the warmth of her spirit. You will see that she is smiling just for you and your day will be brightened!

One of my very favorite things to do is share Sammie stories of yesterday and today!

The “Back Story” Behind the Beautiful Portrait of Sammie, shared by her father, Michael Welsh.

My job in the Ohio ANG required me to periodically to go to the USAF Europe HQ (HQ USAFE) in Ramstein, Germany. I first started going there in the late 1980's as a 2nd Lieutenant. And then after 9/11 happened we were called to active duty supporting theater wide communications services. We were working for the General of USAFE during a time of war. It was in that capacity while I was there in 2002 and 2003 that Sammie came to spend the summer each year, and became quite the European sophisticate with trips to Belgium, Luxembourg, Austria, and Hungary. She even served as my date at a

Hungarian General Staff state sponsored cruise and dinner in the Danube.

Appropriately, I was part of a delegation with Major General John Smith and his wife, Anita, who just happened to be one of the founders of Nightingale Montessori. Any fears or worries quickly passed with Anita Smith, and Sammie had a touring partner for all of her time there! [Anita Smith is a beloved former teacher in our beginning days at NM. We (Nancy, Sheila and Maria) were so thrilled to know that Sammie too met and spent time with our Anita Smith!]

A year after her passing in 2004, I returned to Germany in much the same capacity to renew relationships and friendships, and business relationships with the USAFE staff folks. In December of 2005 during the Christmas season in Europe where it is always very festive, with people strolling along beautifully lit streets and plazas and where it is always a sight to behold and cherish and where hot drinks taste all the more delicious.

The Ramstein AF Base mall is no different as it too puts on a beautiful winter festival and brings in a lot of local vendors to the Exchange Mall complex they have there serving all of the various military families in the region. I was there at lunchtime on a Tuesday, the first day after our arrival the previous day, after the morning meetings. The mall has the usual American fast foods like Dominos, KFC, Burger King etc. As I was sitting there at my table eating lunch, I began watching a painter at his easel working and talking with many different families. He was at that time painting a live portrait of a young man sitting beside him, but he would stop and take orders from people who brought him portraits. I watched him paint a while and observed the remarkable likeness he had crafted of his subject all while chatting with folks at the same time.

After lunch, I approached him and presented the little 2x3 wallet photo I had of Sammie which was from the last portrait session we had with Sammie just before Thanksgiving the month before she was called home. I wasn't sure he could craft a painting from such a small portrait, but it was all I had. I asked him if he could do it, and he assured me that he could. I then informed him that I needed it by Thursday, two days following as I had to return to the states on Friday at a very early departure time. He again assured me that it would be done on time and that I could pick it up that Thursday afternoon.

He agreed to do the work, and he delivered right on time. The painting was covered when he gave it to me. He then carefully unwrapped it as I waited anxiously, and when he uncovered it, I nearly broke down in tears when I saw it. I don't know how this Frenchman, this man who just came by the base that one particular week could have achieved such a beautiful likeness of Sammie from such a small portrait. I don't know if he goes there every year, or if that was the only time. But suffice it to say, I thought it was magic! I couldn't wait to get home to show it to Pichi and get her reaction. **Ever since that painting came home, it has always hung in a very prominent place for all to see.**

Experiential Learning in the Kitchen

Each day offers new experiences to be discovered in the kitchen and opportunities to expand upon existing interests and projects.



Students help assemble afterschool snack packets

Some aspects of our program encourages students to run and collect data for our, "Taste Testing Challenges" and to refine and improve upon our existing menus. Starting back in the 2017-2018 school year, in conjunction with the receipt of the **Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant through the Chef Anne Foundation** we created the **Student Nutrition Action Committee, or SNAC**. We developed many fun and exciting new lessons and activities that are now foundational activities found throughout our cooking program. With our "Challenge" participating students conduct surveys to rate and evaluate meal participation throughout the different age levels. For example: Categories titled, "Food Satisfaction," are rated on overall look, taste and presentation. For our students that also participate in food preparation we evaluate ease of preparation, overall food uses (leftover, recycling into a new recipe,) affordability and ease of responsibly sourced ingredients.. As we view and organize our results, we can then determine if the menu item was a success. If it needs adjustments, we alter the preparation to increase satisfaction or if we offer a replacement entre in the future. If we do indeed replace a menu, students familiar with our NSLP guidelines then study and select an approved recipe. These analyses have presented us with invaluable data to enable us to increase meal participation and expand our delicious and nutritious meals to more students. The children feel empowered to take action when it delivers results to their satisfaction. SNAC helps to select which fresh fruits and vegetables can be utilized in our program, choose and make new salad recipes and learn various ways of preparing and serving these meal components.

