

Education for Peace. Prepared for Life.



“Establishing lasting peace is the work of education;
all politics can do is keep us out of war.”

— Maria Montessori



A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

The promise we share

Prepared for Life. Rooted in Englewood.

From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

When a young child says, "I can do it myself," I hear the beginning of something lasting. The child is discovering what they can do. Over time, those small discoveries help prepare them to make choices, take responsibility and contribute to their community.

Early childhood is a period of extraordinary brain development. Experiences and responsive relationships help shape learning, attention and emotional regulation. Learning continues throughout life, but the early years deserve our strongest investment.

Montessori gives children daily practice in coordination, concentration and independence. Pouring water takes care. Choosing and completing work builds follow-through. Materials that reveal mistakes invite another try. Confidence grows as children become more capable, with freedom to choose within clear limits.

We protect the satisfaction of discovery and mastery: learning because the work itself matters. Hands-on language and mathematics build academic preparation. Children learn to follow fair rules, ask questions and own their choices.

Montessori makes room for wonder, reflection and compassion. In our public school, spiritual awareness honors every family's beliefs. Caring for a plant, helping a younger classmate and learning about other cultures help children understand that their choices affect others.

This year, financial pressures forced difficult choices. We kept our attention on the people and resources children rely on: their teachers, their classrooms and the support they need to learn.

Our educators, families, Board members, neighbors and supporters have helped us through this year's challenges and those that came before. I am grateful for the time, care and resources they continue to give.

In these pages, you will meet some of the children and adults behind our work. Their stories show what is growing here and why it deserves continued support.

Thank you for helping us keep Montessori education within reach for Englewood's children. I hope you will visit and see their work for yourself.

With gratitude,

Rita Nolan

Executive Director, The Montessori Network



From the Principal

Dear Friends,

Walk into any classroom at The Montessori School of Englewood and you will see children deeply at work. Our youngest learners are discovering they can care for themselves and their classroom. Our middle schoolers are tackling hard problems together and finding their voices. And our teachers are watching closely, ready with exactly what each child needs next.

That is what our theme this year means: Prepared for Life. Rooted in Englewood. We are a tuition-free public school, and we practice Montessori as it was originally created: for children in communities like ours. This year, 420 children ages 3 to 14 learned with us. Our promise to each of them is the knowledge, independence, and sense of belonging they need to shape their own futures.

In 2025–26, I saw that promise come to life. Students who are too often left behind elsewhere grew the fastest here, with our students with disabilities and English learners outpacing their classmates in math growth. More children stayed in class and learning, as suspensions fell by two-thirds. And families stepped into leadership, helping set goals for our school.

I also want to be honest: too many of our students are still working toward grade level in math. We have set clear goals for this year and are changing how we teach to meet them. Our children deserve nothing less.

This is where you come in. Your support helps make possible the things that set our school apart: therapists and counselors who serve children on site, teachers trained in authentic Montessori practice, beautiful learning materials, and programs that welcome families as partners. When you invest in TMSOE, you invest in Englewood's children and in the future they will build.

Thank you for standing with us. I hope you will visit, see our classrooms for yourself, and join us in the year ahead.

With gratitude,

Stephanie Toon

Principal

The Montessori School of Englewood





LOOKING AHEAD • 2026-27

Four focuses. One shared future.

Our priorities for 2026–27 connect classroom learning, family participation, financial stability and the leadership transition.

Accessible, high-quality Montessori education

01 Learning & Student Support

Strengthen Montessori instruction, coaching and targeted support. Review student work and intervention progress; respond to learning gaps.

02 Belonging & Community

Build attendance, family connection and meaningful participation. Listen to students, families and staff, offer accessible ways to share feedback, and show how it shapes decisions.

03 Financial & Program Sustainability

Align spending, staffing and programs with dependable resources. Review budgets and cash monthly; protect required services and fund priorities.

04 Leadership & Accountability

Prepare the leadership transition and clarify responsibility. Document decision rights, knowledge transfer and regular leadership reviews.

Review evidence → Adjust action → Report progress

Children growing in knowledge, independence and belonging.

Our 2026–2031 plans connect these four priorities. Leaders review progress with the Board, document needed changes and report back. The linked plans below set out the work ahead.

