



# eyes wide open

THE SPRINGMONT NEWSLETTER - ALUMNI EDITION  
Winter 2018

## IN THIS ISSUE

### 2 Alumni Panel

#### Montessori in the News

### 3 Follow Us

#### First Impressions

### 4 On the Farm

## Springmont Welcomes Jon Alden

Springmont welcomed Jon Alden as our new Head of School, effective July 1, 2018. After an eight-month long, international search process which included the active engagement of students, faculty, staff, parents, trustees and alumni, Jon Alden was selected. Board Chair Frank Blake and Search Committee Chair Steve DeVinney wrote “Jon’s experience and dedication to moving Springmont forward while continuing to honor the school’s mission and cherished traditions



made the Board’s decision unanimous. Springmont’s community – students, teachers, administrators, staff and parents – is known for working together to maintain an environment that allows students to become informed, determined, socially-conscious, collaborative and resourceful citizens. We are confident that under Jon’s leadership our community will continue to work together to ensure that these hallmarks of a Springmont education will be available for many generations to come.”

Jon has been a head of school for 16 years, most recently serving as the head of the Nantucket New School where he increased enrollment by 25% and presided over a successful capital campaign. Prior to his post in Nantucket, he was the head of the Lowcountry Preparatory School in Pawleys Island, SC from 2009 to 2012 and the head of the Virginia Beach Friends School from 2002 to 2009. Jon earned his M.Ed. from Middle Tennessee State University in 1995 and his B.A. from Denison University in 1986.

In a letter to the community Jon wrote, “Students excel when they are engaged in their education and when they learn by doing. Not only do they achieve academic success, but they become lifelong thinkers, seekers and empowered citizens. Although I have not previously worked in a Montessori school, Dr. Montessori’s belief that “Education is a process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment” is completely in alignment with my own educational philosophy. I would maintain that any school that has goats, chickens and a turkey that has voluntarily called the campus its home is living Dr. Montessori’s vision very well. Springmont is clearly living its mission every day.”

Jon looks forward to being active in the Sandy Springs community, as he has been in Nantucket where he served on the board of the Nantucket Rotary Club and coached the Nantucket Student Lacrosse U11 team. Jon and his wife, Megan DuBois, have four children ranging in age from 16 to 26.

“Educating the mind  
without educating  
the heart is no  
education at all.”

- Aristotle

## Join us for the Alumni Panel on Thursday, January 10th!

Last January, after several years on hiatus, we brought back the Alumni Panel. Fifteen alumni returned to campus to speak with Upper Elementary and Middle School students and parents of students at all levels. Their thoughtful insight was appreciated by all in attendance. One family visiting campus for an Open House came by and shared that meeting our impressive alumni was one of the reasons they decided to send their child to Springmont.

So, by popular demand, we are assembling another Alumni Panel to follow our Open House on the evening of Thursday, January 10th.

We need your help informing the community of the value of a Springmont education. If you completed your 6th or 8th year here, we would love for you to join us! Alumni will have a half hour to mix and mingle followed by a semi-formal panel conversation. Alumni will speak with current parents and students about their experience at Springmont and how it prepared them for high school, college and beyond. If you are interested in attending please RSVP by emailing Lauren Stevenson at [l Stevenson@springmont.com](mailto:l Stevenson@springmont.com).

Our alumni are a remarkable testament to a Springmont education that nurtures the whole person - one that balances intellect, raw talent and ambition with personality, imagination and inspiration. Help us share that with our current and prospective families.



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## Montessori in the News

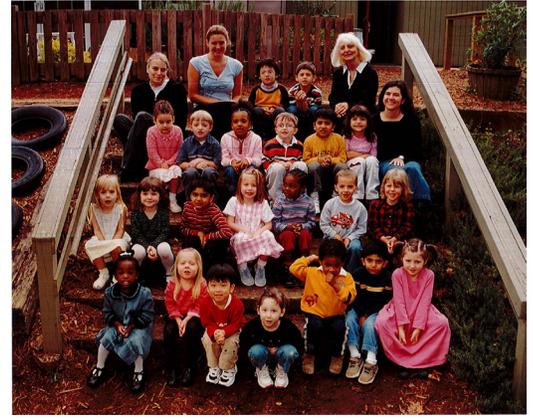
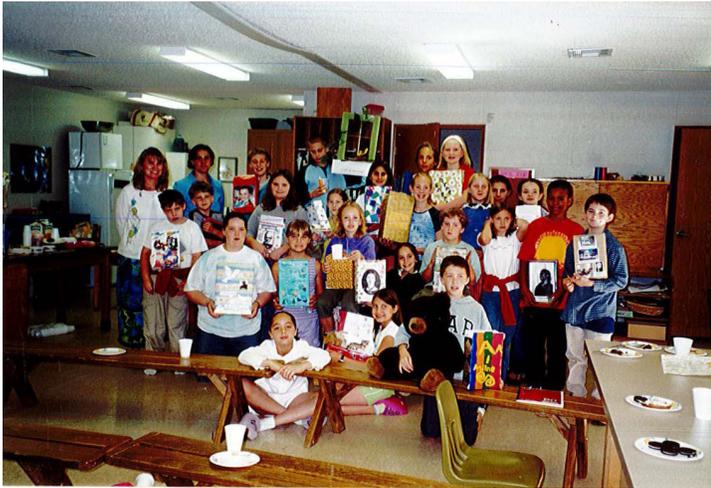
In late September, Jeff Bezos, owner of Amazon, who spent over a year considering the alternatives for his next philanthropic venture, announced that one of his two projects is pledging \$1 billion to fund “high-quality, full-scholarship, Montessori-inspired preschools in underserved communities”.