Gourmet Grub

January brought the arrival of the fresh "Modelo or Blood Orange." Returning students took delight in the beautiful red hue, pink pulp and sour taste of the Blood Orange. Owl Chefs learned new ways of preparing the fruit and presented the students samples of this seasonal citrus.



Daesha, Maddox and Malcom gather info to label food storage correctly

February will bring the testing of many whole grain and whole wheat rich baked goods as we look forward to developing delicious and healthy snacks we hope to sell to raise funds for our new kitchen! More info to come!

The Kitchen would like to thank all of our Student Chefs for their hard work in preparing delicious foods for our Nightingale Community to enjoy during Science Fair, and of course a Big Thank you to all of our Hard Working SNAC participants for the new ideas and daily participation.



Ella cracks eggs

Sensitive Period for Order

“Order is one of the needs of life which, when it is satisfied, produces a real happiness”

- Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori believed the sensitive period for order begins at birth, peaks during early toddlerhood, and generally lasts until around age five. This sensitive period is characterized by an inner need for consistency and repetition. During this sensitive period, the child craves routine and predictability. The child has a need for everything in his/her physical environment to have its designated place.

Parents of the **Hummingbirds** may have noticed many different types of sorting and/or matching work listed on their child’s daily note. These types of sensorial works are one of the many ways the **Hummingbird** staff are able to nurture the intrinsic need for order within the **Hummingbirds**. The children are delighted as they manipulate the work to create precise order.

When the children are presented with materials that allow them to create order in their physical experiences, they are also able to create mental order. Mental order supports the child’s ability to adapt to changes in his/her environment as they take place. This internal order also supports the child’s ability to function well in their environment.

All of the benefits listed above also support early math skills. Sorting work helps the **Hummingbirds** to understand that things can be alike or different, belong to a specific group, and be organized into groups. Early exposure in these areas is important for numerical concepts and number grouping that they will experience later in life. The **Hummingbirds** are on the path of applying the logical thinking of mathematical concepts in everyday life.



Nathan transfers eggs using tongs.



Lani strings beads.



Alivia matches colors.



Evelyn focuses on her work.



Callie works with an imbu-care box.



Skye practices holding a paintbrush.



Leo works with the lock box.



Annie strengthens her fine motor muscles.



Emily works with the ring return.



Charlie places cylinders into the depth peg board.



Paxton works with the coin box.



Reznor puts caps into a small opening.



Cooper makes music outside.



Nez transfers pom poms using tweezers.



Hazel looks at a book.

Higher Order Thinking

Higher Order Thinking is a natural capability that enables complex problem solving.

The curriculum requires students to critically examine the components of a problem in order to judge whether a principle learned in a familiar situation can be applied to new problem. The structure of a decimal or phonic system uses principles that govern the solutions to problems within its order. Learning that solving new problems with principles learned in previous ones becomes a way to learn through a Higher Order Thinking process.

The **Chicks** involve higher order thinking when cooking. While following the sequence of the recipe they see how each step connects to the whole finished product.



Brooks watches Athena crack an egg.

Parent Corner

NM is making a school wide effort to reduce our carbon footprint. The **Chickadee Class** will be taking a more active role in participating by encouraging the children to bring reusable containers in their lunches. We will begin by returning your sandwich baggies for possible reuse instead of throwing them away at school. The children take great pride in being part of our recycling and composting program. Some of the most coveted student jobs are taking our food waste basket to the compost bin and washing out milk cartons to be flattened for the recycle bin!

Valentine's Day is around the corner! While we will be celebrating love and friendship with the Chicks we want to stay away from the consumer aspect of this holiday. If your child would like to pass out Valentines we ask that they are handmade and that there are enough for all the children. We currently have 27 Chicks. Please do not have your child write the name of the person they are for, instead, they can write their own name so that each recipient will know who it is from. This eases the process of passing them out. Some children like to bring a treat to share. If you would like to do so please refer to the smart snack suggestions found in the Chickadee handbook. This will enable us to serve healthy alternatives to the sugary fare typically associated with the holiday in the past.



