

## Why Montessori?

Imagine going to work and having the ability to choose what you could do on a particular day. On Monday, you could build a rocket ship, on Tuesday take a trip down the Nile River, and on Wednesday read and discuss your favorite book. By Thursday, you could move on to solve quadratic equations, and to end the week you could plan and host a party. How could you ever grow bored if your job provided you the opportunity to do all these things in one week, followed by a host of new challenges the very next? Picture how your ambition would soar if you were able to have the versatility to choose what *you* would like to work on.

When a child enters a Montessori classroom this is what they encounter, on a child's level. Through activities that the children call "works," they can build a model rocket ship using wooden blocks, or they can take a trip down the Nile by learning about the people and animals of Africa. Maybe they *can't* solve quadratic equations (yet!), but they can learn how numbers relate to each other using counting beads and an abacus. They learn to serve themselves a snack, and clean up when they are done. They are immersed in an environment that caters to their needs. They find furniture that is their size, a cabinet that is ready for them to choose what they would like to have for a snack, and shelves filled with enticing and enriching "works."

Dr. Maria Montessori developed her approach through observing the ways in which children learn; discovering that children have "absorbent minds," that they literally absorb information from their environment. In a Montessori classroom, children are encouraged to learn at their own pace in a self-correcting, "prepared environment." In this prepared environment, they focus on the areas of practical life, sensory awareness, language, mathematics, and cultural subjects. The teachers in the classroom facilitate the learning process by guiding children and demonstrating proper use of "works," but do not interfere in the learning process. Maria Montessori said, "We must be taught and we must be willing to accept guidance if we wish to become effective teachers."

We sincerely feel that when Maria Montessori said, "The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind," she truly saw what children are capable of.