



MONTESSORI SCHOOL

OF FORT MYERS

A PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING

An Illustrated History Since 1969

Montessori School of Fort Myers

*An Illustrated History
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1960s

1970s

1980s

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2010s

March 27, 1969

Newspaper clipping announcing the imminent opening of the first Montessori School in Fort Myers

September 1969

Montessori School of Fort Myers was founded on April 3, 1969 by a group of dedicated parents who wanted to provide a Montessori education for their children. The first class was held in September 1969 in what was then "The Little Green House" on Colonial Blvd. in Fort Myers, FL.

Fort Myers (Fla.) News-Press, Thur., March 27, 1969 7-A

New Montessori School Directors Gather Today

The board of directors of the newly formed Montessori School of Fort Myers, first of its kind in the county, which plans to begin classes for area children in September, will meet at the home of Mrs. William Johnson, 2430 McGregor Blvd. today at 9:30 a.m.

The Montessori method of teaching was introduced by Dr. Maria Montessori, M.D. in Italy about 100 years ago and has since spread to most countries throughout the world.

"All children are encouraged (in this system) to learn to their greatest capacity. A gifted child can go as fast as he can and a slow learner can go at his own pace without holding back the others," Mrs. C. M. Foster, assistant director of the program explained.

Sensitive Periods

"Dr. Montessori discovered that children up to the age of six have many sensitive periods of growth when they learn extra fast. She developed the philosophy of helping the child by letting him do things for himself.

"So we don't teach. We present the child with materials and let him learn," she said, using a hand washing procedure as an example.

Show the child a basin, a pitcher, soap, towel, pail and an apron. Put on the apron first. Then go fill the pitcher with water. Then wash hands with soap and water and then rinse the hands. Use the towel to dry off. Finally, pour the used water in the pail and put away the equipment.

"Then ask the child to do it himself. He will get a certain satisfaction in doing these things properly. It will help

talking about this type of education for several years in Fort Myers. Mrs. John Morrissey, 1343 Woodmere Lane, began asking this year those interested in the area about forming a school on the Montessori method. In January we got together with several other people and have met every week since with Mrs. Johnson.

"We signed the articles of incorporation for The Montessori School of Fort Myers, Inc. on March 5th in applying for a state charter from Secretary of State Tom Adams.

"We plan two classes of 16 children each for September. Age range will be two and a half to six years old. We have not decided on a building yet for the school, but we still have a little time.

"Like other private schools, we will charge a fee which will be \$30 a month. Since we are a non-profit organization, we need donations in getting started."

Head teacher or directress will be Mrs. Bailey Hathaway, 213 SE 47th St., who is librarian at Edison Junior College. She received her masters degree in library science at the University of Syracuse in New York in 1961 and worked a year in a Montessori School in Rochester, N. Y. as part of her internship for the degree.

Mrs. Foster, 2878 Valencia Way, who holds a masters degree in elementary education has studied the Montessori Method and taught five years out of state. She will be an assistant directress.

Mrs. Morrissey, 1343 Woodmere Lane, received her BS from a midwestern college and took a course in the Wee

ago. She will also be an instructor.

Mrs. William Johnson, 2430 McGregor Blvd., who received her bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland in education, has taught five years and will be a directress.

The board of directors include Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Foster and Mrs. Morrissey. Serving on the advisory board are Dr. David G. Robinson, Edison Junior College president; C. Marshall Foster, Dr. Wallace Graves, Wiley Parker, Mrs. George Ball, Dr. William Johnson and Mrs. Curtis Bostick.

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MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF FORT MYERS, INC.

