



NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2022

# The Albrook Almanac

## Kindness Inclusion and Diversity in the Montessori Classroom

By Nina Marvi

In this article may I note once again the crucial component of what a Montessori teacher embodies: Kindness and respect-not to be confused with permissiveness but a modelling of the behavior that is to be expected in the children.

In Dr. Montessori's words:

Let us treat them (children) therefore, with all the kindness which we would wish to develop in them.

Kindness and respect, however are part of a greater and essential undertaking. These traits are fostered and their development facilitated by an explicit celebration of and teaching about the diversity of human kind in our fundamental needs lessons.

Montessori writes:

The needs of mankind are universal. Our means of meeting them create the richness and diversity of the planet. The Montessori child should come to relish the texture of that diversity.

These series of lessons not only serve as a study of the diversity of human kind, but also our classrooms. For each classroom community is a diverse tapestry of various ages, abilities, ethnicities and backgrounds. Exploring these fundamental needs of all humans across the planet and how they are fulfilled is one of the starting points for us in fostering respect for diversity and inclusion within the classroom.

In addition, our Anti-Bias and Social Emotional Learning curricula serve to structure our approach in sequential lessons

aimed at an appreciation of our similarities and differences. We see the development of empathy and kindness in our children as they learn to walk in the shoes of another. We see an awareness developing in our children not only of the needs of the world at large, but of the needs of their classroom communities and even of themselves.

## Diverse Book Choices for All Grade Levels

By Tom Berger

As published in <https://www.edutopia.org/article/22-diverse-book-choices-all-grade-levels/>

In a vibrant, multicultural society, representing the richness of students' lives in a class or school library takes a conscious effort. Including writers and fictional characters with a variety of backgrounds, beliefs, and life circumstances is a way to increase the chances that students will find both windows and mirrors in the library—books that reflect their lives, and ones that give them insight into the lives and experiences of people who aren't like them.

No book shelf is going to represent the fullness of this nation. From the descendants of people who arrived here more than 15,000 years ago to the newest immigrants, we're simply too much. But the inclusive set of books below—many of which were recommended by multiple teachers—span all grade and Lexile levels up to 1140L, and include award winners and best

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The Albrook School

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sellers, books that have stood the test of time and newer options. We hope they reflect human diversity in the broadest sense, addressing race and ethnicity, religion, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, and other special circumstances.

#### GRADES PRE-K TO 2

##### ***Red: A Crayon's Story***

Red—a blue crayon in a red wrapper—has issues: He can't color strawberries or fire engines properly, and can't quite figure out just what he's good at. Michael Hall's illustrated book is a cute story with a serious message for kids: Believe in yourself and be true to who you are. It's a valuable message for all kids who feel like they're different from others—LGBT kids and kids with learning differences, for example—and for their peers.

##### ***Deena Misses Her Mom***

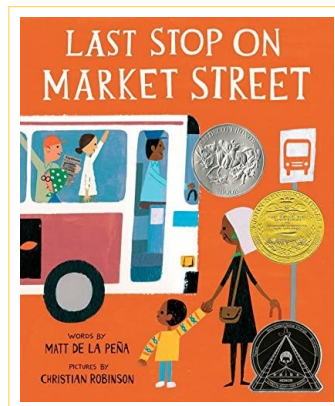
Deena is a formerly well-behaved girl who has been lashing out in school ever since her mom was sent to jail. Deena's story—sensitively illustrated by Leslie Jindalay Pyo—was written by high school students Jonae Haynesworth, Jesse Holmes, Layonnie Jones, and Kahliya Ruffin to reflect the lives of the children they were tutoring in Washington, DC. Parental imprisonment is a shockingly common occurrence in America: More than 5 million children in the U.S. have had at least one parent in jail.

##### ***We Are Family***

Patricia Hegarty's book about the bonds of family, illustrated by Ryan Wheatcroft, presents children with a variety of family situations—traditional nuclear families of different races, same-sex parents, grandparents raising a child, a single mother and child, multiracial families—to make the point that what they all have in common is love.