Explore our five-year plans:

[Board & Network Strategic Plan, 2026–2031](#)

[School Academics & SEL Strategic Plan](#)



Vision and mission

TMSOE mission & vision. Our school develops the potential of children and adults through Montessori education, honoring identity, academic growth and belonging. We envision access to affirming, high-quality Montessori learning for all children, led by well-prepared, culturally responsive educators.

MRC mission & vision. Montessori Residency of Chicago recruits, prepares and coaches a diverse community of educators for under-resourced schools. Its vision is a strong pipeline of Montessori teachers who help children become leaders and contributors in their communities.

What we value. Every child’s potential; identity and lived experience; inclusion by design; growth through evidence; and community ownership. Families help shape our school through Board service and parent advisory groups.

Our community at a glance

Children served, pre-K–8 during the year	420
CPS K–8 snapshot 2025–2026	355 students
Black	263 74.1%
Hispanic	79 22.3%
White	11 3.1%
American Indian / Alaska Native	1 0.3%
Two or more races	1 0.3%
English learners	55 15.5%
Students with disabilities	83 23.4%
School 20th-day count 2025–2026	392 students
Students in temporary living situations	13.27%
Low-income / free or reduced-price lunch	84.44%
Head Start funded slots March 2026	60
MRC new learners / graduates, summer 2026	9 / 3

Head Start | 2025–26 PIR enrollment records

74 children. Primary race/ethnicity: Black 68; Hispanic/Latino 4; American Indian/Alaska Native 1; White 1. Primary language: English 72; Spanish 2.

Figures describe different populations and dates. Head Start counts are enrollment records across the year; slots are funded capacity. Language is not an English-learner designation. K–8 percentages apply only to their listed snapshot. Categories may overlap.

Sources: TMSOE and MRC mission/vision webpages (summarized); CPS 2025–26 profile; charter renewal Table IV.C; DFSS March 2026 allocation; 2025–26 PIR enrollment workbook; MRC summer 2026 records. CPS separately reports 61.4% low income under a different measure.





CHILDREN BECOMING CAPABLE

I can do it myself.

Independence begins with an opportunity to try.



Hands-on discovery with Montessori number rods.

A classroom prepared for discovery

By Juan St. Mane

Edited from his classroom reflection

Small tables, materials within reach and room to work invite children to begin. They choose an activity, concentrate and repeat it. Each repetition gives them another opportunity to understand what the materials can show them.

With Montessori number rods, the learning begins before the counting. Children carry the rods to their workspace and arrange them for the activity. They then connect number names and written numerals with quantities they can see and handle.

The adult prepares the space, demonstrates carefully and observes. We offer the help a child needs while leaving room for them to do the work themselves.

Learning alongside a national community

TMSOE belongs to the Ideal Learning Head Start Network, where educators share practical ways to bring child-centered learning to publicly funded early childhood programs. We learn from one another and advocate for approaches that respect how young children learn.

Why Montessori transforms lives

Finishing a difficult task, choosing work and helping a classmate give children reasons to trust their abilities. These everyday experiences help them learn to persist, take responsibility and contribute.



A DAY OF POSSIBILITY • ELEMENTARY

A world to discover.

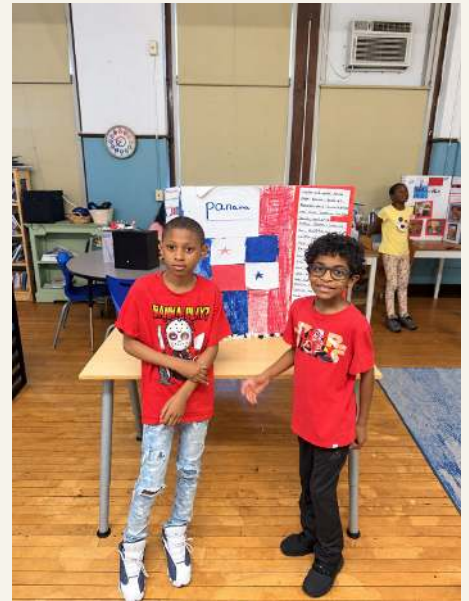
Research, teamwork and the confidence to share what we learn.



Costa Rica



Cuba



Panama

The studies of Costa Rica, Cuba and Panama pictured here connect maps, language and culture. Children explore how people live, what they share and what they can learn from one another.