Drake and Athena wash the bread pans.



Kennedy and Ella observe Nia and Finn putting batter in the pans.



Nemariah and Sevynn stir.



Science Fair

Chicks enjoy Science Fair presentations from Tristan and Allie of the Owls and GeMiah and Briniya of the Falcons. The **Chicks** were able to learn first hand the higher order thinking of the older students as they explained their hypothesis and experiments.



Tristan demonstrates part of his experiment.



Chicks listen to a science fair presentation from the Falcon Class.



Owls Tristan and Allie have Chicks Marcel and Marianna test out their experiment.



Allie explains her Science Fair project .

Wax Museum Has Begun!

For many families in the Eagle class, they know what to expect with the approaching time of the “Wax Museum.” But before you knew what the Eagle Wax Museum was, you might have thought, wax? Is my child using wax? Making a museum? Making a wax statue? You are not alone in your confusion! We are here to clear up some of the misconceptions and give you a glimpse into what it will consist of.

Every year a different research theme is selected: Timeline of Life, Timeline of Humans and Timeline of Communication. This year, our theme is **Timeline of Life**. We will represent organisms from bacteria through humans. By now, your child has already selected a research topic. They have already spent time reading about their topic, the first step into the research process. Through the next few weeks, they will go through sequential steps to demonstrate their learning in a comprehensive report. They will also be creating a costume, either at home, or at school.

On **February 15, 2019** all of the students will gather in the Eagle classroom and be on display. They will be in costume and their research report will be hanging near them. You, and all attendees of the evening’s event will walk through the Timeline of Life and have a chance to view all Eagle students on display. The room will look much different, so as to not distract your attention away from the “wax statues.” Your child will hold still, as if a wax statue, only to change positions slowly, when a bell rings. And who knows, you might not even be able to detect your child because they might be inside part of their costume!

We look forward to seeing all who are able to make it to the event at 6:30pm. If you are not able to come that evening, there will be a school walk through earlier in the day that you can attend.

Eagles Work Hard to Move a Giant Snowball!

Two friends use levers to help the struggling many hands pushing. Interestingly, all students who tried to operate the lever pushed down as though it were a first class lever with the fulcrum in the center. After discovering that did not work they pulled up



and felt the power of their second class lever. This was science at its best: a real problem to solve, a hypothesis that doesn't work, and another option to try!

Valentine’s Day

In keeping with our underlying effort to present ecological ideas to students at **Nightingale**, the Eagles will once again be recycling paper to create **Valentine’s Day** cards. The Eagles study papermaking as part of the progression of human achievement . We will learn about the use of plants and fibers as a tool to record thoughts and make communication both portable and long lasting. We will use a blender and scraps of paper that we have saved throughout the year.

The tradition of **Eagles** helping **Chickadees** make their own Valentines to present to their families remains a highlight to both the **Eagle** as teacher and the **Chickadee** as student each year. The **Chickadees** are grinding the pulp for their own papermaking with a manual blender.

We ask that any Valentines that children bring to school to share with their friends be handmade – **not** the commercial variety. There will be a celebration time for the students to “mail” and receive these expressions of friendship from each other. Remember, we are a “**Smart Snack School**” if you choose to send treats of any kind. We will kindly send items that do not fit the handmade or smart snack criteria back home with your child.





Owl Valentine's Day

On February 14 the Owl students that choose to participate in celebrating Valentine's Day will have an opportunity to exchange Valentines with their classmates in the afternoon. If you choose to participate, please send in enough Valentine's for your child to share with all students. There are 31 students in the Owl class.

Please send in an old shoebox or brown paper bag that can be decorated as one of our art projects as we prepare for this exchange. Keep in mind, if you are going to send in a snack, it needs to be within the SMART snack guidelines.

Upcoming Owl Events

February 21—Rhythms of Africa - Young People's Concert: **Rhythms of Africa** is a celebration of the influence of African rhythmic elements on the orchestra and its music. This concert will explore the musical evidence that composers, musicians, and conductors leave to send us a message. The audience will discover, observe, and investigate the evidence as they become "Concert Scene Investigators".