##### ***Last Stop on Market Street***

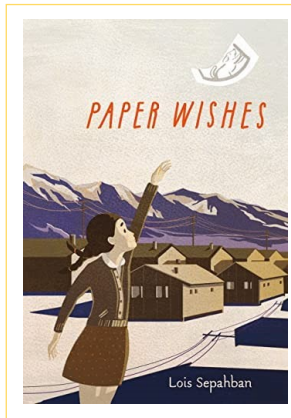
Written by Matt de la Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson, this 2016 Newbery Medal winner shows kids the value of generosity and being satisfied with what you have. Young CJ asks his grandmother questions on a bus ride—why don't they have a car? why is one passenger blind? why do they get off



in a dirty part of town?—as they travel from church to volunteer at a soup kitchen on Market Street. Her answers help CJ uncover the beauty in the world around him.

#### GRADES 3 TO 5

##### ***Paper Wishes***



In this work of historical fiction by Lois Sepahban, 10-year-old Manami is forced to leave her home after the attack on Pearl Harbor—her Japanese American family is relocated from Bainbridge Island, near Seattle, to an internment camp in the California desert. When her dog is taken from her in the process, Manami stops talking. A good introduction to the tough subject of Japanese internment—and the personal and social cost of intolerance.

##### ***Drita, My Homegirl***

An unlikely friendship blossoms between Maxie, a popular fourth grader, and the new kid in class, Drita, whose family has fled the war in Kosovo. In bringing together a refugee with limited English and an African American New York City kid, former public school teacher Jenny Lombard explores immigration and multicultural friendship.

##### ***Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History***

Vashti Harrison's beautifully illustrated mini-biographies of 40 black female trailblazers are meant to be inspiring for all readers; Harrison says she wrote it for her younger self, wondering "what kind of dreams I might have had if I had known about all these women when I was growing up." Harrison's subjects range from Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman to Mahalia Jackson, Shirley Chisholm, Octavia Butler, and Dominique Dawes—role models in politics, sports, the arts and sciences, and more.

##### ***Wonder***

August Pullman—Auggie—has had numerous surgeries to correct facial anomalies, but when he enters school in fifth grade after years of homeschooling, he still has a face that draws nicknames like Freak and Freddy Krueger. R.J. Palacio's

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novel presents Auggie’s perspective as well as those of friends and family members. Palacio has called the novel “a meditation on kindness.”

## GRADES 6 TO 8

### ***The Rose That Grew From Concrete***

This collection of poems was written by Tupac Shakur while still a teenager—making it a source of inspiration for young writers, particularly boys, who appreciate the musician’s authenticity. The poems are reproduced from Shakur’s journals; many show small edits he made, giving a glimpse of his creative process.

### ***The Arrival***

A sepia-toned marvel, *The Arrival* conveys in images—there is no dialogue—a man’s journey from his troubled home country to a new one. Artist Shaun Tan places the reader in the immigrant’s shoes by using an invented alphabet on the signs in the strange new world he enters—the language is as impenetrable to the reader as it is to the protagonist.

### ***The Skin I’m In***

Tackling bullying and the adolescent drive to build an identity, Sharon Flake’s debut novel is the story of Maleeka Madison, an African American seventh grader who struggles with poverty and self-consciousness about her dark skin—and fights the people who try to help her. The book won Flake the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award for New Talent.

### ***Under the Mesquite***

Lupita, a Mexican American teen, struggles to take care of her younger siblings as her mother battles cancer in this free verse novel that makes effective use of interspersed Spanish. Guadalupe Garcia McCall’s debut was published by Lee & Low, which has been dedicated to publishing multicultural books since 1991.

### ***Ghost***

A National Book Award finalist, Jason Reynolds’s *Ghost* is the story of an African American middle school runner with the talent to qualify for the Junior Olympics—if he can learn to control his

temper. Money is tight and his father is in jail, and Ghost has been having a lot of what he calls “altercations.” This is the first in a series of books about the members of a track team.