Children follow questions, gather information and share discoveries. Preparing a presentation gives them practice in explaining ideas, listening to classmates and considering another perspective.

Montessori en Español: expanding access

70 English learners were enrolled at the 2025-26 20th-day count. A **\$25,000 PwC Foundation Reimagine grant**, awarded in June 2026, supports Spanish-language Montessori materials for our school and lays the foundation for a bilingual teacher-preparation pathway at Montessori Residency of Chicago. Planning began in July, connecting classroom learning with preparation for the adults who guide it.

Student research displays: Costa Rica, Cuba and Panama.



STUDENT & ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS

From Englewood, looking ahead

LEAH WHITE

A new chapter at Whitney Young

TMSOE valedictorian Leah White was accepted to Whitney Young Magnet High School. We celebrate her achievement with her family and teachers, and look forward to what comes next.

Markell Mosley

From TMSOE to the University of Illinois

In 2022, Markell Mosley graduated from The Montessori School of Englewood as valedictorian. Four years later, he earned that distinction again at Catalyst Maria High School. This fall, he began studying business at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's Gies College of Business.

Behind those milestones are people Markell has not forgotten. Reflecting on his high school graduation, he thanked the family, friends and educators who supported him along the way. Their encouragement is part of his story, too.

His learning has also taken him beyond the classroom. Markell spent two summers interning with the Chicago Transit Authority. In his second summer, he worked with the purchasing department and helped develop a project on communication between departments. The team's work earned a Collaborative Achievement Award.

Markell begins college with experiences from TMSOE, Catalyst Maria and the CTA, and with gratitude for the people who helped him get there. We look forward to seeing where his curiosity and hard work take him next.

Sources: TMSOE June 2022 Board packet; Markell Mosley's public LinkedIn profile and posts; Rita Nolan. College enrollment is a fall 2026 update.

Markell's story draws on his public reflections. Leah's profile supplied by Rita Nolan.

"The chief symptom of adolescence is a state of expectation, a tendency towards creative work and a need for the strengthening of self-confidence."

— Maria Montessori · From *Childhood to Adolescence*, p. 63



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT • MIRACLE WATKINS

“TMSOE was my family.”

From helping younger children to imagining a future as a teacher

**MIRACLE WATKINS**

TMSOE Class of 2024

Junior, Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences

Miracle Watkins still carries a lesson from TMSOE into high school: keep trying until you understand. Now a junior at Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences, she says the habits she developed here help her stay focused, complete her work and connect with other students.

Some of her favorite memories are of Ms. Leah’s class and helping younger children in Ms. Ethel’s classroom. That willingness to help has stayed with her. In high school, she continues to support classmates, and she hopes to become a teacher herself.

The move to a larger, louder school took adjustment. Miracle credits the independence and confidence she developed at TMSOE with helping her find her footing and make new connections. She hopes to return one day to help the teachers and students who made the school feel like family.

“The Montessori School of Englewood taught me that I want to be a teacher.”

Adapted from Miracle Watkins’s reflection, shared by Jonathan Howell, August 24, 2026. Photos accompanied the reflection. Grade level reflects fall 2026.



THE APPROACH BEHIND THE PROGRESS

The Montessori difference

The results below show where students made progress and where we need to do more.

“To stimulate life,—leaving it then free to develop, to unfold,—herein lies the first task of the educator.”

— Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, p. 115



EGG
A strong beginning
Early Childhood



CATERPILLAR
Discovery and growth
Elementary | Grades 1–6



CHRYSALIS
Becoming
Middle School | Grades 7–8



BUTTERFLY
Possibility and contribution
High School & Beyond

Growth worth celebrating

+28 points

Fourth-grade reading

+16 points

Seventh-grade math

The strongest reading and math growth in grades 4–8, respectively. Across the year-to-year IAR analysis, the midpoint gain was 11 points in reading and 3 points in math.

More students meeting the standard

IAR proficiency	2025	2026
Reading / English language arts	12.7%	19.4%
Mathematics	3.7%	5.1%

More students meet expectations, but math proficiency remains too low.

Source: June 4, 2026 IAR analysis. Growth is median change in distance to proficiency, not a percentage or state growth ranking.



A strength in reading. A clear next step in math.

