



# eyes wide open

Spring  
mont  
ATLANTA'S FIRST  
MONTESSORI SCHOOL

THE SPRINGMONT NEWSLETTER - ALUMNI EDITION

## IN THIS ISSUE

### AROUND CAMPUS

- 2 Reaccreditation  
Landschool Trips
- 3 Creek Kids  
Future Cities
- 4 Last Year's Dollars at  
Work  
Outdoor  
Enhancements
- 5 Authentic Economics

### STUDENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

- 6 Thanksgiving  
Outreach  
Play Me Again Pianos
- 7 Charity Efforts

### ALUMNI EVENTS & UPDATES

- 8 Alumni Gatherings
- 9 Stay Involved
- 10 Alumni Spotlight

The world is round so  
that friendship may  
encircle it.

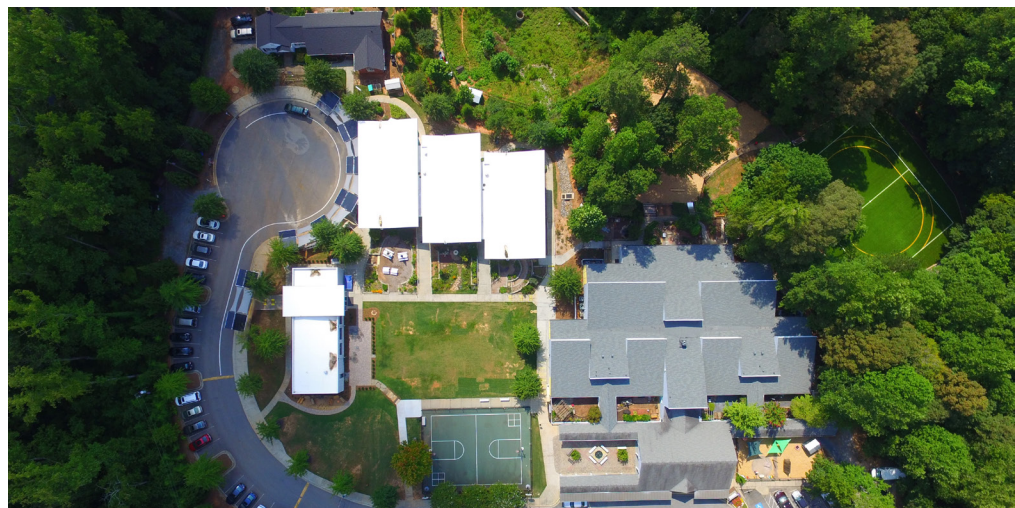
- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Admittedly, we should have done a better job keeping up with our alumni but we're working to be much better at it! Your stories are already our stories, and we tell and retell them regularly. We still share the story of the alum whose biggest difficulty moving to a larger school was getting the locker open – not algebra or history! We tell the story of the alum who wanted to take Latin in high school, and Lovett didn't have an entrance exam for it so they gave her the 9th grade final – and she aced it! We talk about the car modified to run on restaurant oil and the Stanford alum whose mom was worried he would never potty train. These stories are HUGE to prospective parents with questions about outcomes and current parents who can't help but worry. We tell the stories of the dissent when we changed the school name to Springmont - it shows the depth of your connection to your k-8 school, which is unheard of! Your journeys, endeavors and perspectives are important to our legacy, so now we're working to track you down!



Please help us tell more stories about you and your experiences here. We're glad for you to call us First Montessori, FMSA or Springmont, but the one thing parents always want to know is how their kids will turn out - your journeys help them imagine the possibilities. We would love to have you back to campus to see the improvements and the things that are still the same. You'll want to see for yourself the great things happening on our campus which is, perhaps, smaller than your childhood memories would indicate.

We're putting alumni on the walls – your work, pictures, accomplishments and quotes. Don't miss the opportunity to be represented and share your new stories with us!



