

The adolescent must never be treated as a child, for that is a stage of life which s/he surpassed. It is better to treat an adolescent as if he has greater value than he actually shows than if he has less and let him feel that his merits and self-respect are disregarded. (Maria Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence)

Montessori is a term used to describe the philosophy of education that emphasizes the balance of freedoms and responsibilities. Respect for the child is at the center, and guides the learning. At the middle school level, this means strategic balance of rigorous academics and projects, meaningful work, intentionality in our habits, service to others, and outdoor adventures.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Education is a natural process carried out by the human individual, and is acquired not by listening to words, but by experiences in the environment. (Maria Montessori) At Montessori Middle School, we use **Summit** as a way for students to learn rigorous academics, apply real world skills, and develop habits of success. It addresses the whole child. It puts students in charge of their learning, in both projects and technical skills, and gives strong supports for all parts of life's challenges and celebrations. We do not use a grade system; instead we utilize a rubric system, student-led conferences, and exhibitions of student presentations and projects. Evaluation is completed by student, peers, teachers, and sometimes community guests, and our focus is on student growth over time on specific and measurable cognitive skills.

STEWARDSHIP

Emphasis on stewardship and community is grounded in the understanding that the sensitive period of adolescence is a gateway for social reform...Honor the adolescent as a "social newborn" and create real and meaningful responsibilities. (Marta Donahue, from Montessori Education for the Third Plane of Development) Central to Montessori philosophy are the ideas of interconnectedness, seeing the bigger picture, and the teenager's place and contributions within all of society. One person can have an impact. In this program, our spring is spent seeing needs in our community and acting on them through **Adventure Fridays**, mostly involving the outdoors and physical activity. Projects may include: River clean up with the Riverkeeper, tree-planting with Lands Council, neighborhood beautification with the City of Spokane, trails maintenance with Riverside State Park, student teaching and internships in SPM elementary classrooms, weeklong trips to Mt. Rainier or Olympic State Park, and bouldering at Bloc Yard.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Young people have two needs: 1) to be protected in this period of tumultuous change and 2) to be placed in a position to understand the...role which they will [eventually] play in society. (Maria Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence) Based on the interests of students and current projects and learning, we have many ongoing community partnerships to enhance the **relevance** of this program. Examples include stormwater garden with the Lands Council, weekly philosophy with Gonzaga University, writing opportunities with EWU, GU, and Whitworth, trout release with the Conservation District, financial literacy with STCU, and situational awareness with SPD. Our program also invites guests for seminars, recognizing leadership and vocations in this community to inspire various career paths and spark new learning directions. We also have student-led occupations and businesses.

PROJECTS

The chief symptom of adolescence is a state of expectation, a tendency toward creative work, and a need for the strengthening of self-confidence. (Maria Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence) Student get multiple opportunities to present and demonstrate mastery of skills, through **exhibitions** and symposiums. These are formal presentations delivered by students. For example: Mt. Rainier field studies, TED Talks for Genius Hour, poetry slams, earthapalooza, dance, philosophy balls, conferences, writing classes, literature, storm garden design, art club, murals, video production, art shows, student teaching, novels/book publishing, etc.

TEST SCORES

Students are required to take the SBAC each spring, and the MAP each fall and spring. Additionally, 8th graders take the PSAT in the fall.

HABITS OF SUCCESS

The freedom of our children has its limit in the community, for freedom does not mean doing what one wants, but being master of oneself. (Maria Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence) Habits of Success are the mindsets and behaviors that support academic achievement and well-being.

