

Dear UMS,

I wanted to thank the UMS staff for all the care that you have given our family. From toddler to pre-school to kindergarten, UMS has provided my son Lucas with quality education that focuses whole-child development. Raising children in today's world can feel so overwhelming but with the help of your staff and teachers, I grew in both confidence and joy in parenting Lucas.

The Montessori environment at UMS encouraged Lucas to become an independent and creative thinker who loves learning, takes on challenges, and accepts responsibility. His classrooms were organized to support the necessary sensory and motor aspects of child development while providing the necessary intellectual tools to succeed in elementary school. With this, and perhaps most important, however was the manner in which Lucas learned kindness, patience, and compassion. I am often approached by parents who comment on his behavior and I tell them about UMS. I also encounter misconceptions that the Montessori environment is disorderly, too focused on independent tasks, and that it encourages kids to avoid engaging in the intellectual demands placed on children in other school programs. Not at all true! The UMS environment was calm, engaging, and encouraged collaborative and cooperative play. The organization of Lucas' responsibilities through Kindergarten allowed my son to work on very similar tasks to his peers in other programs but at a pace that was both encouraging AND appropriate.

Most important to me, however, was that Lucas loved going to school every day! Instead of tiring of repeated and rote exercises, Lucas learned to take control of learning, which is a skill that he will use in elementary school and beyond! Lucas loved interacting with his teachers and peers! He never tired of the toys and tools rotated in his classroom, and he loved the authentic engagement with the world around him, especially the outdoors. He now wants to travel the world, become a scientist, and have play-dates with the many new friends he has met even now that he has moved on to the first grade! Thank you for the advice, the encouragement to become active in the UMS family, and thank you for helping Lucas discover his potential. You all will be sincerely missed!!

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