Campus shot courtesy of Springmont Alumnus, Ryan Restifo

## REACCREDITATION... A REPUTATION OF WHICH TO BE PROUD!

Accreditation with SAIS (Southern Association of Independent Schools) and SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) wrapped up last spring with a resounding success. It was Springmont's third full accreditation since joining the inaugural joint accreditation with SACS and the regional SAIS. The four-person team from independent schools in the southeast met with a selection of Springmont stakeholders from each group (i.e. faculty, students, parents and Board). They were highly complimentary of the level of engagement of each group as well as Springmont's emphasis on outdoor learning and the quality of programming inside the classroom, remarking, "Springmont is on the verge of breaking out!"

A summary of commendations and recommendations for Curriculum Enhancement is as follows:

### Commendations

- Visioning and implementing the Plus program to deepen the support for individual learning needs
- Providing thorough feedback to parents via the Progress Report, demonstrating the depth and breadth of progress and expectation at Springmont
- Employing Division Heads who support Teachers and are intricately involved in the success of each student
- Delivering superior Montessori practices and programming

### Recommendations

- Clarify the expectation of expanded technology use based on each developmental stage and in keeping with Montessori philosophy
- Define the Middle School program as the pinnacle of the Springmont experience
- Engage families and staff in a discussion regarding the vision for an athletic program

A summary of all commendations and recommendations is available on the school's website.

---

## UPDATE ON BELOVED LANDSCHOOL TRIPS

Each fall and spring, the Poplar Springs Landschool trips are eagerly anticipated by students and Teachers, and many alums consider these trips among the highlights of their Springmont experience!



Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary and Middle School students had their annual fall overnight trips to our 86-acre Landschool campus in Northwest Georgia. These experiences are part of the curriculum and include bountiful opportunities to enjoy hands-on learning experiences and to study, explore and interact with nature, away from our typical urban lives.

Students become more environmentally aware, extend their lessons and develop a lasting connection with the natural world as a result of visiting the Landschool. Researchers

have shown that this favorably impacts children's management of every day stress, improves cognitive functioning and enhances one's sense of well-being. These trips are also an opportunity to develop social skills and competence. Making the trip as a class further strengthens bonds of friendship as students spend an extended period of time together in a setting beyond the four walls of the classroom.





## "Creek Kids"...New Programming and Campus Enhancements

Every Monday at 11:40, the Creek Kids meet! Creek Kids is a volunteer-based club for Lower Elementary students led by Thomson Chuites, Springmont's Outdoor Education Teacher, and supported by the Lower Elementary Teachers and Assistants. All Lower Elementary children are invited to be members of this service-oriented club whose goal is to clean up and beautify the creek that runs through the natural play area developing behind the Field.

The club began with trash pickup from the I-285 runoff that flows into the creek. A catchment system to filter the water during heavy rainfalls was built, and riparian plants will be planted along the catchment to further help purify the water. The children are so eager to help and are devoted to creating a healthy water system on campus. This dedication shows as they voluntarily work during recess time!

With the help of Billy Staton, our Facilities Manager, a large pallet (originally used to



bring our Tyrannosaurus skull model to campus) was repurposed as a bridge that will span the creek at one of the two crossings along the proposed creekside trail. It took six Creek Kids (with Thomson's help!) to transport the heavy pallet down to the trailhead, where it was installed after the trail was cleared and defined.



Future goals for the Creek Kids will be testing water quality, working on creek walks, removing invasive species, planting native riparian plants and creating a safe, natural play area for Springmont children to enjoy for years to come.

## Middle School Students Prepare for Second Future Cities Competition

Some alumni may remember the competition of 2012. As part of their preparation for the 2016-17 Future Cities Competition, Middle School students have been exploring engineering. One of their exercises was a Marshmallow Challenge where groups of students were challenged to build the tallest possible structure in just 18 minutes. Given 20 sticks of spaghetti, 1 yard of string, 1 yard of tape and 1 marshmallow, what can you build? Not only did they learn about physics and materials science, but also about collaboration and cooperation - the building blocks of teamwork!