33% of eighth graders reached reading proficiency

The highest reading proficiency among the school's grades 3–8.

One in three eighth graders met or exceeded the reading standard as they prepared for high school.

Math needs focused support

Just 3% of eighth graders reached math proficiency, while 48% were approaching it. In the year-to-year analysis, the midpoint moved 17 points farther from proficiency. These results make stronger math instruction and targeted support an urgent priority.

STRENGTHENING MATH | 2026–2027

Rebecca Hendrickson

Math coach • Making Math Sense

A former UTEP math coach, Rebecca brings more than 25 years of experience as a teacher and teacher educator. Her work has included coaching in Chicago and New York City public schools, as well as Chicago charter and private schools.

Depth of Knowledge (DOK) describes the thinking a task requires, from recalling facts and applying concepts to strategic reasoning and extended investigation. It measures complexity, not difficulty. Math coaching and peer walkthroughs review lesson tasks and student thinking against these levels. Teachers use the findings to revise lessons, balancing essential skills with opportunities to explain strategies, justify answers and apply concepts.

What comes next

Math coaching and peer walkthroughs are strengthening reasoning tasks. Teacher teams will review student work, classroom assessments and i-Ready growth alongside walkthrough findings, then adjust lessons and support. We expect stronger explanations, more independent problem solving and more students reaching grade-level math proficiency. Annual IAR results will provide an additional check.

Another view of math growth

Across the school, i-Ready reported 103% of typical annual math growth—slightly above the expected yearly amount. This separate assessment measures growth; it does not mean students are at grade level.

**BELONGING & WELL-BEING**

Known. Supported. Ready to learn.

Children need to feel known, safe and ready to take part in classroom life.



A familiar adult. A steady routine.

A child needs adults who know when to step closer and when to let them try. Montessori rests on a triangle of relationships: the child, the family and the school. Parents bring knowledge of their child's life; teachers bring careful observation of their learning. Listening to one another helps us offer consistent encouragement and expectations.

Montessori's three-year age groupings give relationships time to deepen. Younger children learn by watching older classmates; older children strengthen their understanding by helping others. Over the cycle, a child moves from newcomer to experienced member of the classroom, with growing responsibility for its people and shared work.

That continuity creates room to be known beyond a difficult day. A trusted adult, a familiar classmate and a family's insight can help a child work through frustration, repair a relationship and find their way back to learning.

The next step: shared routines and timely support

In 2026–27, we are strengthening daily social-emotional learning and coordination among staff who support children's behavioral health. Restorative practices help children resolve conflict and repair relationships. Together with families, we help children build confidence, strengthen connections and feel ready to learn.

Sources: 2025–2026 mid-year Board report; September 2026 State of the School.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The power of showing up

Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth

Seventh grader McKinley Jones has worked with Carly Chocron of Taft Law since kindergarten. Their years together tell the story of Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth: a commitment to a child that lasts well beyond a single lesson.



TMSOE seventh grader McKinley Jones with Carly Chocron of Taft Law, her tutor since kindergarten.



Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias and then-fifth grader Tristan Mallory were deep in conversation when the Secretary visited Lend-A-Hand last year.

For 11 years, Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth has partnered with TMSOE. Approximately 40 of our students are expected to participate in 2026–27. The program provides free, one-to-one tutoring and buses children to the Chicago Bar Association, removing cost and transportation barriers for families.

The journey downtown opens another door. Students explore Chicago beyond Englewood and meet people who help shape public life, including Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias. They deserve access to the whole city—and opportunities to picture themselves in it.

Eighty percent of the program's volunteers are lawyers. Week after week, they make time to help children learn.

Lend-A-Hand describes itself as Chicago's only volunteer tutoring program offering a dyslexia-friendly, Orton-Gillingham approach. Its staff includes a certified dyslexia tutor and a reading interventionist. Tutors use letter-sound practice, decodable books and targeted instruction to help children build reading skills step by step. A trusted adult returns each week, ready to keep working alongside the child.

91% of Lend-A-Hand's struggling readers made at least one year of reading progress, May 2025–May 2026.

Source: Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth, 2026 Annual Report. Program details updated by Lend-A-Hand, October 2026.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Chiymelle Proby Nunn

Giving from the Heart, Investing in Englewood

For Chiymelle Proby Nunn, giving back is more than an act of generosity. It is a lifelong commitment rooted in faith, family, and the belief that every child deserves opportunities to dream, discover, and thrive.