### ***American Born Chinese***

This graphic novel—the first to be nominated for a National Book Award—tells three stories: The legend of the Monkey King, a master of martial arts; the story of a Chinese American boy who wants to be just American; and a depiction of racial stereotypes of Chinese immigrants that features a character named Chin-kee. In weaving these stories together, Gene Luen Yang explores Chinese American identities, bigotry, and the process of assimilation.

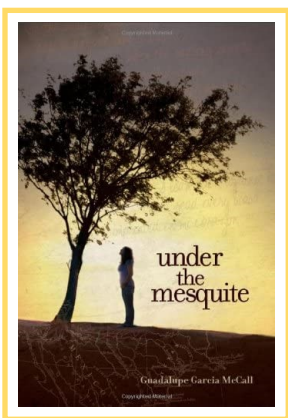
### ***George***

George is a transgender fourth grader who wants to try out for the lead role in the school production of *Charlotte’s Web* so that her mother will see her as a girl. Alex Gino presents George’s struggles with both bullying and the painful reassurance that she will “turn into a fine young man.” George won a Stonewall Book Award—and made the American Library Association’s 10 Most Challenged Books list in 2016 and 2017.

## Montessori for the 21st Century-Picasso

While continuing to use all of our hands-on toddler materials, we also incorporate technology into our learning. Before learning our scarecrow song, we used an iPad to show what a scarecrow looks like and why they are used. To celebrate Diwali, during circle time, we watched a song and related video on our iPad to help teach the children about this holiday. After the new year, we will start learning our International Day song in another language. We usually start by practicing the song in English and then watching a video of the song in another language. The children enjoy the video, which is a good refresher for the teachers too!

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## Homer – Montessori for a Changing World

When we stop and look at how much has changed in the world around us, we realize how little our Montessori classroom and philosophy has been affected. It is timeless. Our youngest students learn by manipulating the hands on activities they work with every day. Through these pictures, enjoy a glimpse in the day of a child exploring and understanding their world in their own unique way. Every day is a new experience!

## Book Fair Thank You

Thank you, Albrook community, for your heartfelt support of this year’s Book Fair! We were able to surpass last year’s record breaking sales, all because of your generosity, Albrook received 25% of sales, a grand total of \$1,074.29 for the school! The teachers and children are enjoying the many books that were kindly donated to both the classroom and main library’s “Wish Lists.”

Thank you, as well, to the amazing behind-the-scenes committee for all their hard work: Jayanthi Akuthota, Astrid Kurnianta, Kara Chabot and Jia He.

You can continue to support Albrook each time you order from The Children’s Bookstore, using the Albrook link, and we will receive 15% of each sale.

Happy reading, and Happy New Year!

## Trunk or Treat

The Albrook Trunk or Treat has become a popular and much-anticipated event. This year's Trunk or Treat took place on Sunday, October 30th. The weather could not have been more perfect as families gathered at Albrook with decorated cars and treats for all. It was so fun to see everyone's costumes and to watch the children make the rounds of all three parking areas. Here are some highlights from the Upper Elementary students:

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**Sophia:** I loved the decorations and it was really well organized.

**Suhana:** It was fun selling all the lemonade for the Ukrainian Montessori Center fundraiser.

**Theodore:** I liked going because I was able to see my friends and I got lots of candy.

**Nathan:** I loved all the variety of costumes and cars, and the candy was really good!

**Zofia:** It was really, really fun! I loved all the costumes.

**Adhya:** I'm looking forward to next year to do it again.

**Abby:** I enjoyed trunk or treating with my friends.

**Helena:** I really enjoyed it. I liked being able to see my friends and getting a lot of candy.

**Freya:** I really loved the Trunk or Treat. I know people liked seeing our puppies for our "101 Dalmatians" car.

**Daniel:** I had fun with my friends, and I got a lot of candy.



## Open House at Albrook

The Albrook School had its first in a series of Open Houses on Sunday, November 13, from 1-3pm. The spring-like day served us well; many families were eager to get out and about with their families to begin their school search. Parents are faced with all different types of concerns in today's climate. They seek a safe school environment. They want to know that the teachers are hands-on and engaging. They want a social setting conducive to developing a sense of community. And last but not least, they want their child will love school!

