



HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

Shrewsbury Montessori School (SMS), previously the Montessori Center of Shrewsbury, was founded over 40 years ago when Mrs. Nancy Corkum began her mission to bring Dr. Maria Montessori's educational philosophy to children in Massachusetts, first in Dudley, Auburn, and then in Shrewsbury.

In 1972, Mrs. Nancy Corkum opened her first proprietary school, Treetops, in Dudley, Massachusetts. Initially, Treetops consisted of the youngest Corkum son, four preschool classmates, Mrs. Corkum as the Lead Teacher, and one Assistant Teacher. As enrollment increased between 1976 and 1981, she established the Children's House (CH) in Auburn, and classrooms located at the Fay School in Southborough, the Beal School in Shrewsbury, and Mt. Olivet Church in Shrewsbury. In 1986, Nancy and Keith Corkum purchased the property at 55 Oak Street, Shrewsbury, establishing the Montessori Center of Shrewsbury, Inc. Six classrooms were added to the house. Two additional classrooms were added in 1989. The All Purpose Room (AP Room) and the Media Center/library/language classroom were built in 1998.

In the fall of 2004, Mrs. Corkum announced her retirement and her intention to sell the School. A group of parents offered to help convert the School to a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. The parent group raised the necessary funds, secured a mortgage, and established the bylaws of the corporation. The SMS faculty continued in their roles through this transition.

David Lilly was hired as Interim Head of School in January, 2005. In July of 2007, Margaret Smetana was hired as Head of School. The Shrewsbury Montessori School is now in its tenth year of operation. It is a nonprofit, independent institution with two campuses: the Children's House of Auburn and the SMS in Shrewsbury. As of the 2015-2016 school year, enrollment stands at 27 students at the Auburn campus and 170 students at the Shrewsbury campus, for a total of 197 students. Although staff, campus facilities, and playgrounds have changed over time, the commitment to providing a strong Montessori education to children, as first envisioned by Mrs. Nancy Corkum, remains.

During the past two years the whole school community has worked diligently on gaining accreditation from the Association of Independent Schools of New England (AISNE). The visiting committee report speaks volumes to the commitment made by everyone at the School in recent years. SMS has balanced long standing traditions with innovative practices while at the same time dramatically reducing its debt load. SMS was characterized by the AISNE visiting committee, "as a school whose institutional maturation and progress have been striking. This is a school on the move and—even more exciting poised on the brink of expansion."



PROGRAM

Children's House

Shrewsbury Montessori School Children's House offers children ages three through six an environment designed to invite curiosity, foster inner discipline, and motivate children to learn. The multi-age Children's House classrooms span three years, including the Kindergarten year.

Practical Life activities include pouring, sweeping, tying, zipping, and buttoning, as well as practicing grace and courtesy. The Practical Life Curriculum increases a child's concentration, coordination, fine and gross motor skills, sense of order, and building the process of finishing a work. These experiences lead to the development of independence and foster relationships with others.

The Sensorial materials help young children gather information received through their senses. By seeing, smelling, tasting, hearing, and touching, children begin to classify and name objects such as colors, shapes, dimensions, and textures.

The Children's House offers a full component of Language, Math, and Cultural lessons, as defined on the Scope and Sequence page of the website. The rich Montessori curriculum allows children to learn essential academic skills while gaining problem solving and critical thinking skills. A Shrewsbury Montessori education builds character and a sense of global and social responsibility.

Shrewsbury Montessori Children's House students are assessed both academically and socially through classroom observations, informal and formal assessment, and a collection of the child's work. Student progress is shared with parents through Parent Conferences, Progress Reports, and as needed or requested throughout the year.

Elementary Program

Shrewsbury Montessori School's Elementary Program is divided into two levels: Lower Elementary (First through Third Year), and Upper Elementary (Fourth through Sixth Year). Both of these programs build on the academic foundation laid in Children's House.

The elementary child has an enthusiasm for learning, as well as much curiosity. The elementary child begins to move from concrete to abstract thinking. The Montessori curriculum integrates language, literature, mathematics, history, geography, and science. The elementary teacher prepares the environment with this in mind and offers an interdisciplinary approach. Children see connections and develop creative and critical thinking skills. A collaborative, academic approach instills concepts of responsibility, independence, and the sense of belonging to a group.

The elementary child receives lessons and works on projects in individual, small group, and large group formats. Collaboration allows a child to practice the decision-making process. Students progress at their own pace, within the framework of the curriculum.

Shrewsbury Montessori School students are assessed both academically and socially through classroom observations, a collection of the child's work, and informal and formal (TerraNova) assessments that are given to Third through Sixth Year students annually. Student progress is shared with parents through Parent Conferences, Progress Reports, and as needed or requested throughout the year.

Elementary students develop daily work plans and choose the order of their daily work. This deep respect for the needs of the child to order his and her own day aids the development of internally motivated young people. Confident, engaged learners grow to be leaders in the classroom and the world beyond Shrewsbury Montessori School. The SMS elementary program culminates with the sixth Year Experience, which includes such educational opportunities as a week at Old Sturbridge Village, Model United Nations, lead roles in the Upper Elementary Musical, a week at Nature's Classroom, a Latin Banquet, and a Mystery Trip with the Head of School.

The SMS teaching faculty is comprised of dedicated professionals who model strong work ethics and collaboration while delivering a challenging curriculum to the students. All SMS Lead Teachers hold Montessori credentials, which include a rigorous training program and a supervised year-long internship in addition to their academic degree. Faculty who teach special curriculum in art, computer, music, and French also hold degrees.

All staff members bring their individual styles and experiences to create a respectful, inclusive environment in which every child can thrive. SMS staff members additionally believe in the key attributes of integrity, humor, and resilience that further contribute to a positive school environment.

At SMS a visitor will find students merrily beaver away on one project or another in a carefully crafted and ordered room that draws students in and engages them in important work.

FACILITIES

The campus at Shrewsbury Montessori is a beautifully maintained building located on Oak Street in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, with a second building located in Auburn, Massachusetts, that houses the Montessori Children's House of Auburn. The original house on Oak Street was purchased by the Corkums in 1986. Since that time, two additions have been made including additional classrooms and an All-Purpose Room that serves a multitude of functions but acts specifically as a music and art room.

All spaces are very well cared for by the housekeeping professionals and, to an even great degree, the faculty that occupy the spaces. The teaching spaces are meticulously organized maximizing the instruction opportunities in every room. All take great pride in the SMS plant. The School is very committed to safety, as well. All exterior doors are managed by an advanced security system.

The plot of land where the Shrewsbury campus is located is very small, with only a small playground on the site and minimal parking. The School is bordered on three sides by Oak Middle School, a Shrewsbury public school. The limited size of the site presents a challenge as the School contemplates its continuing evolution.

The Auburn Campus is a log cabin built as a one-room schoolhouse. It is every bit as well cared for as the main Shrewsbury Campus building and very much a gem in its own right.

