



Goal 1: Prayerfully and thoughtfully inspire the growth of RMS in order to provide our children with the finest environments and adult guides that enable learning and growth at every stage of development

Objective 1: Thoughtfully expand RMS Environments to meet the increasing interest of families in our growing community

Accomplishments

The Summer of 2022 was busy with construction and renovation projects in the Toddler, Primary and Elementary environments. The Toddler community moved out of their old space into a much larger building, the old Elementary environment was converted into a second Children’s House, and walls were knocked down to create the new space for the Elementary environment, all for the sake of expanding our growing numbers.

Covered patio spaces were created to provide outdoor work environments for the students in our Children’s House and Toddler communities. Weather-proof storage cabinets were purchased and stocked with Montessori materials so that students are able to seamlessly work either indoors or outside. Fences were installed to designate the Toddler and Primary outdoor play and work areas.

All new Sensorial, Language, Math, Geography and Atrium materials were purchased to complete our second Children’s House Environment. Additional tables, chairs, stools, shelves, rugs and curtains have also been purchased to beautify each of the spaces. In the Spring of 2023, a heavy duty laminator was purchased in order that the Elementary environment can make larger materials such as timelines and charts.

We have also been able to offer opportunities such as music class, an art workshop, Elementary P.E. and two Spanish speaking assistants to introduce other languages to our students.



Objective 2: Promote guide and staff well-being and competency by refreshing and enriching the RMS work environment.

Accomplishments

With the addition of a new washer and dryer, the staff lounge now serves as a convenient space for Guides and Assistants to perform the daily tasks of maintaining the cleanliness of their classrooms more efficiently. The installation of a wireless access point has allowed Staff Meetings to include online training sessions, and provided our teachers with access to the internet so that they can take care of the day to day tasks of emailing parents, updating Transparent Classroom with pictures, writing newsletter updates, and lesson planning.

In the Fall of 2022, a health care option was provided and continues to be sustained for the staff. Many of our employees are taking advantage of this benefit.

All of our staff members have been able to participate in ongoing training and professional development. In the last two years, staff members completed various workshops on topics such as conducting the first six weeks of school, art curriculum, and observation. One staff member also completed a certificate course on school administration and two others completed Level 1 of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. This year, we are able to send one of our staff members to the AMI Assistants to Infancy course through WMI and several other staff members are currently taking or have completed Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level 1 and Level 3 courses. To date, all but the newest hire has completed at least the first half of CGS Level 1.

Staff members do not need to take PTO in order to attend retreats. This has allowed for several teachers and assistants to nourish and cultivate their spiritual lives without the worry of it counting towards their time off. Additionally, the staff welcomed Sr. Mary Michael Fox for a beautiful retreat prior to the beginning of the school year. There have also been opportunities for staff to attend mass on campus.

Objective 3: Fiscally manage the growth of RMS in a manner that provides the finest adult guides and environments, while also ensuring that RMS remains accessible for families who are invested in an Authentic Catholic Montessori education.

Accomplishments

Established a Finance Council that has both worked with the Head of School and Board of Directors to build a robust financial model to inform key decision making as well as provided in-regular depth reporting to the Board on key metrics.

The staff and Mardi Gras committee have worked together to populate a school needs list of items available for donation before, during and after the event that align directly with actual needs in the classrooms.

Objective 5: Share our inspiring RMS story of growth and Authentic Catholic Montessori education to attract new families to our community.

Accomplishments

Updated the RMS Website Blog to share authentic and inspiring stories from guides about successes our children are experiencing in all areas of their development. Unique visitors to our website went up 24% year over year.

Used Facebook and Instagram to share pictures and anecdotes to give our social media followers a look into the life of a Catholic Montessori school. Our Facebook reach has increased by 212% and Instagram reach by 42% since the publication of the Strategic Plan.

We've added 32 new families in the last two academic years compared to 20 the previous two years.



GOAL 2: Foster an intentional RMS Community of children, families and adult guides focused on parent education, increased communication, purposeful events, and volunteer opportunities that contribute to the realization of our strategic plan.

Objective 1: Refresh and enhance the Parent Montessori Journey

Accomplishments

Our Back to School Orientation for the last two years has been the most well attended parent night of the year, with 67% of our parents attending in 2022 and 70% in 2023. In 2023, we reinvented the format of night by beginning the evening with sign up tables for all of our school events throughout the year and information tables with staff to answer questions on the most important topics. We continued to have specific sessions in each of the classrooms. This was a huge success both because it gave parents all of the information they needed upfront, and also made the night much more of a social gathering instead of a series of talks to listen to.

In 2022-23, we held two Parent Education evenings covering the topics “Are Academics Important?” where staff discussed the importance of academics in the context of educating the whole child in a Montessori environment, and “Life After Montessori” where we brought in a guest speaker from The Heights who grew up going to Montessori schools and shared his experiences of how it prepared him for life.

In 2022 -23 we also tested small group formats and parent education events in the mornings covering topics such as observation, Montessori materials, and Freedom and Discipline. We further piloted the offering of childcare during which several parents took advantage of.

Throughout the year, we kept data on attendance and sent out parent surveys asking their thoughts on which topics they would like to hear more about, what time of day they would like parent education workshops to be available, and whether or not they would need child care. This data helped to guide us in the direction of changing up the format of our Parent Education series for the 2023-24 school year.