A lifelong Chicagoan, Chiymelle's connection to Englewood runs deep. Her family's home was located at 6123 South Sangamon, she attended sixth grade in Englewood, and at age 12, began attending Beautiful Zion Missionary Baptist Church. For Chiymelle, Englewood is part of her family's history, her personal journey, and her enduring commitment to service.

When The Montessori School of Englewood (TMSOE) was founded in August 2012, Chiymelle immediately recognized the possibilities it represented for children and families. Involved since the school's inception, she vividly remembers her first visit. Walking through classrooms filled with colorful artwork, paintings, and opportunities for hands-on learning, she was inspired by an environment where creativity, curiosity, and imagination were celebrated, opening new doors for children in Englewood.

From the beginning, Chiymelle has been a connector, advocate, and champion for TMSOE. She helped introduce the Monarch Awards Foundation, Inc. to the school, creating opportunities for community partnerships and collaboration. Through her leadership at Beautiful Zion, where she serves as a Trustee and Co-Chair of the Finance and Trustees Ministries, she has helped coordinate donations of socks, underwear, toys, coats, shoes, backpacks, and other essentials for students and families.

Her commitment to educational advancement extends well beyond Englewood. A longtime leader with the Monarch Awards Foundation and Cradles to Crayons Chicago, Chiymelle has spent more than two decades mobilizing volunteers, cultivating partnerships, and securing resources for children and families. Recently elected as an At-Large Director of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Educational Advancement Foundation, Inc., she continues championing educational opportunities and lifelong learning.

Professionally, Chiymelle brings more than 24 years of experience in the legal industry, serving as a Director at a leading international law firm. Across her professional and philanthropic endeavors, one common thread remains: connecting people, purpose, and partnerships to create meaningful change.

Her philosophy of giving, however, remains beautifully simple, grounded in wisdom passed down by her beloved grandmother:

"When you get something, you give it, and you give it from your heart."

Those words continue to guide Chiymelle's commitment to service. She believes generosity extends beyond financial contributions to the time we share, the relationships we build, and the opportunities we create for others.

Fourteen years after TMSOE opened its doors, her commitment remains steadfast. Chiymelle believes that when schools, churches, businesses, nonprofits, and neighbors unite around a shared purpose, extraordinary things happen.

Her story reminds us that meaningful community investment begins with relationships, grows through generosity, and creates a lasting legacy of opportunity for generations to come.

Story: Chiymelle Proby Nunn



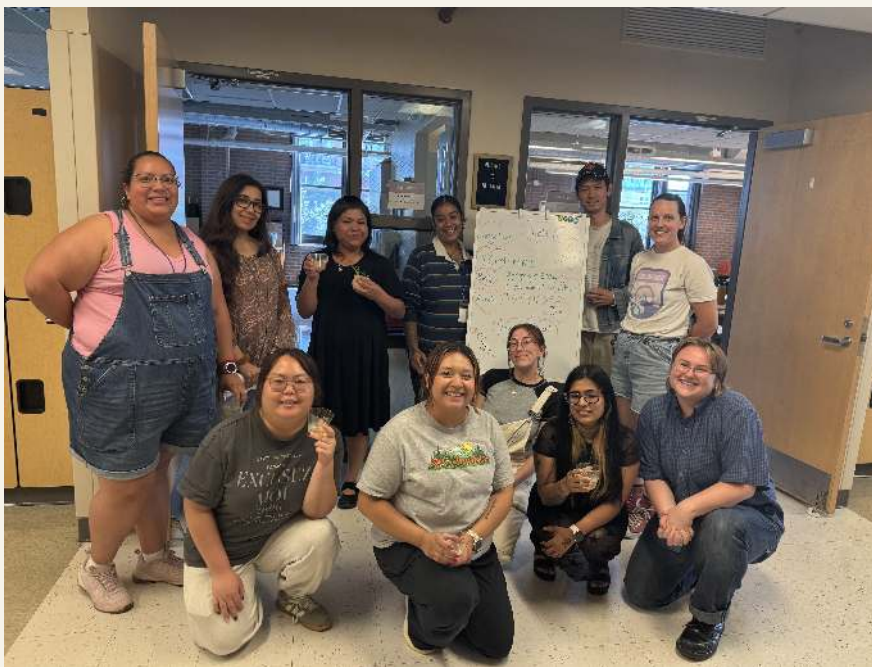
ADULTS LEARNING TO GUIDE THEM

Preparing teachers for the communities they serve

AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY AFFILIATION

The Montessori Residency of Chicago earned American Montessori Society affiliation by meeting rigorous standards for Montessori teacher preparation. This recognition affirms the quality of our program and provides residents with a pathway to an AMS credential.