Our best marketing tool is our teachers! The longevity and dedication of our staff are unparalleled. The passion for the Montessori Method is palpable as the teacher's tour prospective parents through the hallways and to the classrooms. They demonstrate how some Montessori materials are used, how the environment is prepared, and how a lesson is presented. Often times you will witness a light going off in the parent's mind.....this is what I want for my child! An environment that allows the students to explore within boundaries, develop at their own pace, and gain confidence and friendships along the way. It is evident by the number of applications that followed the Open House that the first event was a success!

As we look forward to 2023, another Open House is heading our way on January 14 from 9-11am. We invite you to share your family's experience with friends and neighbors. When we ask prospective parents how they heard about Albrook, it is generally not from an ad but rather from a current parent, alums, or a friend of Albrook.



## The Albrook Community Giving Tree

"Real Generosity is doing something nice for someone who will never find out."

Frank Howard Clark

In keeping with a tradition that began in December 1994, the Albrook Giving Tree was set up in the reception area. Decorated with lights and ornaments and special red hearts with white trims. Each heart hosted three wishes from young boys and girls. So many of these young children are less fortunate than we are, and will most likely be the only gifts they receive over the holiday or throughout the year. Each heart held three wishes, a need, a want, and an educational item. Some examples are a 4yr old girl who wished for a pretty dress and a bow for her hair, a baby doll, and a lego set. A 5-year-old boy requested a winter jacket and gloves, a backpack with new markers, and a lego set.

Over the years, our school has partnered with various charities and organizations. This year the Stepping Stones and preschool classes partnered with Christmas is for Children. This non-profit, non-denominational organization is dedicated to providing children in need some love and joy over the holiday season. Christmas is for Children has been bringing the spirit of the holiday season to families since 1991.

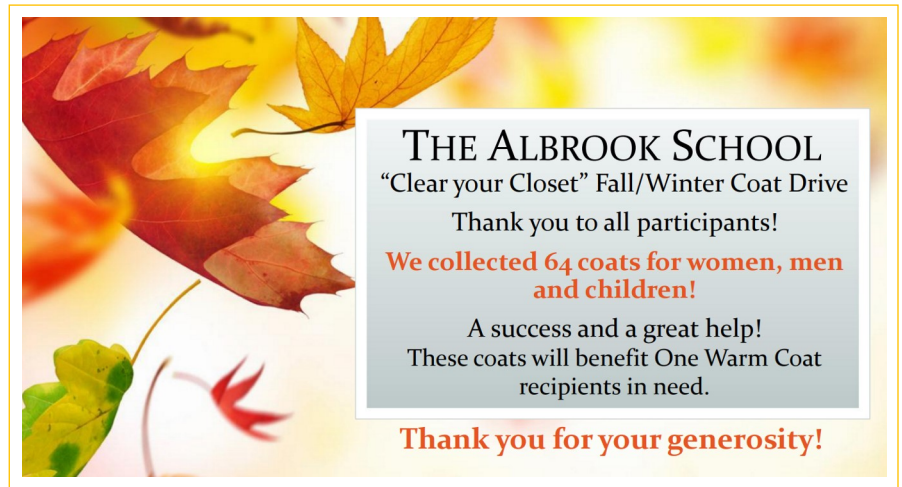
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The elementary classes supported a Toy Drive for the Morristown Medical Center's Goryeb Children's Hospital. There were requests for gift cards and toys such as Legos, action figures, dolls, cars, and toys for infants in the NICU.