February 22—Ohio Caverns Concealed beneath the rolling farmland and wooded countryside of Champaign County the caverns were formed thousands of years ago when an underground river cut through ancient limestone and created vast rooms and passageways that later filled with countless crystal stalactites, stalagmites and other amazing formations.



Musical Presentation by Lola on the Violin with her Dad, John, on the Cello

Owl, Lola Derr, and her **Dad, John,** played several musical instruments for the **Owl** class. The **Owls** were able to try the cello and violin during their music presentation. We discovered that we have several natural musicians within the Owl classroom.



Owl News



Falcon Career Fair

Some Falcons finished the second session, themed “**Inquiry**” by presenting a **Career Fair Project**. The **Falcons** that participated in the **Career Fair** were mentors to their classmates as they finalized their **Science Fair Projects**.

For the **Career Fair**, each participant was asked to explore a variety of potential careers based on results of an abbreviated **Myers-Briggs** test and an exploration on the **Ohio Means Jobs** website (including an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, traits, skills, and preferences).

Each of the participating students chose one career to explore and present at a **Career Fair** for their classmates. This event was a mock “recruiting event.” It produced enough excitement that we had some surprise guest visitors from around the building who came into the room to see what all the buzz was about!

The careers chosen included administrative assistant, demolitionist, graphic artist, information technologist, bakery manager, equestrian coach, actor, air traffic controller, professional sports team manager, and mental health counselor. Each “recruiter” presented a description of the job, the educational and experiential requirements, potential salary opportunities, and the top five reasons to pick their chosen career.



Falcons presenting and exploring career fair.



Math

Problem solving is practiced daily in our math classes.

Montessori developed many math materials that present mathematical concepts concretely. **Montessori** math materials are used for our work in the decimal system, fractions, percent, geometry and algebra.

The individual’s growth, pace and ability sets the timeline for the progression and introduction of new materials and concepts.

Teachers watch and guide students as they seek to discover the many practical applications in math. Our daily journey includes working together where teachers prepare work and help set the challenge level and students that use their critical thinking skills to explore as they complete their work.

The **Montessori** materials are designed to provide the outlet for discovery as means of learning math concepts rather than just being “told how to do it.”

Thinking Skills That Help Us Face Challenges

In the **Falcon** room we work to provide various learning activities that support students learning, practicing and retaining critical thinking and problem solving skills.

- Provide opportunities to have fun - to play
- Ask open-ended questions
- Lead by discovery as a means of problem solving (vs. telling them how)
- Help children develop a hypothesis and follow the scientific method
- Encourage thinking in new and different ways
- Encourage the child the research to extend their understanding

During many of the day to day interactions with students we encourage research and support students as they seek to find an answer on their own.

We provide opportunities where children learn from observing how adults solve problems too.

Every opportunity we can find where we can take the time to allow students to think through problems, we do!

The time it takes is worth it in the long run because it develops critical thinking and problems solving skills, which will serve them for the rest of their lives.



Garden Tower Project

Thank You **Marilyn Riley**, parent of **Wing, Aidan**, for donating her Third Place win of \$100 of a **Garden Tower Project**. NM was most excited to acquire this Tower Garden. It is assembled and waiting for warmth and light to start growing.

The Tower Garden Promises to Be:

- Able to Grow 50 Plants and Vegetables in Four Square Feet*
- Can Compost and Garden All in the One Nutrient Rich Garden*

We can't wait to see if this Award

Winning Innovation and Design Proves to Be As Good As It Promises!

Nightingale Takes on Climate Change

Wing Ecology students are taking advantage of their six acre 2525 campus to fight climate change through a variety of gardening strategies. Removal of invasive species provides opportunities to create carbon sinks and huga culture berms around our forests. This traditional technique of burying wood creates self watering garden mounds that will be planted with a variety of native food producing species such as *Corylus Americana*, *Prunus American* and *Cercis Canadensis*. Our edible school yards will provide produce with zero transport miles compared to a national average of over 1,000.

Ecology students feel that **Food Forests** are the best strategy for climate change adaptation and mitigation, as they contain a great diversity of species that both sequester large amounts of carbon and reduce the resources used to provide our food. Other benefits include wildlife habitat, many useful products, and great aesthetic value. We can no longer tell children they must save the world, we must tell them to enjoy it. And in this is theirs and its salvation.

