

ARBOR MONTESSORI SCHOOL



THE *Montessori* OBSERVER

"This is education, understood as a help to life; an education from birth, which feeds a peaceful revolution, and unites all in a common aim."

—Maria Montessori

Spring 2009



Congratulations!!!



Arbor's Class of 2009

Not Pictured: Levi Siegelman, Leigh Kathryn Vines, Anna Vernon

O *Montessori* OBSERVER

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Hannah Brown

Hannah Brown

Hannah started at Arbor when she was nine years old. Her first teachers were Betty and Sue. She has enjoyed all the people and the freedom of the Montessori classroom. She says Arbor has helped her “learn how to learn and build a strong sense of community.” Her middle school memories include “the time Leigh Kathryn fell off the risers in math class” and doing the costumes with Mia for the middle school plays. “I really enjoyed being a co-costume designer for Peter Pan with Mia. It was a really fun process to design and sew the costumes and get to see them worn on stage. It could be stressful at times, but we all worked really well together and we were proud of the way they turned out.” Hannah also liked basketball season, which she says was “definitely a highlight of the year. I had so much fun playing with everyone. We were a small team, but by the end of the season,



Paula Cheng

Paula Cheng

we improved so much.” Hannah will be going to Decatur High School in the fall. She would like to be remembered as “the coolest tall girl you have ever met and an all-around nice person who is determined to succeed.”

Paula entered Arbor at age four, in Cheryl and Becca’s class. She says that she has enjoyed the people more than anything during her time here. “I love being around the Arbor students. And the Arbor community in general is so caring and supportive.” She liked attending Coffee House when she was in lower elementary, but when she got to middle school, she saw that it was really a “mini-business.” She also values her participation in debate: “I remember being furious with my Mom for making me join the debate team. But I’m glad she



Annabelle Cook

did, because it's been a lot of fun and has taught me so many important skills." Paula says she will miss all the traditions like going to Bruster's after Spring Concert. "Spring concerts have always been really enjoyable for me. I remember being in Lower Elementary and thinking, 'Whoa! Those middle schoolers are good!' Now, in middle school, I think, 'Aww, those kids are so cute!'" Paula also liked the trips: she says of Costa Rica: "...We visited an amazing country, saw breathtaking landscapes, and cute animals, but we also became much closer as a class and had "FUN!" Paula would like to be remembered as "just Paula; whatever they remember about me, I just hope it represents me."

"Arbor has given me the people-skills, learning skills, motivation and knowledge to survive anything that thrown at me. I will miss everything and everyone!"



Caroline Courtney

Annabelle Cook

Annabelle came to Arbor when she was eleven and was a student in Kate's class. "The reason I came to Arbor was that it was a great school and when I visited, I felt welcome. Also, I wanted to do Montessori all the way through eighth grade." Annabelle really liked the production cycle, when the middle school focuses on producing a play. "...We work soooo hard, but it doesn't feel like it because we are all doing what we love." She also "loved Enrichment! My enrichment teacher was Stephanie. She was so fun! She was like a friend, but yet our teacher, too." She felt that participating in both Business Day in upper elementary and Market in middle school will help her a lot in the business world. She also feels that the middle school "eases you into homework really well. I feel really prepared for high school." Annabelle will be attending Peachtree Ridge High School next year. She would like to be remembered as "creative and nice."



Cameron Crawford-Mook

Caroline Courtney

Caroline's first teachers were Betty and Heather. "Even though I was new, I felt like I had known these people for years. That is what I love about Arbor. You always feel welcomed by everyone here." The things she will always remember are, "playing guitar in the window seat and eating lunch outside on Fridays." When asked about what she will miss most about Arbor, Caroline answered, "I will miss my friends so much, and, even though we are going different ways, I know we will all keep in touch. I have discovered things about myself and it is all because of the people I have met here at Arbor." Caroline was glad she was involved in debate team. "Starting from the bottom and working up to the top really gave me a clear understanding of what you can do when you really set your mind to it." In sports, she realized that "if one person won, it was really a vic-



Joe Crow



Riley Ellingson



Mia Hutchins

tory for the team.” Caroline will be going to Pace Academy next year, where she plans to spread the word about “the way Arbor kids are: Independent. Strong-Minded. And Motivated.” She continues, “Before I came to Arbor, I was not confident in myself. Arbor has given me the self-confidence to dream bigger, and work harder toward those dreams.” Caroline wants to be remembered as the girl “who would always help others, but was never afraid to stand up for what she believes in.”