Enrollment 1969-1970

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Parent's Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Cynthia D. Beebler	Dr. & Mrs. Cecil Beebler		
William C. Beebler	Dr. & Mrs. Cecil Beebler		
Stephen B. Bostick	Mr. & Mrs. Curtis Bostick		
Cathie Coleman	Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Coleman		
Jeanette L. Dean	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Dean		
Tommy Doak	Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Doak		
Deborah E. Douglass	Dr. & Mrs. Paul Douglass		
Calvin B. Esbaugh	Mr. & Mrs. Willis Esbaugh		
Willis G. Esbaugh, Jr.	Mr. & Mrs. Willis Esbaugh		
Michael Fisher	Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Fisher		
Behrends B. Foster	Mr. & Mrs. Marshall Foster		
Charles A. Foster	Mr. & Mrs. Marshall Foster		
Darylene L. Foster	Mr. & Mrs. Marshall Foster		
Jackie Friedman	Dr. & Mrs. Gilbert W. Friedman		
Curtis Ray House, III	Mr. & Mrs. Curtis R. House, Jr.		
Julia Lynn Hughes	Mr. & Mrs. Robert K. Hughes		
Jonathan M. Isley	Dr. & Mrs. Joseph K. Isley, Jr.		
Margaret D. Ives	Mr. & Mrs. Frank Ives		
Jennifer L. Johnson	Dr. & Mrs. William H. Johnson		
William H. Johnson	Dr. & Mrs. William H. Johnson		
Brian M. Kyle	Dr. & Mrs. Michael Kyle		
Parke D. Lewis	Dr. & Mrs. Parke Lewis, Jr.		
Jaye Lowenstine	Mr. & Mrs. Don Lowenstine		
Kathryn McCall	Dr. & Mrs. Douglas McCall		
Aaron H. McInnis	Mr. & Mrs. Bryan McInnis		
James Morrissey	Mr. & Mrs. John Morrissey		
Jeffrey Persons	Dr. & Mrs. Louis F. Persons		
Garner Phillips	Mr. & Mrs. Ben Phillips		
John Pisaris	Dr. & Mrs. Peter Pisaris		
Mayn C. Ponellis	Mr. & Mrs. Victor J. Ponellis		
Victor S. Ponellis	Mr. & Mrs. Victor J. Ponellis		
Kathleen M. Ramsey	Dr. & Mrs. George A. Ramsey		
Sandy Robinson	Dr. & Mrs. David G. Robinson		
Henry F. Schmid	Dr. & Mrs. Feltrich Schmid		
David Smith	Mr. & Mrs. L. Smith		
James T. Smoot, III	Mr. & Mrs. Tom Smoot		
Susan K. Smoot	Mr. & Mrs. Tom Smoot		
Julie Sonnenberg	Mr. & Mrs. R. Sonnenberg		
Adlai Stein	Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Stein		
Joe Williams, III	Mr. & Mrs. Joe Williams, Jr.		
Toni L. Washington	Mr. & Mrs. Louis Washington		
Sarah Yarger	Mr. & Mrs. Jesse F. Yarger		

Autumn 1969 – Enrollment roster of our inaugural class, 42 students

Tuition will be due the first of each month, made out to Montessori School of Ft. Myers, and should be mailed to Mrs. William H. Johnson, 2430 McGregor Boulevard, Ft. Myers, Florida 33901.

TUITION SCHEDULE:

	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Semi-annually</u>	<u>Annually</u>
1 child	\$30.00	\$260.00	\$250.00
2 children	55.00	485.00	475.00

School will open Tuesday, September 2, 1969.

First Session 8:30 A. M. - 10:30 A. M.
Second Session 1:00 P. M. - 3:00 P. M.

There will be no one at the school responsible for your child until fifteen minutes prior to and fifteen minutes following each session.

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Session Request Form

Parents' Name _____

Child's Name _____ Session Requested _____
" " " " " "

Please return immediately with your September tuition to:

Mrs. William H. Johnson
2430 McGregor Boulevard
Ft. Myers, Florida 33901

Autumn 1969 – Sign-up sheet for inaugural class. Tuition was \$30 per month.

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Autumn 1969 – Inaugural class held at the *Little Green House* location off Colonial Boulevard and Summerlin road in Fort Myers, FL.

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1969 - 1973

Classes were held in the *Little Green House*, then at Church of the Resurrection on Cypress Lake Drive and Summerlin Road, until the present location on Crystal Drive was purchased from the Villas Kindergarten in 1973. The 1,810 ft² house was originally built in 1962 as a model home for the Villas Neighborhood before being used by the Villas Kindergarten and then bought by Montessori School of Fort Myers.