For 2023-24, we included four workshops in our academic year: Parent Orientation, the Silent Journey, Guest Speaker Jesse McCarthy, and a Lenten Retreat. Each of these workshops have been thoughtfully planned out based on parent feedback to help educate our parent community much in the same way we educate our students: by recognizing the development of the whole person - mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually - and offering both a information and hands-on experiences. We have also added monthly parent/child visits throughout the year, giving students the opportunity to regularly welcome their parents into their classroom environments and show them all that they have been learning.

Objective 2: Intentionally connect families to foster trust and confidence in their Montessori Journey

Accomplishments

In 2022-23, we also established monthly parent cohort meetings with the intent of helping families connect with each other based upon the developmental stage of their children. Surveys were conducted about the parent cohorts and it was decided that while they were enjoyable, parents' schedules were busy and they were more inclined to attend a parent education night. Working with this feedback and that from the Parents Guild, the School committed to shifting most of the in-service days to have days in fall and spring to accommodate Stay and Play Picnics for families to easily connect through their children.

Established a Mentor Family Program in collaboration with the Parents Guild. During the summer, contact information of new families is passed along to mentor families who are available to guide new families through the first few months of the year. These mentor families also attend the beginning of the year events (Orientation, Back to School Picnic, etc.) to introduce themselves and make our new families feel welcome.



Objective 3: Promote monthly communication between parents and RMS about education and developmental milestones along the Montessori Continuum.

Accomplishments

In 2022 we created a conference report form as a tool for discussion during conferences and as a means to show the child's progression in the context of milestones along the Montessori continuum. In 2023, we iterated on that process by adjusting the Fall conference report form to be more discussion based. The Spring Conference Report for Toddler and Primary will cover details of the year and be given each year as a comparison of growth.

Beginning in the 2023-2024 year, parents of Elementary children will receive twice yearly progress reports through Transparent Classroom.

For the 2023-24 school year, we will continue to find ways to make Transparent Classroom the central hub for parent/school communication and information. Future plans include the Admissions application process, injury report forms, permission slips, and links to conferences, parent education nights, newsletters, etc.

GOAL 3 Model and live an authentic Catholic Montessori Environment in keeping with the original principles laid out by Dr. Montessori.

Objective 1: Utilize the principles laid out by Dr. Montessori to assess which AMI principles/initiatives we uphold and which AMI principles/initiatives we consciously reject and then transparently document and communicate our position, to include highlighting the importance of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd to the development of the “whole child”.

Accomplishments

In 2022, then Miss Fox connected with a group of Catholic Montessorians around the country and began working with them on an initiative to begin the work of this transparent documentation. The work is still in the identification stage and being done slowly by Montessorians also engaged in the work of running the day to day operations of school.

RMS continues to be transparent in the lived implementation and the way we communicate our position. During our admissions process, we explain to prospective families that the spiritual development of the child is just as important as the academic, social, physical and emotional development. We highlight that the Atrium is accessible to students in the same way that any of the other materials are available. Our staff also consistently writes about Montessori theory and pedagogy through the lens of our Catholic identity in our weekly update newsletter. Traditions are sprinkled throughout the year such as the All Souls Living Museum, the Epiphany celebration, and the Liturgy of Light. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is at the heart of our school and is reflected in each of the classroom environments through the materials, but also through our teachers, assistants and staff living out the faith in our thoughts, words, actions and interactions with each other and the children.



Objective 4: Create a compelling outdoor environment, integrated with the education of the “whole child”, that draws the children and families in our community together, engages them with nature, and encourages the praise of the Creator.

Accomplishments

A door was put in the new toddler building and a fence in an outdoor area around it to give toddlers easy, consistent access to the outdoors. Raised and in ground beds were created and maintained by a parent volunteer.

The chicken coop was enclosed with a chicken run to protect the chickens and allow the elementary children to easily care for them and the toddler and primary children to visit and gather eggs. These freshly gathered eggs are used in all the classrooms as snack and ingredients in baking.

A hoop house of built in the back field to extend the growing season so that harvests can more often coincide with the academic year. Small hoop box covers were installed on raised beds in the primary garden for the same outcome.

A gaga ball pit was built by a local Boy Scout for the children to enjoy at recess and families to use at gatherings.

A fire pit was built by an RMS family for use by the community.

Flower fields were planted in 2022 and expanded in 2023. Children of the school assist in the care of the flower fields and children from all the environments visit the fields to pick flowers for the work of flower arranging and beautifying the classroom. The children, with the help of a community member, have also used the flowers and other natural products picked from the campus to naturally dye fabrics. The flowers have also been used for decoration at RMS community events.



Accomplishments - cont.

An RMS family donated the necessary funds for the playground to be inspected and mulched to code for use by the children and families

Vegetable gardens were planted and maintained by RMS parent volunteers in the summers for children to harvest vegetables in the fall.

A Sponsor a Spot program was begun with 10 spots around the school sponsored to be planted and maintained by RMS families.

A speed bump and swing gate were installed to slow down traffic during drop off and dismissal times and stop it completely during the morning work cycle to provide safety for children using the outdoor spaces.

Security assessments were done with both a private source the the Prince William Country Police Department. Updates were made inside and outside the building to provide increased protection for both the people and upgraded assets. Six exterior security cameras were installed with both live view and recording capabilities. A digital door access was installed with two-way communication video camera at main "visitor entrance" door. Upgrades were made the interior and exterior locking mechanisms. Exterior lighting is in the process of being put back into working order.