Cameron Crawford-Mook

Cameron started at Arbor in the middle school, at age twelve. She has enjoyed the trips the most. “I came to Arbor because I liked how much freedom the students were allowed to have and how supportive the teachers are.” On trips, you get to know everyone really well, and you feel closer to everyone when you get home. And, they helped

me become more independent.” She also enjoyed the class plays: “They helped me realize how much I enjoy acting and gave me more confidence in front of people.” She always felt a sense of pride at every performance. “Debate helped me develop my arguing skills. We had two great coaches and I got to know the debaters well.” although she admits: “I probably spent more time laughing and doing strange things like trying to drink from the opposite side of a glass, than in serious practice rounds!” Cameron says, “I have only been at Arbor for two years, but I feel I have become a part of the Arbor community. Being here has given me more confidence to take risks and do things I might not be good at.” Cameron would like to do something in the medical field or in acting. She would like to be remembered as kind and trustworthy. Cameron will be attending Paideia in the fall.

Joe Crow

Joe started at Arbor at the age of eleven and entered Kate’s class. He has made a lot of friends here, and he says he will miss them because of their personalities, their strengths and even their weaknesses. He learned a lot about American history on the Boston trip and the middle school’s recent trip to Costa Rica taught him about different cultures.

The plays he describes as “awesome.” He feels that the new experiences and responsibilities he had at Arbor will prepare him for the future. When asked what he wants to be when he grows up, Joe said, “I want to be a superstar--and then own my own resort.” When Joe goes to Chamblee High School next year, he will “miss Arbor and all the people in it.”



Riley Ellingson

Riley was three years old when he entered Becca and Cheryl’s class.



Jordan Kesler



Abby Lester



Elizabeth Littlefield

He has always liked the fact that Montessori students don't have to sit at desks and can move around the classroom choosing different work. He remembers liking playtime when he was in elementary because it was a time to be "free and active." Riley says that during his time at Arbor he remembers many things, including being able to buy things on Business Day. The middle school trips taught him how to be a group leader and Medicine Bow taught him "fundamental things, like making a fire and cooking meals." Participating in various sports helped him learn the importance of being a team player as well as how "not to get down when we lost." Riley will be going to Lakeside High School and says he will miss a lot of his Arbor friends because they are going to different high schools. Riley wants people to remember him as "hard working and respectable."

Mia Hutchins

Mia says she came to Arbor middle school at age 12 because her parents felt this was the best place for her to continue her Montessori education. The thing she likes the most is the freedom in the classroom and the independence to choose and explore different subjects. Her favorite memories include the production cycle, basketball, and "telling Barb she looks like a Sesame Street Character." She liked trying different foods at the Diversity World Fair and in Costa Rica and liked working in the kitchen for coffee house.

In fact, she would like to be remembered as "one of the girls who made food for coffee house!" Mia might want to be a dance teacher someday.

Jordan Kesler

Jordan started at Arbor in Shiela and Laura's class at the age of two. She liked "getting to just be myself,

let loose, and enjoy learning in a loving environment. The freedom and independence that I get helps me with everything I face in life." She remembers the trips as "fun, scary, and a grand opportunity," and pizza day as "Hard Work!" I will miss all of my friends and teachers who have guided me through good times and bad times. She says, "My experience at Arbor is a memory in itself and I will always cherish that memory." Jordan would like to be a therapist, a journalist, or anything with the fashion business, and would like to be remembered as: "the word 'fabulous' come to life." Jordan will go to Decatur High School next year.

Abby Lester

Abby's first teachers were Cheryl and Becca and she has been at Arbor since she was four years old. She has enjoyed the middle school trips: "I think our class trips made our class closer. Boston was at the end



Sophie Maschinot



Talia Meyers



Olivia Naegle

of seventh grade, so it was more like saying goodbye. But Costa Rica and orientation I think made everyone feel more comfortable around each other. And they were all tons of fun and I won't forget them." Abby says "the education at Arbor is really good, so that will help me a lot in the future. It also taught me to be free and independent." She has enjoyed learning the "basics" of music and feels she has "never really grown out of doing art." When Abby is an adult she would like to be a "secret agent, a movie critic, or a Coke taste-tester. And I also want to travel all over the world." She would like to be remembered as "fun, happy, and super cool." Abby says, "Arbor was awesome and even though I am excited for high school, I am going to miss it SO much. And I will never forget the people." Abby will attend Woodward Academy for high school.