To the right and below are photos from the early 1970s.



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1973 - 1983

The school enjoyed widespread community support and flourished.

The photos to the right show the school before the large addition was built in 1989.

In the background, Grace Brethren Church can be seen to our west as well as the apartments to the north of our building. Our Banyan Tree is just beginning to get big.

Ms. Linda Touton joins the school in 1976 as an assistant teacher. She led the school until 1996.



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1983 – 1989

Ms. Linda Touton and her husband “Captain Charlie” (then a charter boat captain) take an active role in leading the school. Encouraged by parents, the school undertakes a massive expansion project to triple the size of the building in 1989.



Spring 1983 – Ms. Linda Touton in the back row wearing dark sunglasses



1985

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Summer 1989

The west side of the house before construction on the new addition



Under construction

Summer 1989

The interior of the addition under construction.



2014

Same view as photo to the left.

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Summer 1989
Driveway under construction



Summer 1989
Playground under construction



Summer 1989
View from the northeast



Summer 1989
View from the south. Existing house seen to the right, new building on left.

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Before



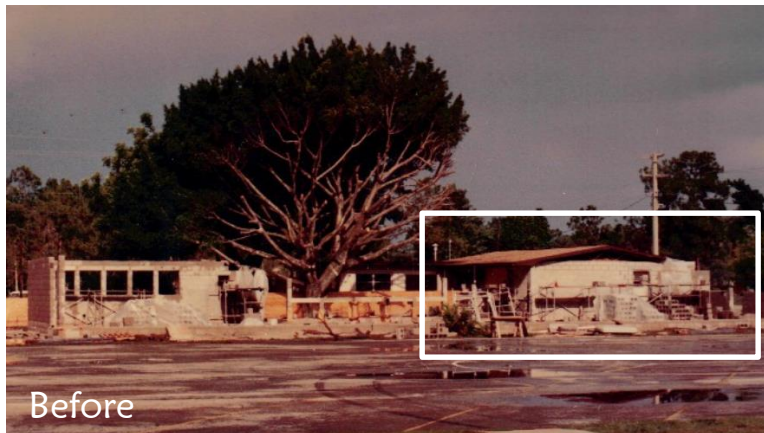
After

Summer 1983

The house's driveway is extended along the east side of the building to allow for morning drop off at the new entrance.

Summer 1983

The house's driveway under construction.



Before



After

Summer 1983

View from the west of the addition under construction. The original house is highlighted in white.

2014

Same view as photo on left.

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1989 - 1996

- 1990 - An elementary class was opened for 1st – 5th grade and enrollment reaches 90 students for all ages in the expanded building (now at 5,000 SF).
- November 14, 1996 - Ms. Linda passes away and her daughter, Ruth Anne Azevedo earns her primary Montessori teaching credential and joins the school as a teacher. The school opens its first toddler room in fall 1996.
- 1998 – The school discontinues its elementary program to focus more on the toddler and primary programs.



2000

Students learning math



2005

Students outside



1993

Students during music time

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2000 - 2008

In 2000, Ruth Anne Azevedo becomes Head of School. The Fort Myers population continues to grow rapidly during the housing boom of the early 2000s and the school operates with a wait list during a time of strong support.

2008 - 2013

When the recession hits in 2008, enrollment drops as families make difficult financial choices and are forced to cut back on spending.



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2013 - Present

The economy begins to recover in the Fort Myers area and James Farwell joins as the new Head of School.

- The interior of all classrooms are significantly renovated and the school achieves re-accreditation with the Florida Kindergarten Council.
- An infant environment is added, a library opened, enrichment programs are created, several teachers are sponsored to take the Montessori teacher credential training, and technology upgrades are made.
- Exterior renovations are underway to renovate both playgrounds, build two outdoor classroom environments, a large garden and a small fruit tree orchard.



Spring 2015 – Fruit tree orchard



Spring 2014 - Infant environment opened



Fall 2014 – Cultural Diversity Celebration