

The Montessorian

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Brenda Huth Named as New Head of School of SJMS



Photos: B. Huth

Brenda Huth, New Head of School at St. Joseph Montessori School

After several months of work and contributions from people across our community, it is with tremendous pleasure that we announce our new Head of School. Brenda Huth has accepted the position and will begin her tenure on May 1, 2019. Matt Brenner will remain in his role through June 30, 2019, allowing for a smooth administrative transition.

Brenda is currently the Director of Curriculum and Student Services at Oak Farm Montessori School in Avilla, Indiana, which serves 297 students from Infant through High School. Brenda has been at Oak Farm since 2015, and last year she served as Interim Co-Director of the school. Her responsibilities as Director of Curriculum include maintaining the fidelity of authentic Montessori practices by working directly with classroom teachers and specialists. As Director of Student Services, she works with students with behavioral and academic concerns by developing Student Action Plans, observing in classrooms, brainstorming strategies, and facilitating the school's Student Support Team Process.

From 2008-2015 Brenda was the Montessori Resource Teacher/Curriculum Development Specialist at Bunche Montessori School in Fort Wayne. Bunche is a public, urban, district-sponsored magnet school. It was also the first public school to be accredited by the American Montessori Society. Prior to that role, from 1996-2008, she was a classroom teacher of 3 - 6-year-olds at Bunche.

In addition to her work in schools, Brenda is very active in Montessori associations. She is a member of the American Montessori Accreditation Commission and a Board member of the United Montessori Schools of Indiana. These roles have enabled Brenda to visit many schools to examine their Montessori practices and standards. Brenda earned both a B.S. and M.S. in Special Education from Saint Francis University. She currently lives in Fort Wayne but will be relocating to the Columbus area for this new position.

Brenda's depth of Montessori experience will help us deliver on the goals of our Strategic Plan and reinvigorate our Montessori practice in the years to come.

We look forward to the next phase of our school under Brenda's leadership. Please join us in welcoming Brenda Huth to the SJMS community!

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Interest Fair

On Feb. 21, 2019, SJMS hosted Interest Fair! For more than 30 years, the SJMS Interest Fair has been open for students to research and report on a wide variety of topics! In addition to our student scientists who are zoologists, physicists, biologists, and chemists, we have biographers, historians, psychologists, inventors, artists, mathematicians, engineers, musicians, and many more! All these topics and more get covered at our Interest Fair!

Students from 1st through 8th grade choose a topic, research it thoroughly, write a research paper, and prepare a presentation which must include a display board and a 3D project of some kind.

On the evening of Interest Fair, our 4th through 8th-grade students fill Ryan Hall with their presentations. Interest Fair is formal, so students are dressed up, and at their most poised. Each student gives two separate 10-15 minute presentations to two judges. Those judges, who are chosen from the extended members of our community (not teachers, not family of participants), then provide scored, written feedback to the student on his or her presentation.

The morning following Interest Fair, Ryan Hall is open to the SJMS community so that families and students can view the projects. If you have time, come look at all the amazing work.

If you're the parent of a Children's House student, please consider volunteering to judge older students on their presentations. Often, the parents of SJMS graduates return to judge. And most excitingly, we have several adult alumni that return to SJMS as Interest Fair judges!

This evening is my favorite event of the year because it is an almost pure Montessori experience of students choosing something about which they are passionate, studying it thoroughly, and sharing that passion with an unbiased audience. This is truly a "life-long learner" moment, and I love it.



Photo: R. Holonitch
JJ Holonitch (ERD) learned about the Lincoln Highway for his Interest Fair project.

STOP THE BLEED Training



Photo: R. Holonitch

SJMS teachers and Erdkinder students received Stop the Bleed training.

Our Erdkinder students and teachers participated in "Stop the Bleed," a new training available to teach strategies in techniques. These classes occurred on March 14th in the Erdkinder classroom. This program was developed in a partnership between The American College of Surgeons (ACS) and ACS Committee on Trauma, with their goal being to train every American in basic bleeding control techniques.

Twelve SJMS teachers drove and flew to our nation's capitol to enjoy the American Montessori Society Annual Conference. The conference occurred between March 21 and 24 in Washington DC. Our teachers experienced great workshops, seminars, and shopping in the exhibit hall. As a special treat, our teachers took some time to meet our new Head of School, Brenda Huth. When our teachers returned after spring break, they shared what they learned at the next staff meeting. Funds from our Spaghetti Dinner helped support their attendance to this amazing conference.

SJMS Teachers Attend AMS Conference



This was an opportunity for our teachers to meet Brenda Huth, our new Head of School.

On March 18th, Ryan Hall was filled with interesting bugs. Mr. Bugman, also named Mark, visited SJMS to share his extensive knowledge of bugs and insects with our school population. He shared cool facts about their habits, habitats, and features. During his presentation, he asked students to help share his bugs with the group. As usual, our students asked great questions at the end of the assembly. We send a special thank you to our Family Association for helping bring the Bugman to SJMS.

BUGS! BUGS! BUGS!



Photo: R. Holonitch

Mr. Bugman shows our students some cool bugs.

Basketball Champions

On March 15, our school celebrated our newly crowned basketball champions. During Fun Friday lunch, our SJMS sixth grade basketball team presented their new trophy to the school as a gift. Matt Brenner, our Head of School, asked some of the players questions about their experiences on the team. GO SJMS!



Photo: R. Holonitch

The SJMS Basketball team presented their trophy to the school.

Erdkinder Bake Sales



Photo: R. Holonitch

Maddy Wood (ERD) helped make cupcakes.

On a monthly basis, our Erdkinder class hosted Bake Sales during our Fun Friday lunch period. The treats varied from month to month, but included cupcakes, brownies, and cookies. Each month had a different theme, like Halloween treats for October, Christmas treats for December, and love-filled treats for February. "Our baked goods are always baked with extra love," said Roxanne Holonitch, the teacher advisor to the bake sales. The money raised supported the Erdkinder Class Trip. This year, our Erdkinder class will be visiting Savannah, Georgia.



Photo: R. Holonitch

Isaac Conrad and Thegn Penrose (ERD) celebrated St. Patrick's Day at our Bake Sale.

Middle School STEM Field Trip

On March 16th, our Middle School students (4th-6th grade) ventured up north to SkateZone71 to take in a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) lesson. Students learned about light, color, and how lighting is used at the roller skating rink. After lunch, our students enjoyed some free time to skate.



Photo: R. Holonitch

Oliver Martin (MS) observes water and light for an experiment.



Photo: R. Holonitch

Natalie Reese, Heidi White, Ava Quint, Nora Raab, and Emma Gulledge, (MS) had fun skating with friends.

Imagine Engineering Presentation



Photo: R. Holonitch

Gabriel Colantonio (P2) helped Tim McCarthy with a demonstration.

Thanks to the support of the Engineers Foundation of Ohio, an engineer stopped in to visit our second year students and discuss careers in the field of engineering. Tim McCarthy, a Safety Engineer at OSU, shared a story and career ideas in the field of engineering with our students. He also demonstrated, with help from our students, some of the problems engineers solve each day.



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