We want to send out a big thank you to our elves at the front desk, who organized and ensured each heart request was wrapped and labeled, ensuring that gifts were delivered on time to our little friends.

For twenty-eight years, we have observed our school community's overwhelming love and generosity; this year has been no exception. Within a week, not one heart was left on the tree, and every child's want, need, and educational wish was filled.

Once again, our Giving tree was a tremendous success! Thank you for supporting and touching a child's heart and making a difference this holiday season.



## Albrook Community Food Drive

The Albrook School's first Food Drive was held in November 1992 to support the Interfaith Food Pantry in Morristown. The food bank's demand increased as the years passed, and our school connected with the Somerset Food Bank.

Over the years, we have had the pleasure of observing our students exercise their muscles with great pride as they pulled, hauled, and dragged boxes and bags filled with much-needed food items, and this year was no exception. It is truly heartwarming to see our students immersed in the true gift of giving.

The staff at the Somerset Food Bank shared that due to the impact of the pandemic and recessionary times, there is a much greater demand for families in need, causing a more significant demand for the Food Bank to keep their shelves stocked. It is only through the continuous support of people like the families at The Albrook School that enable us to address and serve the needs of these families.

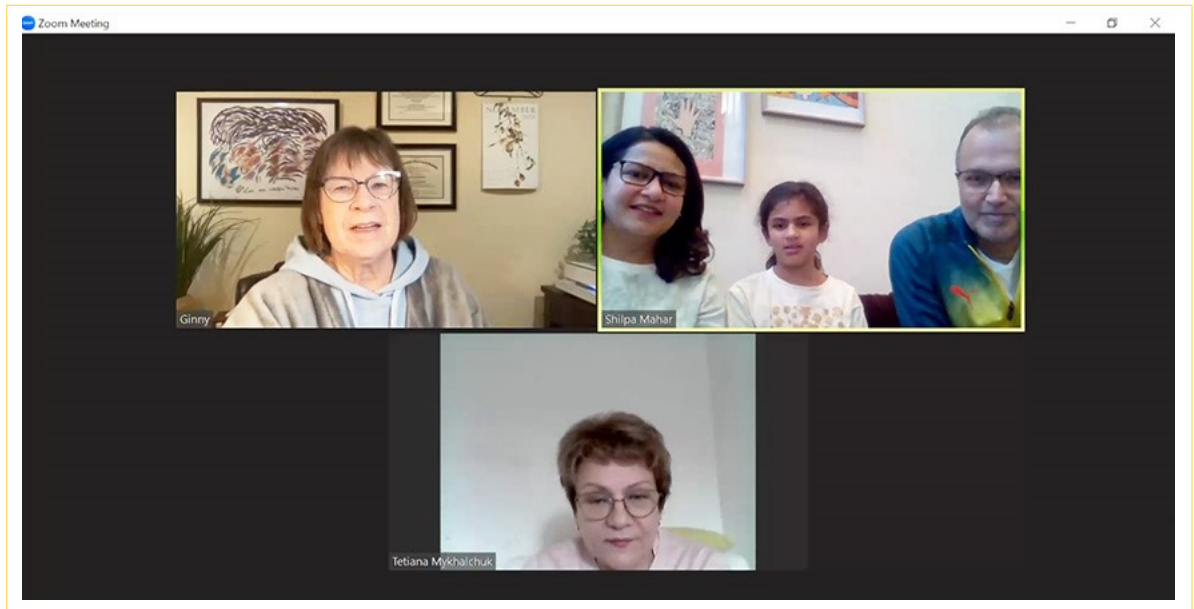
We want to acknowledge Mrs. Smith for being the Food Bank liaison and delivering all the donated food items. Thank you! For helping make this year's food drive a great success. Your generosity, action, and giving spirit will make someone's Thanksgiving richer!