Elizabeth Littlefield

Elizabeth entered Arbor at the age

of eleven and Betty and Heather were her first teachers. She came to Arbor because it continued her Montessori education "and also because I had heard really good things from a friend." She will miss her teachers: "having a really comfortable and close relationship with them has been really nice." She enjoyed the class plays; "I always counted down the days until the play cycle started. When Elizabeth reflects on her experiences here, she says, "I think Arbor has helped me try harder. Before I attended Arbor, I was ok with not finishing my work. But as I've grown and been supported/challenged by my teachers, I am more confident with myself as a whole and am harder on myself (which is a good thing!)." She says Arbor has helped her continue to enjoy sports: "Hanging with your friends and getting stronger in sports is the perfect combination. I learned to push myself even farther than 'ok,' and that has helped in sports and in education in general. Instead of only

running 75%, I will run 90%, which is HUGE for me!" Elizabeth will be going to St. Pius X next year. She is not sure how she wants to be remembered, she just hopes it's "all good."



Sophie Maschinot

Sophie has been at Arbor since she was four. Her first teachers were Shiela and Kyle. Sophie feels that she has grown up here: "From primary to middle school, I've had countless great experiences. I'm not sure you would be able to find another place like Arbor." Her fondest memories include 'absolutely hilarious moments' with her friends, and will miss most of all the sense of closeness she has with her classmates and teachers.

She liked everything: sports, drama, Coffee House, and Arts Night, and auction projects. "From day one Arbor has taught me to work through conflicts, build my self-confidence, speak my mind, help others, and the importance of community. It has



Shivani Patel



Christopher Roberts



Morgan Saylor

given me the foundation to accomplish what I want in my life.” She wants to do something she really enjoys, “something meaningful.” Sophie will attend the Grady Magnet Program next year. She would like to extend special thanks to Jan Deason “for being an awesome teacher and headmaster.”



Talia Meyers

Talia’s first teachers were Deedee and Suzanne, when she entered their class at the age of three. She has enjoyed the freedom in the classroom to explore her own interests and work independently. She really enjoyed working with clay in art and learning how to play the recorder in music. Pizza Day was always great because “there were so many different jobs and everybody got a chance to do something cool.” Business day was a “fun way to earn extra money and then spend it on food.” In the future, Talia might want to

be a magazine editor. She would like to be remembered as a fun Community Meeting co-facilitator. Talia will miss her friends and teachers when she goes to Decatur High School next year.



Olivia Naegle

Olivia has been at Arbor since she was three and a half and started in Arabelle and Miranda’s class. “As I have spent my time here,” she says, “I have found more and more ‘favorite parts’ of Arbor.” She will miss “walking around the track with Talia and Annabelle. We talked about everything from what we had for dinner the night before to stupid celebrity couple names!” She liked the class trips, especially Boston, and the many trips to Medicine Bow. In art, she enjoyed stone carving with Patty: “I might be interested in taking a stone carving class next year, but I doubt it will be as much fun.” One of the things she likes about Arbor is

that it is supportive of not just her goals, but her classmates’ goals, as well--and that has “greatly helped us all.” Olivia will be attending St. Pius X next year and someday would like to become a pediatric dentist.



Shivani Patel

Shivani entered Arbor middle school at age twelve. She participated in every sport Arbor offers and had a great time, especially in basketball: “At the beginning of the season, I didn’t think I would be able to score a three-pointer, but at the end, in the tournament, the ball rolled off the tips of my fingers, hit the backboard square, and went into the basket. I was surprised and happy at the same time.” Shivani credits the debate team with improving her “reading skills, debating skills, and reasoning skills.” She will miss her friends and the teachers “because they were always there for me.” Shivani would like to be a



pharmacist. She will enter Norcross High School next year.



Christopher Roberts

Christopher was three years old when he entered Arabelle and Miranda’s class. He thinks Arbor is “a great place to go through school because of the freedom and the caring community that surrounds us.” He has liked all of the trips he has taken, from lower elementary field trips to museums all the way to the middle school trip to Costa Rica. One of his favorite memories is from Music Night when he was in Kate’s class and they “did Star Wars” on the recorder and xylophones. He remembers waiting for his pizza at lunch time when he was in lower and upper elementary. Now, as an eighth year, Christopher has shared the duties of Pizza Day co-manager with Jordan Kessler. He still thinks that “Pizza Day is definitely one of the best days of the month.” Christopher is proud of Arbor’s ecological philosophies and methods: “The way that the community cares for nature and ‘going green’ has always amazed me,” he says. Christopher is on his way to St. Pius X for high school and someday would like to be an engineer.