Wing News

Growing Together

This past week the **Wings** wrapped up their second quarter theme of "**Growth**" by engaging in several learning experiences that challenged them to grow as individuals.

Since we also happened to have our first significant snow of the season on the ground, that added to the fun on our outdoor adventures. Students spent two weeks planning a campfire lunch and outing at **George Rogers Clark Park**, collecting their favorite recipes and deciding what they would need to successfully make them to share with classmates. Students found out that cooking around a campfire often requires creativity and problem solving skills. The results were delicious, and the time spent bonding around the campfire was time well spent. In addition, students also went to a nearby hill to enjoy some thrilling sledding while the snow was fresh on the ground.

Another day of **Explore Week** was spent learning about the psychologist **Lawrence Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development**, which shows how moral reasoning often evolves as a person matures. We did this in the context of watching and analyzing the film adaptation of the musical **Les Misérables**. Students discussed the decisions made by the characters in the film, and debated which level of moral reasoning each character was demonstrating as they made each decision. They then teamed up in groups to create visual representations of **Kohlberg's Theory** with characters from the film used to represent each level. The discussions and work really helped the concepts sink in. By the end of the day students were already thinking about their own past decisions and where they fell on the moral reasoning spectrum. This will lead to individual growth as they challenge themselves to take that next step.

Throughout the week students also engaged in various challenging and cooperative games that helped them to get to know one another better and grow closer as a community. This included board games, physical challenges, "would you rather" questions, and communication games, to name a few. Our final challenge was ice skating, which many students didn't think they would be able to succeed at. They came to realize that learning a new skill often involves a lot of falls on the way to success, but the outcome makes the falls worthwhile.



Nathan, Gavyn, Teddy and Kiki create Les Mis poster.



Rodnesha cooks hashbrowns



JaMarcus makes bacon



Nathan forming burgers.



Gavyn glides



Rodnesha, Aidan, Kiki, and Austin problem solve.



Aidan sleds



Javion balances

GROUNDING THE HELICOPTER Parents: let your kids fail. You'll be doing them a favor

By [Jenny Anderson](#) October 20, 2015

Your teenager has a science project due. He hates science. He hates projects (as do you). Do you:

- A. Set deadlines for him, get the necessary materials, lay them out on the table with some homemade chocolate chip cookies
- B. Ask your neighbor who is a renowned chemist to stop by and wax poetic about the joys of the periodic table
- C. Hide and pray

If, out of love or a desire to bolster your child's self-esteem, you picked A or B, teacher and author Jessica Lahey thinks you're wrong.

"Do I want [my kids] to be happy now and not-scared and not-anxious, or, a year from now, do I hope that they pushed through being a-little-anxious and a little scared and became a little more competent?" she told Quartz.

We seem to be more worried about raising happy children than competent or autonomous ones.

That question is at the heart of her best-selling book, *The Gift of Failure*. She realized not long ago that something was wrong with her parenting and something was amiss with the middle-school students she taught. They wilted in the face of challenge. They didn't love learning like they used to. Parents took bad grades personally. Everyone was unhappy.

She couldn't pinpoint the root of the problem until she realized: we seem to be more worried about raising happy children than competent or autonomous ones.

Lahey cites the work of Wendy Grolnick, a psychologist, who puts pairs of mothers and children in a room and videotapes them as they play. Grolnick then labels the mothers as "controlling" or "autonomy-supportive," meaning the moms let the kids figure things out on their own. Grolnick then invites the pairs back and the children are put in a room by themselves and asked to perform a task. The results were "striking," Grolnick says in the book. The children who had controlling mothers gave up when faced with a task they could not master. The others did not.

Lahey writes: Kids who were raised by controlling or directive parents could not contemplate tasks on their own, but the kids who were being raised by autonomy-supportive parents stuck with tasks, even when they got frustrated. Kids who can redirect and stay engaged in tasks, even when they

find those tasks difficult become less and less dependent on guidance in order to focus, study, organize, and otherwise run their own lives.

Although advice like "let them try and fail" seems blindingly obvious, it is very hard to implement. At every book event for *the Gift of Failure*, at least one parent approaches Lahey in tears. The parent describes a 16-year-old son who cannot pack a backpack or an 18-year-old daughter who cannot manage conflict. "We think, 'I have plenty of time to teach them,'" Lahey says. "And then they are 17."