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## Meeting Ms. Mykhalchuk

My family and I were able to meet Ms. Mykhalchuk on a Zoom call that Ms. Cusack helped to set up. Ms. Mykhalchuk is the Vice President of the Ukrainian Montessori Association and the other person besides Ms. Cusack who is helping us help UMC. She gave us the photos and the information for my UMC fundraiser.

The biggest thing I took away from the Zoom call was education. Learning what is going on there, some things that you don't hear in the news, and how the children are feeling.



The war is going on, but not everybody from Ukraine had to flee. Even in Kyiv life is going on. Parents are going to work, their children need to go to school, teachers are teaching and making the children feel safe, and doctors are giving help even in such difficult situations. The children feel comfortable in school. (One kid stopped speaking but he spoke when he went to school). With the missile attacks that were going on, when the siren starts, lessons are interrupted and they need to go to the shelter. I wonder if they worry? Ms. Mykhalchuk said that the shelters are close by and the whole process is well organized with help from teachers and also psychologists. The children are not afraid and know what they need to do. Would they be safer at home? Ms. Mykhalchuk said not really. If something were to happen, everything is so close by, it would not matter if they were at home or in school. At least they are happier in school instead of being alone at home.

I could see that Ms. Mykhalchuk misses her home in Ukraine. She had to evacuate from her home after the missile attacks started on Kyiv and the Russian tanks were on the streets. Her family decided to go to Germany where her younger son lives. The journey took many days through western Ukraine, Hungary, Austria, and Poland. She is very thankful to her son's friend in Germany who gave them a home to live in but her biggest desire is to go back to her home in Ukraine.

Her older son is back in Ukraine. She worries about their safety and checks on them every day with phone calls, to check if they have food and water and if they are alive.

With the missiles, Russia is trying to target infrastructure like light, heating, and water supply so that they are without power



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and heating in the winter. The damage that was done by the Nov 23rd missile attack is being repaired and soon the electricity will be more stable. Ms. Mykhalchuk said 'We can live with the cold but the one thing we will not live with is Russia in our country'. I could see that the war has not broken her spirit. Maybe this is the spirit of the other Ukrainians as well, and why Ukraine is staying strong in the fight to defend their country. They want to be independent and democratic, and they want to live in peace. That is what Ukraine is standing for and they are sure they will win.

## Thank you, Albrook Staff!

Your support and generous donations raised an *amazing* \$450.00 for Making Strides Against Breast Cancer!



## Holiday Breakfast

It was the first time in a few years that The Albrook APA hosted a Holiday Breakfast, and it was magnificent! Although a rainy morning, the spirits of the Albrook community were not dampened.

Many hands and hearts helped with the preparation for this event, which included decorations by

our student elves. Their artwork was carefully displayed on the walls. We had a photo booth designed and donated by Mrs. Petrova. Mrs. Smith captured precious moments for families to enjoy. APA volunteers created lovely centerpieces that added to the holiday flair. Beautiful rich red poinsettias that were also donated were an excellent addition.



We were entertained by a magician, a visit from our favorite storytelling Santa Claus, and our infamous Mrs. Marvi joined the children for a sing-along of holiday favorites. Many hands and hearts helped with the food preparation: delicious Estrada, sausages, pancakes, and fruit were served. A selection of drinks included Chai tea, lemonade, coffee, and hot chocolate were enjoyed by all.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who helped the APA on this event. A special thank you to all who assisted with the cleanup at the end.

We would be remiss if we didn't thank Ms. Koster and Mrs. Petrova, their organizational skills were invaluable in following up on every detail. Lastly, we want to thank the many staff members who joined to help. Mrs. Ferguson was our technical expert for the event, Mrs. Tarangul for the last-minute shopping, and Mrs. Dignam happily flipped pancakes early in the morning. The remainder of the staff who attended were open to help wherever needed. The outcome was evident, we are better together, and a lot of fun was had by all!

Check out more photos from the Holiday Breakfast on the next page.

