



June 2006

An Invitation to Share in the Excitement of the Elementary Classroom

St. Croix Academy

A Montessori School 177 Neal Avenue North, Stillwater, MN 55082 Phone No. 436-2603 Fax No. 651-436-1170

Dear Friends,

In the early years of the 20th century Dr. Maria Montessori boldly imagined that one day across the world schools would be built on the principles of children learning with independence and self direction. These schools would create a home-like atmosphere where teachers would engage the children in the joy of learning... for life.

In 2007 we will celebrate the 100 year anniversary of Montessori education. As an Association Montessori International (AMI) school we have enjoyed being part of this rich and fulfilling history. Our hope for the future for children educated using Montessori - principles is that they be grounded in the design of our school as a place to help them identify and develop their abilities and discover their passions and interests.

St. Croix Academy has set sail to reach even higher standards in its goal to enhance our standing as an AMI school. We are gearing up to enhance our Elementary program through the addition of a new teaching staff member for the purpose of investing in our students. We have a talented faculty, and our fifteen acre school campus provides an environment that is unmatched by any other school in the Saint Paul east metro area.

As more people seek a St. Croix Academy educational experience for their children, we continue to prepare for the growth of our Elementary program. Join us in promoting St. Croix Academy.

Sincerely,

John Kupris
Head of School

ST. CROIX ACADEMY ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

Ages 6 to 12

The nature and needs of the child begin to change as he moves to the second plane of development. He has the ability to think more abstractly, requires variety rather than repetition, wants to function as a member of a team, is developing a sense of justice and possesses a powerful and expansive imagination.



To address the child's changing psychological characteristics, lessons change from more individualized at the Primary age to small, group lessons and collaborative projects at the elementary level.

The elementary child is possessed of a mind that learns by questioning and reasoning. Besides having great powers of intellect, he is very imaginative and creative. The materials and the way in which concepts are presented evoke this imagination and serve to help the child in increasingly abstract understanding. Besides skill building in core curriculum subjects such as reading, writing and mathematics, the Montessori method provides an interdisciplinary view to help the child to discover and appreciate the interconnectedness of knowledge and life on earth.

Subject areas are integrated throughout the curriculum in addition to being presented as separate disciplines. The Montessori elementary curriculum provides a framework for study by first presenting the 'big idea'. The teacher then follows up by illuminating the details through stories, pictures, charts, concrete Montessori materials and timelines to enrich the child's understanding. The program focus areas are: Language, Mathematics, Biology, Geography, Earth Sciences, History, Music and Art.

MATHEMATICS materials are concrete representations of abstract concepts and demonstrate what is taking place in a given process. These concrete materials help the child to understand basic concepts such as computation, geometry, fractions and algebra, leading to more abstract exploration.



LANGUAGE activities give keys to our language. The child undertakes the study of words, their origins, spelling and grammatical function. Reading continues and is an integral part of the entire curriculum. It is strengthened through the use of books, poetry and linguistic study. The elementary child begins to develop research and composition skills and keeps track of his own daily work using a work record.



HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND THE ARTS AND SCIENCES are greatly enhanced by the presentation of the "Great Lessons." The lessons are dramatic presentations that give the history of the universe and the world as well as the evolution of plants, animals and humans on earth. The framework of the Great Lessons creates an integrated curriculum of history, geography, biology, geology and the story of the development of language and mathematics by human beings. These great stories inspire and lay the foundation for more in-depth studies by individuals and small groups who present their research to the class, thus enriching the total experience for all students.

Dr. Montessori's lifelong goal was peace on Earth. The Elementary program helps the child develop a deep appreciation for the vital connections between human beings, setting the stage for a peaceful future for humanity.

SPANISH PROGRAM

Communication in another language broadens the child's field of awareness as well as enabling interaction with a greater range of people and cultural knowledge. During childhood, the brain is especially open to the acquisition of language. Responding to this window of opportunity, St. Croix Academy offers Spanish instruction every day in each Primary and the Elementary classroom.



OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE

An appreciation of nature and our connectedness with it is inherent in the Montessori program at St. Croix Academy.

Each classroom has an outdoor space that is cared for by the students. Beautiful flowers and plants flourish in these natural extensions of the classroom. St. Croix Academy is located on 15 acres of rural countryside. Farm animals, composting, playgrounds, a soccer field, trails, wooded areas, sledding hills and a winter ice rink give our students multiple opportunities for nature study and outdoor activities.

St. Croix Academy

ELEMENTARY STAFF

Fiamma di Gioia

This will be Fiamma's 9th year at St. Croix Academy. Her father, a sociologist, encouraged her and her siblings to travel and learn about the people of the world. Her mother was a weaver and received her degree in Library Science at the age of seventy five. While working on her undergraduate degree, Fiamma received credit for her "junior year abroad" by living and studying for a year in Denmark. She specialized in the history of Danish weaving and Hans Christian Anderson's stories and life. In addition, she lived with Mexican families for two summers in Puebla, Mexico. "I wanted to learn more about life in Mexico and to improve my Spanish. My parents hired a wonderful local artist to teach us watercolor painting. We walked with Maestro Marquez to picturesque spots in Puebla. We learned to see color even in old gray water fountains!" She lived for a year in a small village in Sicily near an excavation of the Greek city Morgantina.

Fiamma received her Master's Degree from Arizona State University in child development and family studies. Before studying for the Elementary Program, she worked for ten years as an artist of miniature watercolors and was a member of a juried group of miniature artisans. She framed her tiny watercolors with her own handmade frames, including glass covers; they are unique in the miniature world.

Carl Banner grew up in South Bend, Indiana, the third of four children. He is a graduate of Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio with a degree in English Literature. Since finishing college he has spent four years teaching, both high school and middle school, as well as traveling in Europe and selling antiques.

This past year he studied at the Washington Montessori Institute in Columbia, Maryland with Kay Baker.

He loves reading, traveling, listening to music, visiting thrift and antique stores, playing with his dog, hiking, teaching, playing basketball, soccer, tennis, having conversations and listening to This American Life on NPR. He is extremely excited about working at St. Croix and becoming a part of the community here.

Jennifer Hanson is in the Elementary Program, providing valuable assistance with the many goals and learning objectives we have for the year. Jennifer is a Minnesota certified teacher with an undergraduate degree in history. She brings great enthusiasm for and knowledge of American History. Her talents add to the quality of the program, and the Elementary community will benefit from more of her time.

What does the AMI

Diploma mean?

Maria Montessori founded AMI to uphold the highest standards of teacher training. AMI Teacher Certification is a rigorous process leading to a deep understanding of all the subjects of instruction as well as child development theory and practical techniques.

The AMI Elementary training includes all the lessons for grades one through six in art, botany, geography, geometry, history, language, math, music and zoology. Anyone who has earned an AMI elementary diploma is well-trained and well-equipped with handmade materials. We have our own hand-illustrated and self-typed albums, one hundred hand-painted charts to illustrate lessons, six Time Lines, an illustrated set of "Kingdom Animalia" and "Kingdom Vegetalia" folders, music materials, booklets and cards for botany, geometry and zoology.

To learn more about our Elementary program, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Phone No. 651.436-2603
Fax No. 651.436-1170
E-mail: info@stcroixacademy.org
www.stcroixacademy.org

Design : Samson Den Lejcha