Over several months, students learn about the engineering process, project management, city features and infrastructures, zoning, city planning and model building to ultimately design and create a "future city."



How can you help? The Middle School is looking for professionals to come in and share their knowledge and expertise with the students. If you, or someone you know, works as an engineer, technical professional, architect, city/urban planner or city manager, contact Jillian Elleby at [jelleby@springmont.com](mailto:jelleby@springmont.com).



## SPRINGMONT FUND - Last Year's Dollars at Work

Thanks to donors to the 2015-2016 Springmont Fund, our campus has some new features for our community to share! Students and faculty already enjoy these new enhancements:

- A north/south trail (The Soba Trail), promotes exploration and allows students access to the creek for lessons on botany, ecology and hydrology.
- Climbing apparatuses create a safe place for children to explore their natural inclination to climb and engage in open-ended play.
- A new sound system was purchased to enhance student performances and school gatherings.
- Parking congestion was eased by adding overflow parking for faculty and staff behind the Fine Arts Cottage.
- Antonia's Fountain received a makeover, beautifying our courtyard.
- IT upgrades enhanced the curriculum in Art, Music, Middle School and Plus programs.
- What was formerly above ground drainage will soon be a community garden and inviting space for students to read.



### OUTDOOR ENHANCEMENTS...

We were busy over the summer months...busy with outdoor enhancements for childrens' learning and exploration! As mentioned above, the Springmont Fund brought us a number of new climbing and balancing structures, as well as the facelift for Antonia's Fountain and the start of the Soba Trail, located behind the Field! The students are already quite engaged in play and exploration!





# The Springmont Festival- Authentic Economic Instruction

by Jillian Elleby and Marsha Fleming, Middle School Teachers

The Middle School Fall Festival is a Springmont tradition. Families flock to the cul-de-sac after the Montessori Mile and dashes on the Field; many enjoy the face painting, cotton candy and variety of games for all ages offered by the Middle School. As some of you may know, the Festival is planned and run entirely by the Middle School students. What you may not know, is how much effort, thought, planning and learning go into this event.

An important and unique aspect of Springmont's Middle School program is the students' micro-economy. Maria Montessori wrote that schools should "put the adolescent on the road to achieving economic independence." We do this by allotting time in our weekly schedule to address our class' micro-economy endeavors which include the Festival,



Pizza Shop lunch program, musical concessions and our clothing and textile recycling program. These economic ventures are taken on by our students to earn money towards a goal they have chosen.

Students structure the entire Festival from start to finish. They start making plans in August. They brainstorm a list of activities that would work best for their patrons. The students survey the Upper and Lower Elementary classes to get the opinions of their target audience. After deciding which booths to have and planning the logistics of each one, the students decide how much each activity should cost. All these things are decided through round table discussion with groups working towards consensus in every decision. They assign workers and tasks and decide operating procedures including how to market the event.

As guides in this endeavor, the Middle School Teachers ask pertinent questions and allow the students to debate, discuss and decide upon answers to these questions. Along the way, students connect processes and procedures to customer service and profit. After the Montessori Mile is over and the Middle School Festival has been cleaned up, the decision making and work is not over! Students count the

money, calculate costs and report their final profit. They also analyze each booth and decide which activities were most profitable and how to make them even more profitable for next year. And finally, the students must come to consensus on how to spend the money they made. Will they celebrate, invest, give or save? Financial independence is empowering and understanding economics is academically and developmentally appropriate and valuable as our students become young adults.





## THANKSGIVING OUTREACH

### The Legacy of Kids Care Club



As we have for more than 12 years, Springmont reached out to our wider community at Thanksgiving time. Again this year, Springmont was happy to provide the side dishes and breads for Sandy Springs United Methodist Church's 14th annual Thanksgiving Meal. Teachers chose a dish, families donated an ingredient or necessary item, and students (with assistance from parent volunteers, when needed) prepared the dish in class. As you can see from the pictures, this effort is quite an undertaking and engages students of all ages!