So what's a well-intentioned parent seeking failure (to get to success) supposed to do? Lahey spoke with Quartz about some ways to inhibit the helicopter in all of us and build resilient kids.

Define your end game: long or short term?

"We rescue because it feels good," Lahey says.

Lahey admits she is equally culpable, though she has tried to change. One morning she found her son's homework on the table and decided not to drop it off at his school, even though she was going anyways. She was determined that he become more independent and better organized. She took to Facebook to discuss her decision. "If your husband left his cell phone, would you take it to him?" said one friend. "I am not raising my husband," she thought.

Rescuing her son would make Lahey feel like a good mom, but it would not help her son's organizational issues. Parenting for the long term meant leaving the homework on the table and letting her son, and herself, suffer a bit. As it turned out, the teacher gave her son some extra work and offered some tips on how to remember his homework in the future. The tips have served him well, Lahey says.

Let them own it

Ever grabbed a sponge from a kid because she was making too much of a mess cleaning up? The dirty secret of parenting is that kids can do more than we think they can, and it's up to us to figure that out. (Apparently [the French have sorted this out](#) with kids and cooking, and they let their young toddlers wield large knives.) Kids can do dishes and clean a room without a bribe, but to get to clean kitchens and tidier rooms we have to face messier kitchens, not perfectly sorted laundry, and clothes stuffed in drawers while they figure it out.

Lahey cites the example of a student who was struggling in a gifted and talented school. His mother had been running interference for him for years, managing issues with teachers, and nagging the teen to do his work. The alternative was the failing local public school. Fed up, the mother took the son to the school. She gave him the choice: she wasn't working anymore to keep him in the gifted program. Her son was shocked at what he saw and stepped up his work. He started to talk to his teachers when he had problems—without his mom setting up the meetings—and did more homework. He was never an A student, but that was not the point.

Praise effort and not outcomes

We love to praise our kids; call it a hangover from the self-esteem movement of the 1970s. But praising kids for being smart rather than working hard pushes them into what Stanford researcher Carol Dweck calls a [fixed mindset](#), one in which kids shy away from challenges. Consider this study, which Dweck did variations on for years and [I wrote about here](#):

Researchers give two groups of fifth graders easy tests. Group one is told they got the questions right because they are smart. Group two is told they got the questions right because they tried hard. Then they give the kids a harder test, one designed to be far above their ability. Turns out the “smart” kids don't like the test and don't want to do more. The “effort” kids think they need to try harder and welcome the chance to try again. The researchers give them a third test, another easy one. The “smart” kids struggle, and perform worse than they did on the first test (which was equally easy). The “effort” kids outperform their first test, and outperform their “smart” peers.

And here's the really scary part: the researchers then tell the kids they're going to give the same test at another school, and ask them to send a note over with their own scores. Forty percent of the “smart” kids lie about their results, compared with around 10% of the “effort” kids.

If they see you fail and survive, they will know that failing at a task is not failing as a person.

Dweck's advice is easy: praise effort, not outcomes. Lahey adds to that advice: let your kids know about your own struggles. If they see you fail and survive, they will know that failing at a task is not failing as a person.

Cheer like a grandparent, not a parent

Most of us sign our kids up for sports for the right reasons. We want them to run around, get fresh air, learn

how to be part of a team, and have fun. If they show talent, many of us suddenly turn into maniacs, screaming instructions about sports we have never played and questioning coaches at decibel levels we prohibit at home. Some soccer leagues have implemented [silent soccer Saturdays](#) in an attempt to silence the parents and coaches and give the game back to the kids.

Bruce Brown and Rob Miller, two former coaches who formed Proactive Coaching, asked college athletes, “What is your worst memory from playing youth and high school sports?” The answer was the drive home with their parents. Too much advice, not enough support.

Lahey suggests that if you go to the games, cheer like a grandparent and not a parent. College athletes wanted grandparents at their games because their support was not predicated on achievement. “Grandparents don't critique the coach's strategy or a referee's call. Even in the face of embarrassing failures on the field, grandparents support their grandchildren with no ulterior motive or agenda,” Lahey writes.