Morgan Saylor

Morgan was nine when she started at Arbor in Cindy’s class. She liked the independence and



Shannon Setili

“openness to a fun way of learning.” She remembers science fairs and business day, especially the time she made “cookie hot dogs” which turned out to be a big hit. Morgan always enjoyed class plays and treasured her opportunity to direct the middle school’s most recent play, Peter Pan. She wants to be remembered as the “short but spunky young girl who demonstrated the most beautiful manners and was always willing to work hard.” She also had the exciting chance to intern at the Cartoon Network. “That was one of the best experiences I think I’ve had, and something that I know I could have only done if I went to Arbor.” Morgan feels that Arbor has taught her independence and perseverance and will take these qualities with her to Decatur High School and perhaps into an acting career someday.



Levi Siegelman

Shannon Setili

Shannon enjoyed Arbor since the age of three when she was in Cheryl and Becca’s class. She had fun making up songs in primary, putting on plays in elementary, and traditions through out her time here, like the Diversity World Fair and trips to Bruster’s after Music Night. Shannon learned a lot from the middle school trips and shares this insight: “When you go out of Georgia, and travel to someplace new, it gives the class a kind of understanding of itself, the group, as a whole. Also, to be in ‘school’ in a place you’re not used to lets you experience the place differently.” She also liked how the plays took on a life of their own, when “everyone in the class starts calling each other by their characters’ names.” Shannon would like to do “something creative” when she is an adult, and for now is looking ahead to Paideia, where she will attend high school. She would like to be



Anna Vernon

remembered as the kid that reminds you of you when you were her age. “Unless I don’t. Remember me anyway you want. But that doesn’t mean that’s who I am!”



Levi Siegelman

Levi came to the middle school at age twelve. He enjoyed many things: the class trips, learning about himself through sports and drawing, and especially “the freedom and flexibility to make my own decisions and to be who I am.” When asked how Levi wants to be remembered, he said, “I want to be one of those kids that is still thought of for some little way I impacted your life, whether it was looking you in the eye while shaking your hand and saying thank you, or being there for you when you needed to talk. Finally, I want you to remember me as someone YOU had an impact on.” Levi will



Leigh Kathryn Vines

be attending Yeshiva Atlanta High School. “I do not know what I want to do when I grow up, there are too many interesting options, but I know I want to be a gentleman, a scholar, a husband, a good father, a good friend, and a good person over all.” One of the most important things Levi learned from Arbor is that “what matters is that you put your all into what you are doing.”



Anna Vernon

Anna’s first teachers were Shiela and Kyle when she started at Arbor at the age of five. She has always liked the fact that “everyone knows everyone and the people are really nice and fun to be with.” Some of her memories from Arbor include a lot of “drama about pencils!” and fun times on the playground in elementary. She feels that working with bees in middle school has been

a big responsibility. “I used to be scared of bees,” she says, “but now I don’t even think of them as insects anymore.” She enjoyed her internship at a veterinarian’s office, where she had hands-on experience working with animals, including a ferret. Anna will be attending St. Pius X next year, and she may want to be a writer someday. She wants to be remembered as a person who is going to “do something big.” This is what Anna has to say about her time here: “Arbor has left me really independent, but it’s also helped me to learn in every experience I have, so now wherever I end up, I’m always going to be learning and thinking and continuously moving forward.”



Leigh Kathryn Vines

Leigh Kathryn started her Arbor education at the age of two in Arabelle’s class. She remembers Business Day fondly: “I loved Business Day ever since first grade when I first went and I loved buying all the good food and stuff.” She also liked working on her part of the auction projects “all through the years, in every class.” She has really enjoyed the middle school trips to Costa Rica and Boston. She says, “I felt like I got so much closer to everyone on those trips.” Leigh Kathryn thinks being at Arbor has helped her with social skills and self-discipline. She hopes to be a rock star someday and would like to be remembered as a “really cool person.” Leigh Kathryn will attend St. Pius X next year.

The Third Plane of Development: The Adolescent

By Annie Frazer, Middle School Teacher

Adolescents in our society have an undeserved bad name. They are seen as unreasonable, negative, lazy—you've heard the stereotypes. Today's adolescent is as misunderstood as the small child was in Montessori's time,



when little children were considered savages incapable of graceful movement or good manners.

So who is the adolescent, really? Maria Montessori defined the third plane of development as the ages from twelve to eighteen. The first sub-plane, from age twelve to fifteen, is a period of intense, rapid growth and development as dramatic as the burst of growth in the first three years of life. After the intellectually-driven, stable second plane (age six to twelve), the physical, emotional and intellectual changes young adolescents experience can be unsettling for themselves and their families.