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONTINUES

### Springmont and Play Me Again Pianos Combine Forces

Springmont and Play Me Again Pianos joined together to donate a beautifully painted piano to the Woodruff Arts Center. Play Me Again Pianos is a non-profit organization started by Springmont parents Kelly and Jason Brett. Their goal is to place 88 gorgeous pieces of playable art around the Atlanta area. "Carly", the piano Springmont helped create, was donated to Play Me Again Pianos who then enlisted our help.





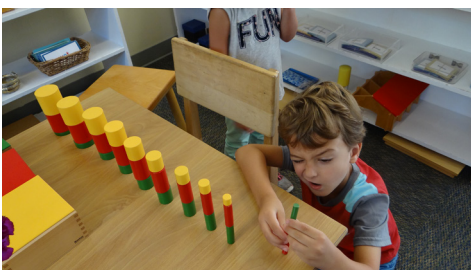
## COMPASSION REMAINS RELEVANT

### Charity efforts abound at Springmont Festival!



Thanks to the budding compassion of our students, the Springmont Festival included no less than five student-driven fundraisers for various charities!

- Chris' Class sold bracelets, tooth fairy pillows, monster pillows and aloe plants, and raised \$374.50 for the Haitian American Caucus, the organization Bonnie assisted in Haiti.
  - Livia's Class sold pesto made by the students from basil grown in the classroom garden and raised \$264.00. They joined Chris' class and sent this money to help families in Haiti.
  - Marina, Aidan and Felix, Lower Elementary students from Patricia's Class, sold fruit and lemonade, raising \$27 for polar bears. They sent this as a donation to the World Wildlife Federation.
  - MJ, Jeremy, Felix, Soham, Wilder, Abe and Asher, also in Patricia's Class, sold snack items and raised \$41 for Fur Kids animal rescue.
  - Upper Elementary students, Ellie and Julia, made hand-made booklets to raise money for breast cancer research.
- Way to go, students!

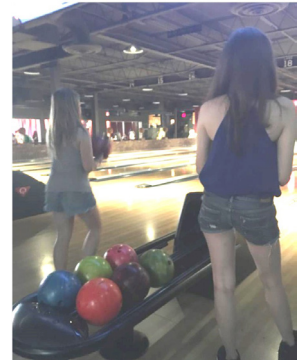




## Alumni Committee Hosts First Event at The Painted Pin

On August 27th the Springmont Alumni Committee hosted an Alumni Gathering at The Painted Pin. Everyone had a great time and CJ Turner walked away as the bowling champion!

This is the first time the Alumni Committee has hosted an event, and we hope to do many more around Atlanta and perhaps in other cities in the near future! If you'd be interested in joining the Alumni Committee and helping to organize events for 2017, please email Lauren Stevenson at [l Stevenson@springmont.com](mailto:l Stevenson@springmont.com).



## Montessori Mile, Springmont Festival & Alumni Brunch

For the second time Springmont hosted an Alumni Brunch following the Montessori Mile races. Several alumni participated in the Mile and alumnus Ryan Restifo took home the first place ribbon! We had a gorgeous, slightly cold day to come together and catch up with former classmates and teachers. Honored Guest Joe Seidel joined us and we even had a family join us from out of town!

Alumni enjoyed touring campus, meeting the various animals in our growing brood, connecting with students and parents and supporting the various charity fundraisers hosted by the classes. It was fantastic to have so many former students back on campus and faculty and staff were so proud to hear of the amazing things our alumni are achieving.



We plan to host this event again next year, and take your alumni picture on the library ladder, so stay tuned for the 2017 Montessori Mile, Springmont Festival & Alumni Brunch date to mark on your calendar!





## Save the Date for the Spring Auction

“In Our Own Backyard” will be an evening of fun and fundraising at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia (MOCA GA) on Saturday, April 8, 2017. Make plans to attend as you won’t want to miss the many wonderful silent auction items or the fabulous items made by each class that are part of the Live Auction!