Montessori has been a priority for the Bezos family since Jeff attended a Montessori preschool. His mom recalls his years in Montessori as a time when he would be so engrossed in an activity, his teachers would have to literally lift him out of his chair to move him to the next activity (The Montessori Mafia, Wall Street Journal, April 5, 2011). Montessori shaped the way he thinks about the world and how he runs his company. Bezos recognizes the importance of a child’s early experiences, acknowledges the great impact of a child’s early years and asserts that Montessori principles offer a “giant leg up for any child”.

As you can imagine, Montessori professionals around the United States are ecstatic about his announcement, and Montessori organizations, including AMI, have joined Bezos in conversations about how to make his idea a reality. Allowing more young children to embrace lifelong learning, independent thinking, respectful interactions, and harmony with nature will ultimately lead to Bezos’ charitable goal of having positively impacted the world right now and into the future.

## Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for Photos and News

Be sure to follow Springmont Alumni Association on Facebook (@springmontalums) and Springmont Alumni on Instagram (springmontalumni) to enjoy old photos and stay up-to-date on Springmont Alumni news. Here are some of our recent #SpringmontTBT photos. (More on back page.)



## First Impressions from Jon Alden

As I started my classroom visits, I was struck by the level of independent engagement exhibited by our students. In each room, I had difficulty finding a single student who looked up from his or her work to see who opened the door. Though students were often clustered around tables, rarely were they working on the same task. The individual educational program students enjoy at Springmont is one of the biggest differences between our school and other non-Montessori schools that I have discovered. This cannot be achieved without a fundamental difference in the approach of the teacher. In fact, the use of the term “guide” rather than “teacher” in Montessori education speaks to this. Students are guided to learn independently and at their own pace and to follow their own passions while simultaneously learning core academics.

This concept of individualized learning was reinforced for me during our Parent Education Evening in September. As I stopped by each presentation, I heard teachers at each level explaining how they carefully observe each student so that they can interpret his or her current learning and modify the environment to meet the needs and interests of each student. The goal of the teacher/guide is to intervene less and less as the child develops this unique, independent engagement. What has impressed me most about our faculty is their ability to respect their students’ independence while being supportive and their ability to motivate students without the use of rewards or punishment even as they provide more and more independent work.



As Dr. Montessori said, “The greatest sign of success for a teacher... is to be able to say, ‘The children are now working as if I did not exist.’”

# On the Farm

by Michelle Wolfersberger



If you've been to campus recently, you've seen, first hand, how our "farm" has grown. Franklin the turkey has perhaps become our school's unofficial mascot! Springmont is also home to two sheep, King and Duke, and one goat, Jack. There are also two rabbits, Oscar and Emmy, and a tortoise, Shelby. Finally, we have a large flock of chickens including two roosters, Sheldon and Diego, and hens Sally, Jane, Belle, Snow White, Goldie, Batman, Amelia Egghart, Hen Solo, Mort, Sunny, Clover, Elizabeth, Victoria and Silly Lilly. Three chicks round out the flock, Thing 1, Thing 2 and Nugget.. With so many different species, and personalities, there's never a dull moment in Springmont's barnyard!



King and Duke are two Babydoll Southdown sheep and were a gift to

School Jerri King. They are 9 months old, and while small, are almost full-grown! This ancient breed originates from the South Downs of England where they were prized for their hardiness and wool. The breed arrived in the U.S. in 1803 but declined in popularity because they were too small and, in their native England, became extinct.

While they remain on the Rare Breeds registry, an intensive breeding program brought the breed back, and we fell in love with those adorable teddy bear faces all over again! Still prized for their wool (which, for you knitters out there, runs in the 19 to 22 microns range, putting it in the same class as cashmere) they are known for having sweet temperaments. They are also popular as "organic weeders" in vineyards and orchards because they don't damage the trunks or bark of the fruit trees, and of course, they fertilize as they go!

King and Duke are cared for by our Upper Elementary students who give them fresh hay and water daily while our Middle School students keep their paddock and barn clean using good old elbow grease and organic, non-chemical products. In the spring, students will have an opportunity to watch them get sheared, and we'll have lessons on how to prepare the fleece for yarn making. Their wool will be put to good, creative use in the classrooms!

## Springmont Throwbacks