The teacher is your partner, not your adversary

If we talk to teachers and they talk to us, a lot of problems can be avoided. Easier said than done.

Lahey tells harrowing tales of parents who demand grade changes and refuse to see challenges as learning opportunities. “Teaching has become a push and pull between opposing forces in which parents want teachers to educate their children with increasing rigor, but reject those rigorous lessons as ‘too hard’ or ‘too frustrating’ for their children to endure,” she writes.

Lahey has a long list of suggestions on how to build a better parent-teacher relationship. Some are so obvious it is sad she has to write them down—be friendly and polite; project an attitude of respect for education.

Here are some others:

- Wait a day before emailing a teacher over a perceived emergency or crisis
 - Let the teacher know about big events at home
- Let your child have a voice; role-play to help him prepare for tough conversations

Some other excellent books on the subject of extracting yourself from your kids' lives include Madeline Levine's *Teach Your Children Well: Parenting for Authentic Success* and Wendy Mogel's *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee*.

Montessori Education & My Child AMS (The American Montessori Society)



Montessori is a unique educational approach that nurtures a child's intrinsic desire to learn. Montessori focuses on the whole child—his cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. Montessori education is right for children of any age. Some Montessori schools provide all levels of learning, from

infant/toddler through the secondary level. Others offer only certain education levels.

Introducing your child to Montessori as early as possible puts her on the right path to becoming a confident, self-motivated learner.

The Door to Learning



In a Montessori environment, children learn by exploring and manipulating specially designed materials. Each material teaches one concept or skill at a time, and lays a foundation from which students can comprehend increasingly abstract ideas. Children work with materials at their own pace, repeating an exercise until it is mastered. The teacher may gently guide the process, but her goal is to inspire rather than instruct.

Throughout the classroom, beautifully prepared, inviting curriculum areas contain a sequential array of lessons to be learned. As students work through the sequence, they build and expand on materials and lessons already mastered. And all the while they are developing qualities with which they'll approach every future challenge: autonomy, creative thinking, and satisfaction in a job well done.

Tracking Your Child's Progress

Although most Montessori teachers do not assign grades, they closely observe each student's progress and readiness to move on to new lessons. They may orally question a student about what she has learned, or ask her to teach the lesson to a fellow student. In some schools, students compile a portfolio of their work to demonstrate their competence in a variety of skills.

Most schools hold family conferences a few times a year so parents may see their child's work and hear the teacher's assessment. Teachers typically provide a written narrative that explains a student's progress in relation to his own development and to developmental norms.

If your child attends a public Montessori school, you will probably be given information about her performance on standardized tests, which you can use to evaluate her progress against national

norms. Some independent schools also administer standardized exams, particularly if they will be a requirement of schools into which their students will transition.

Some parents may wonder why Montessori doesn't endorse grading, if only to motivate students to work hard. But grades, like other external rewards, have temporary effects at best. Instead, Montessori education nurtures a child's intrinsic motivation to learn, create, and do satisfying work.

Montessori for Children with Special Needs

Children with special needs, such as learning differences or physical disabilities, often thrive in a Montessori setting.

Montessori teaching materials engage all the senses, important for students with distinct learning styles. Students learn by doing and are free to move about, an advantage for those who require a high level of physical activity. And each child has the latitude to learn at his own pace, without pressure to meet formal standards by a predetermined time.

Depending on a student's needs, the school might refer him for additional resources such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and/or counseling.

Nonetheless, some students may need greater accessibility or more support services than a given school can provide. In each situation, the individual's needs and the school's resources should be carefully assessed to ensure a successful match.

Transitioning to a Traditional School

Many children spend only their preschool years in a Montessori classroom. Others complete the elementary grades before transferring to another—usually traditional—school. A smaller—but growing—group of students stay with Montessori through secondary school.

A child who transfers out of a Montessori school is likely to notice some differences. For example, instead of choosing



his own work to investigate and master, he might have to learn what's on the teacher's lesson plan. Instead of moving freely around the classroom, there's a chance she'll sit in an assigned seat. Instead of learning

in a classroom with a mixed-aged grouping, it's probable that she'll be placed just with students her own age.

Fortunately, children are adaptable. Poised, self-reliant, and used to working harmoniously as part of a classroom community, students who transition from Montessori typically adjust quickly to the ways of their new school.