Alumni over 21 are welcome! It’s an excellent means of supporting Springmont and reconnecting with faculty and friends.

### Don't Be A Stranger!



Julie Strickland and Jordan Dean



Kyle & Evan Strickland, Theresa Dean, Thomas Friedline

Don't wait for a special event to visit campus! We love it when alumni and alumni families return to Springmont!

As Director of Development & Alumni Relations, Lauren Stevenson is happy to host you on campus. Simply email her at [l Stevenson@springmont.com](mailto:l Stevenson@springmont.com) with your request including what classes you'd like to visit and dates of availability. This campus belongs to all of our community members! Come see what's new!



Livia Osorio, Dominique Straughn, Julie Strickland, Rosanne Tricoles



Sandi Weinstein Johnson, Staci Weinstein Rieder and son



Elsa Stallings, Juliana Dinkle, Julius Long, Margot Fumo

### Stay in the Know

Follow the Springmont Alumni Association on Facebook to stay up to date on school events, alumni gatherings, campus updates and a weekly #SpringmontTBT. The page will help us continue to build an alumni network and disseminate information as we reengage former students and student families!



Middle School 2009



Primary Class 1985



Upper Elementary Class 2000



## Where in the World are Springmont Alumni?

We want to know where you are and what you are doing! What mountains are you climbing!? What adventures lay ahead (or behind) you!? The Faculty and Staff at Springmont are constantly bragging about the the incredible alumni that leave Springmont and go out into the world to to become effective and compassionate people. We want to know and to share your proudest moments.

Have you graduated, accepted a new job, been married, welcomed a new baby, traveled the world, traveled the galaxy, or made an impact right here at home? These are accomplishments to share. Please email Lauren Stevenson at [l Stevenson@springmont.com](mailto:l Stevenson@springmont.com) to share your achievements, or those of your alumni child.

We are working on new features including “Alumni of the Week” on social media, a database of profiles available through the website and campus signage (like those seen below) to share just how amazing you are! Help us make these efforts a success and send in your information today!

*“You’re off to great places, today is your day! Your mountain is waiting, so... get on your way!”*  
-Dr. Seuss

*“First Montessori taught me the power of fearlessly putting my whole heart into my work, the people I meet and my collective dreams.”*

Molly Carpenter, PhD

First Montessori, 1999  
The Galloway School, 2005  
University of the South, 2009  
Dartmouth College, 2014



*“First Montessori helped prepare me for high school, college and beyond by giving me the confidence and the tools to be self-sufficient and independent. FMSA’s closer, first-name basis relationship between teacher and student also helped me to be respectful of my superiors, while not being intimidated by them.”*

Natalie Carrud

First Montessori, 2009  
Pace Academy, 2013  
Scripps College, 2017



*“I have a strong belief that my time spent as a First Montessori student contributed to my artistic potential. I wasn’t meant to learn in a traditional setting, and if I hadn’t attended First Montessori, I would have never pursued my creative calling.”*

Katherine Maxwell

Contemporary Moving Artist and Choreographer,  
First Montessori, 2004  
Blessed Trinity Catholic High School, 2008  
Kennesaw State University, 2012



*“While at Springmont, I gained a life-long love for learning as well as a global perspective that I use daily. Whether I am making movies or helping educate children in Africa, I have the authentic belief that through these experiences I am making a difference in the world around me.”*

Erin Bernhardt,  
Filmmaker and Impact Producer,  
2014 & 2015 TED Presenter  
Springmont Class of 1991



*“A Springmont student carries a genuine feeling of confidence, competence and self-reliance that he or she can successfully engage whatever challenge or endeavor might arise...because it’s true.”*

John W. Stephenson, Jr., Director  
Strategic Partnerships & Special Projects,  
Chick-fil-A, Inc.,  
Former President and CEO,  
College Football Hall of Fame  
Springmont Class of 1984



We hope to see you in 2017!





# Springmont Throwbacks