Residents study, practice lessons and receive coaching in classrooms. This preparation helps teachers respond to children's strengths, needs and experiences—and brings Montessori education to more children in under-resourced schools.



MRC summer 2026. Photos supplied by Felicia Lang.



Prepared adults.
Purposeful teaching.
Stronger communities.



MONTESSORI RESIDENCY OF CHICAGO

Preparing the adults who prepare children

Tiffany Miranda: discovering the purpose behind the lesson

Lower Elementary Teacher Assistant, The Montessori School of Englewood
MRC Elementary I (E1) resident | Anticipated credential: June 2028



“I have always been a visual learner,” says Tiffany Miranda. “I love being able to see something in order to better understand it.” Montessori’s hands-on materials made sense to her for that reason: children could experience a concept for themselves.

Reena Morgan, her Head Start coach and MRC program director, first encouraged her to join MRC. Tiffany hesitated. After moving to Lower Elementary, she wanted to learn how to present the lessons herself and offer more support to her lead teacher. She asked to join the training and was given the opportunity.

Watching Mrs. Anne present the Five Great Lessons stayed with her. “It was not only about the information being taught,” Tiffany explains. She noticed the storytelling, the students’ attention and

the connections to the world outside the classroom. How the teacher offered the lesson mattered.

“Before beginning my Montessori training, I thought about education mainly in terms of what children needed to learn academically.” Now she thinks just as carefully about children making choices, becoming independent and learning responsibility.

The training is changing her own habits, too. “It has taught me to slow down, observe, appreciate the world around us, and help children discover the beauty and purpose within it.”

“I have learned that every Montessori material, lesson, and presentation is intentional.”

MRC residents receive cohort check-ins and fall observations to help them put their training into practice in the classroom.

Adapted from Tiffany Miranda’s written reflections. Photo supplied by Tiffany Miranda.



Financial stewardship

FY2026 • July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026 • Unaudited

REVENUE & SUPPORT

\$8,646,553

TOTAL EXPENSES

\$8,717,405

PROGRAM SERVICES

91.3%

Where resources came from

CPS & other public funding	\$6,459,229
Head Start grant	\$1,054,300
Foundation & corporate gifts	\$219,383
Individual gifts	\$132,876
Other income ¹	\$10,235
In-kind support	\$770,530
Total	\$8,646,553

How resources were used

Personnel	\$5,764,149
Program & student costs	\$1,330,565
Donated facilities	\$768,055
Administration & occupancy	\$689,105
Other indirect costs	\$165,531
Total	\$8,717,405

YEAR-END OPERATING DEFICIT: \$70,852 | 0.8% of revenue

Year-end net assets: \$1,095,060

A challenging year. A clear priority.

This year brought higher costs for special education services and substitute coverage, an unsuccessful \$286,500 funding appeal, and delays in Head Start reimbursements. Throughout these challenges, our priority remained sustaining programs for children and meeting payroll. We managed other spending carefully and used our line of credit to bridge reimbursement delays, which added interest expense. Building stronger cash reserves is a priority for FY2027, helping protect classrooms from disruptions when payments arrive late.

A community that showed up.

Our community contributed \$360,279 through cash gifts and special events, along with \$770,530 in donated facilities, goods, and services. Gifts alone totaled \$352,259—141% of our \$250,000 FY2026 fundraising goal. This generosity sustained essential resources for children and educators. In-kind contributions strengthen our programs, while cash gifts help meet expenses such as salaries and daily operations.

Understanding the year-end results.

The charter school, including shared administration, ended the year with a \$169,501 surplus, and Montessori Residency of Chicago with a \$6,297 surplus. Head Start recorded a \$246,650 deficit, resulting in an overall organizational deficit of **\$70,852**. These results underscore the need for dependable support for our youngest learners.