Adolescents may become much more emotional as they enter a period of sensitivity to social justice and personal dignity. They need to be treated with respect and are very aware of injustice in the world around them. Maria Montessori viewed adolescents as social new-



...The adolescent wants to know how the facts connect to each other and how they can be used to do good in the world.

borns—they are newly born into adult life and society, and they need tender and protective care as they learn to navigate the complicated society they live in.

Adolescents are not intrinsically negative, but thoughtful and critical. They want to put their boundless energy toward improving society-- in-

cluding the society of the class and even the family! When they have the opportunity to participate in decision-making and influence their surroundings, their eye for how things could be better becomes a



wonderful asset.

Teachers and parents sometimes mistakenly view the developmental shift from an intellectual to a practical orientation as academic laziness. Rather than being interested in facts for their own sake, as the second plane child is, the adolescent wants to know how the facts connect to each other and how they can be used to do good in the world. The stereotypical adolescent complaint, "Why do we have to learn this?" is actually a statement of deep need: the need to apply knowledge, to put what one learns to good and productive use.

When the school environment supports the specific needs and characteristics of early adolescents, they blossom into generous, compassionate and insightful young adults. So how does a Montessori adolescent program meet these needs and create space for the noble adolescent to emerge?

First of all, the adolescent community must be supportive and challenging, providing an environment where students can learn to navigate the relationship between themselves as individuals and their group or society. Community meeting discussions can be long and difficult as students work through issues affecting the class. Although an outside observer might be surprised at the time it can take to address a seemingly simple issue, these conversations are deeply grounded in the search for justice. Students work hard to listen to each other with compassion and to understand others' perspectives, supporting the dignity and worth of each member of the group. The empowerment gained from achieving justice through their own efforts in their small society makes it easier

to think about confronting injustice in the larger society.

Academic work in a Montessori environment is also geared toward meeting the students' developmental needs—their needs for self-expression, the development of the psyche, and preparation for adult life. Meaningful work that benefits the larger community is a key aspect of Montessori education for the adolescent. Academic work is exciting when it leads directly to applications, so Montessori adolescents learn about chemical reactions in the course of making soap to sell at the market; they learn about watersheds and freshwater ecosystems as they collect data for a statewide Adopt-a-Stream program; they learn about plant biology in order to be able to provide for the needs of the vegetables in the garden that will help to feed their community.

The development of independence is crucial to Montessori education at any stage. The first plane child learns to care for herself and her surroundings, putting on her own clothes, pouring her milk, and cleaning up after a spill. Children in the second plane of development

further develop their independence by arranging outings and learning to navigate the world beyond their classroom. In the third plane of development, it is most important for the adolescent to develop economic independence. Montessori identified economic activity—production and exchange of goods and services—as the fundamental mechanism of society. Students in Arbor's middle school grow vegetables, make soap, and design jewelry and other goods to sell at market; they collect and process orders for pizza and assemble salads to serve to younger students and staff on pizza day; and they serve customers home-baked goods at coffeehouse. Student-run businesses allow students to participate in the most basic aspect of society while gaining the self-confidence that comes of knowing their own power to act.

The negative stereotypes of adolescents in our society owe much to the inappropriate environments most teenagers are forced to inhabit. At Arbor, we are privileged to see adolescents in their natural environment: moody sometimes, certainly; critical and sensitive, yes; and also loving, exuberant, energetic, and hopeful.

Where do Our Graduates Go From Here? On to High School!

Hannah: Decatur High School

Paula: Pace Academy

Annabelle: Peachtree Ridge High School

Caroline: Pace Academy

Cameron: The Paideia School

Joe: Chamblee High School

Riley: Lakeside High School

Mia: Decatur High School

Jordan: Decatur High School

Abby: Woodward Academy

Elizabeth: St. Pius X

Sophie: Grady Magnet School

Talia: Decatur High School

Olivia: St. Pius X

Shivani: Norcross High School

Christopher: St. Pius X

Morgan: Decatur High School

Levi: Yeshiva Atlanta High School

Shannon: The Paideia School

Anna: St. Pius X

Leigh Kathryn: St. Pius X



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On to Middle School!

In alphabetical order: Joelle Borchers, Daniel Bowen, Bernadette Bridges, Davis Cavanagh, Bryce Cetron, Rebecca Entrekin, Alex Gazmararian, Rylee Hafitz, Ben Heller, Kate McReynolds, Ernest Moore, Gibson Moxley, Alexandra Murdoch, Ansley Murphy, Jacob Ragozzine, David Robinson, Aaron Tozer-Rich