

# The Peaceful Family Newsletter

Welcome to the inaugural issue of The Peaceful Family Newsletter!

In this space, I hope to share with you thoughts and reflections of individuals and families as to how Montessori impacted their lives.

To kick that off, this month I have the joy of sharing with you the reflections of Patty Eggerding and how raising her three children implementing Montessori values and practices has resulted in the long run.

Patty Eggerding is the Head of School at West Suburban Montessori School in Oak Park, IL. Having her AMI certification for both Assistants to Infancy and Primary, Patty has been positively influencing the Oak Park Montessori community since 2012. She has grown the school from three Primary classrooms to now include a Lower and Upper Elementary program. Prior to her work at West Suburban Montessori School, she was a guide for the Young Children's Community (18 mos - 3 years) at Forest Bluff Montessori School.

I came to meet and befriend Patty in 2010 when I took my first steps into the Montessori Community at the AMI training center in Milwaukee Wisconsin. It didn't take me long to come to admire Patty for her calm temperament, deep-rooted respect for all people, and passion for Montessori. She is the type of person that embodies the idea of "better together" by encouraging others to learn more about Montessori and sharing her years of experience to help families find their way to incorporating Montessori philosophy and practices at home and at school.

Patty and her husband, Scott, have three children all of whom were raised guided by the Montessori philosophy. Here Patty shares qualities she sees in her children, attributed to one of the foremost principles of Montessori, respecting the child.

I hope you enjoy reading her reflections as much as I have!



## How Montessori Education Shaped our Family

by Patty Eggerding

I became a Montessori educator after college. What first drew me to Montessori was the respectful nature of interactions between the adults and the children. A living example of how beautifully a community can function when respect is modeled by the adults. I knew I wanted this for my life and for my family. My husband, who is a high school administrator, quickly saw the amazing academic strengths in a quality Montessori program and quickly agreed that the method made sense for our children. The support we have received from many gifted and kind Montessori guides over the years has made us better parents and better humans.

I am blessed with three children Peter (21), Lily (18), and Jenna (14). I would say that all of them are voracious readers, curious learners, goal-oriented, and committed to social justice. They have distinctly different personalities and interests. The following are some of the positives we see in our children that are directly related to their Montessori roots:

**They are not afraid to stand up for what is right** - If someone is being teased or discriminated against, they are the first to point it out and to support the person. They are direct, yet respectful. They are not afraid to stand up for what they believe in.

**They continue to be curious learners and have confidence in their academic pursuits** - Peter is studying diplomacy in college, Lily is studying child psychiatry in college, and Jenna is convinced she would like to study exoplanetology. Jenna also has a passion for math that she accredits to the Montessori materials.

(cont.)

**They are kind** - They have had their share of sibling arguments, but this pandemic showed me how close they are to each other. We were all home together for 5 months during this stressful time and it made us even closer. Favorite pandemic perks...lots of board games, cards, and my son made me tea every evening as a caring gesture when I got home from work.

**They are responsible** - We got a puppy during the quarantine. My children all helped care for him, walk him, and love him. We shared in the delight and hard work of a new dog. Our puppy knows every trick in the book because they took pride in teaching him new commands

**They care about beauty and order in their environments** - Montessori environments are ordered and aesthetically pleasing. Montessori believed that if we surround a child with beauty and order, the child will want to live in a place with beauty and order. I was not sure if this was going to work out when my children were younger and I looked in their bedrooms! I can assure you that they are now very organized and seek to make their environments aesthetically pleasing, each with their own flare.

**My children are articulate** - They communicate their feelings and choose their words carefully. They tell us things even when they know that it might be hard. When they make a mistake they own up to it.

**They are highly social and make friends easily** - They are loyal to their friends.

**They care about the community** - They have been highly involved in their youth groups at our church and various clubs that they support. They realize the benefits of being a part of a group with people you can support and receive support from.

**They are resourceful** - They all began baking and cooking as toddlers. They are all foodies and have been able to prepare meals for themselves and our family since the early elementary years. This has been such a positive contribution to our family. So helpful for two working parents. Maybe the best part is knowing they are ready for life on their own when they left for college.

**They are fiercely independent** - They have always taken pride in the things they can do for themselves. If they don't know how to do something, they ask and learn and it becomes their work. They have always enjoyed sleep away camp, traveling, and adventures. They love to try new things.

It feels strange to put all of these positive qualities down on paper about my children. The truth is that we faced many of the challenges that all parents face. They are not perfect children, and we are not even close to perfect parents. We are all committed to learning and growing as we continue to evolve as a family. We do feel so fortunate to have had the support of our Montessori communities along the way. It has made a difference for all of us and improved our relationships with our children.

*Patty Eggerding is the Head of School at West Suburban Montessori School in Oak Park, Illinois. She has over 30 years of experience in Montessori schools in St. Louis and the Chicago area.*



## *Links of Love*

I have curated a short list of links about love, an apropos topic for February!

[The Science of Love in Childhood:](#)

[Conversations with leading experts in childhood love, adversity and mental health](#)

[When the Parental Relationship is Better, Children do Better](#)

[How a Parent's Affection Shapes a Child's Happiness Later in Life](#)

Enjoy the reading!