Source: TMSOE FY2026 financial report. Figures are unaudited. Revenue and expenses include in-kind contributions.

¹ Other income includes \$8,020 in special events and \$2,215 in miscellaneous income.



Why fundraising matters

Public funding does not cover the full cost of our work. Donations help sustain teachers, classroom materials and support for children and families.

What reaches the classroom

The funding formula is not the same as cash available to our classrooms.

CPS uses Per Capita Tuition Charge (PCTC), a district spending benchmark, to calculate charter school funding. That benchmark is not the same as cash available to a school. The calculation includes some costs CPS pays on schools' behalf, and payments can reflect deductions for district-provided services. District-run schools receive resources through a different budgeting model, so a single per-pupil figure does not tell the whole story.

The resources every child deserves

Children need different kinds of support to take part fully in school. When special education funding falls short, we use flexible dollars to meet required services. Donations help sustain specialists, therapies and classroom resources so every child can learn.

A strong beginning takes community support

Early Childhood is the cornerstone of Montessori. The standard Head Start match is \$25 in eligible community support for every \$100 in federal funding, unless a waiver applies. That equals 20% of the combined program budget. TMSOE's separate fundraising target is \$30 for every \$100 in federal funding, helping us meet needs beyond the standard match.

Eligible, documented gifts of space, goods and services can count toward the Head Start match. But meeting the match does not cover every expense: our FY2026 unaudited results show a \$246,650 Head Start deficit. Cash gifts help pay teachers and meet costs that donated goods and services cannot cover.

You can help by making a gift, contributing needed goods or professional services, or introducing us to someone who would like to support this work.

Sources: CPS FY2026 budget; Office of Head Start, Non-Federal Match Narrative and 45 CFR 1303.4; TMSOE FY2026 unaudited financial report.





A COMMUNITY SUSTAINING THE WORK

Help protect a strong beginning.



On page 5, children carry number rods to their workspace and begin to explore. Your gift helps keep the teachers, materials and classroom support behind that daily work in place.

From Juan St. Mane's classroom reflection, page 5.

\$166,088.78 to go

\$133,911.22 raised as of October 14, 2026

Toward our \$300,000 FY2027 goal • Give by June 30, 2027

Your gift helps sustain

Prepared teachers who observe closely and guide each child's learning.

Hands-on materials and classrooms where children can practice, persist and grow.

Individualized support and dependable care for children and families.

Giving now helps us plan staffing and classroom resources, and keep learning uninterrupted when federal reimbursements arrive late. Monthly gifts provide dependable support we can plan around.

Give today. Become a monthly donor.

Help close the remaining gap and keep a strong Montessori beginning within reach for Englewood's children.

Scan to give or visit donorbox.org/tmsoe



Prefer a particular program? Write "Early Childhood Education," "Diverse Learners," "ESL Education" or "MRC teacher preparation" in the donation comment box. A gift where the need is greatest supports the work across our network.

Questions, visits, partnerships or in-kind gifts: Felicia Lang | flang@tmsoe.org

Montessori: The seeds we plant today will not produce a harvest until tomorrow.



IN MEMORIAM

Remembering Ethel Nelson

A life of care. A lasting place in our community.

A tribute from Rita Nolan, Executive Director



For so many years, Ethel Nelson was a treasured member of The Montessori School of Englewood family and a steadfast presence for the children and families of Englewood. She understood that early childhood is where hope begins—that nurturing our youngest learners strengthens families and helps shape a more just future.

Her leadership was quiet but unwavering. She met challenges with wisdom, patience and dignity. We remember her sparkling eyes welcoming children and families each morning, her gentle smile and the wonderful sense of humor

that lifted the spirits of those around her. Ethel had a rare gift for making people feel seen, valued and cared for.

Her kindness, professionalism and commitment helped build the foundation on which our Head Start program continues to stand. Her contribution lives in the children who discovered confidence, the families who found support and the educators who learned from her example.

“We are better because she walked beside us.
Her life’s work reminds us that education is,
above all else, an act of love.”

We hold her sister Victoria and the entire Nelson family close in our hearts. Alongside our sorrow is deep gratitude for the years we shared with Ethel and for the care she gave so generously to this community.

We honor her by continuing the work she loved—with compassion, excellence and an unwavering belief in the potential of every child. Ethel will always be part of our TMSOE family.

Adapted from Rita Nolan’s tribute to the TMSOE community, June 26, 2026. Photo supplied by Rita Nolan.



WITH GRATITUDE

Thank you for making it possible

Your generosity supports children, families and Montessori education in Englewood.

Individual

Alexis Lavko
Amy Dickerson
Andrew Knight
Anonymous
Anthony Pendleton
April Jean Bapstise
Barbara & Martin J Perry
Brenda Moctezuma
Catherine Connor
Chiymelle Proby Nunn
Chris Shue
Claudia Lovelette
David and Marie Dickson
Dorothy Matern
Felicia Lang
Ginger Farley and Robert Shapiro
(*in memoriam*)
Gonzalo Curiel

Gus Toon
Hugo Portales
Jan and John Szostek
Jeffrey Viereggs
Jo Haley
Jocelyn Mendoza
Juan St. Mane
Julie Dakers
Karen and Kimball Anderson
Kate Siegel
Kathryn McCabe
Keith Abrams
Ken Burns
Linda Schmidt
Maggie Mikuzis
Maria Barksdale
Marvin Hoffman
Anonymous
Matt Moeller

Melissa Anderson
Michael Sculnick
Monica Kuzma
Omar Yeung
Patrick Nolan
Paula Raila
Reena Morgan
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Rita Nolan
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Peter Talmers
Jade Williams
Rebecca Creighton
Ebonie Townsend

Corporate

Andrea Raila on Behalf of Raila Assocs
Lawyers-Lend-a Hand to Youth
Hive Educational Consulting
Tereo Group

Foundation

The Anderson Family Foundation
Douglas and Jessie Macdonald Gift Fund
Anonymous
The Norwood Fund
Pay it Forward Charitable Foundation

Organization

St. Andrew's Women's Philoptochos Society

In-kind

Bernie's Book Bank
Beautiful Zion Missionary Baptist Church
Brightpoint Mentoring
Charly Sport
De Leon Designs
Gateway Montessori
Monarch Awards Foundation
Prairieland Montessori
St Andrew Greek Orthodox Church
Stephanie Toon
Teamwork Englewood
Thomas Vega Byrnes
Wood Street Collective
Rebels for Peace
Intercultural Montessori Academy
Yasmeen Rodriguez
Rita Kovac
Trust for Learning
Howard Bailey
Chef Won Kim - Kimski
WinstonTaylor
Children's Research Triangle
Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute
University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners

2025–2026 Head Start Parent Policy Committee

With gratitude for strengthening family voice and helping guide our early childhood program.

Emily Muñoz, Chairperson; Shani Mason, Vice Chairperson; Dajia White, Secretary; D'Andrea Mosley; Lamont Baker; and Twyla Jackson, Community Representative.



Board & Leadership

Ebonie Townsend | Vice President, 2025–2026

With gratitude to Ebonie Townsend, who served as Board Vice President during 2025–2026, for her leadership and commitment to our school community.

Current Board | October 2026

Karen Anderson

President | Attorney

Lauren Furlan

Treasurer | Deals Partner, PwC

Joe Motto

Member | Winston Taylor

Peter Talmers

Member | Principal, Slalom Consulting

Kathy Bailey

Member | Attorney

Lari Dierks

Member | Attorney, U.S. District Courts in Chicago

Jamie Knight

Vice President | Former Montessori Educator; Attorney, Cook County

Gabrielle Sansonetti

Secretary | Attorney

James Sulzer

Member | Retired Attorney, Sulzer & Shopiro Ltd.

Peter Cunningham

Member | President, Cunningham Communications

Jade Williams

Member | Attorney

Rebecca Creighton

Member | CEO, Trellus

Board Members Emeriti: Thom Hale | Marve Hoffman

Leadership Team

Current leadership | October 2026

Rita Nolan

Executive Director

Felicia Lang

Chief Strategy Officer

Maria Barksdale

Vice Principal of Curriculum & Instruction

Chris Shue

Chief Financial Officer

Stephanie Toon

Principal

Maggie Mikuzis

Chief Operating Officer

Raven Garrett-Wheeler

Vice Principal of Culture & Early Childhood Programs

Prepared for Life. Rooted in Englewood.