## Volunteering: Every Bit Helps

By Shilpa Mahar (Suhana's mom)

As a working parent, I've always admired and been thankful to the parents that take out time to be class moms, special event volunteers and so much more. Helping organize some school activities lately has served as a reminder about how much goes into many of these activities. But whether you want to go all out or do something small, whether you want to do a one-time activity or something regularly, whether it's something that can be done at home or an offer of a small amount of time at school, there's a volunteering opportunity to fit your schedule and interests.

When I heard Jessica Koster's speech at the Back-to-School night, this bit stuck with me - How even working parents can find time to do activities with shorter time commitments. All I had to do was plan ahead for time off from work, and block my calendar. Working with the children at the Children's Garden has been the perfect example. You can pick any day or time that works for you. Each 'session' can be as short as 40 minutes, you can do one or more sessions in a day if you'd like, and you're welcome to continue working in the garden after the children have returned to their classrooms. I've personally found it so therapeutic. Warm sunny days, the blue sky and the green fields for a view, checking out the vegetables and flowers the children have nurtured, and their fun chatter as they weed, transplant and have fun, what's not to love? I also got to spend time with Pankaj (Adya's mom) while putting up the chicken wire fence, and it was just lovely.

My hope is that I can continue to make time for this, and maybe you'll give it a try too.

## Holiday Decor

They arrived early on a cold morning in late November all bundled up and ready to go to work. Everyone was so grateful to Natasha Patel for supplying doughnuts and coffee for all. The transition from fall décor to winter holiday was seamless. There are candy canes, wreaths, a menorah, poinsettias and the list goes on. Needless to say, Natasha Patel, Peri Rosenstein, Nicole Guijral, Michelle Gomes, Shakira Rivera and Lily Petrov did a fabulous job putting us in the holiday spirit.



**APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR  
WILL ONLY BE ACCEPTED AFTER JAN 1, 2023**

## Procedure and Criteria for Awarding Financial Aid/Scholarships

A limited number of scholarships are offered each year to students in the Kindergarten and Elementary Programs. Applications must be submitted to FAST; it is Independent School Management's (ISM) FAST (tuition assistance for School Tuition) program. FAST provides a need-based tuition analysis service. A report is generated and supplied to The Albrook School indicating what a family should reasonably contribute toward tuition. **All applications must be submitted to FAST no later than March 4, 2023.** All information is kept strictly confidential.

The Administration and the Board Scholarship Committee review all the financial aid applicants and award scholarships based on the following criteria:

1. The family's demonstrated commitment to Montessori Education
2. Student's personal potential within the class and program
3. Financial need based on expected family contribution (a measure of the family's ability to pay for the child's education)
4. Academic merit

The dollar amount of scholarships awarded is affected by the total amount of money designated for scholarships for that school year and the number of applicants awarded scholarships.

The application process is self-guided. You may partially complete the application and save your work and then return back to it at a later time. FAST offers online email help and a 24/7 helpline is provided. **The non-refundable fee for the application is \$48.00** and is to be paid at the end of the session by the applicant using a credit card. VISA, MasterCard and AMEX are accepted. After completing the online application, **you will be required to mail or scan and email all of your 2022 tax documents for both state and federal taxes with all the schedules and W-2's to:**

**Independent School Management  
Attn: FAST Processing 2207 Concord Pike #417  
Wilmington, DE 19803**

Write THE ALBROOK SCHOOL's name on the outside of the envelope to ensure quick processing of your application. Please use the hyperlink below to submit your application: [FAST](https://www.ismfast.com/FastPage.php?id=6f6a7f28447aa4f26d2ff8cb0979c079)  
(<https://www.ismfast.com/FastPage.php?id=6f6a7f28447aa4f26d2ff8cb0979c079>)

(Application available in January, 2023)  
All families submitting applications will be notified of the results before April 1, 2023.

Wishing the  
Albrook Community a  
peaceful and joyous  
holiday season  
and a  
Happy New Year.

**Around Albrook**

Dance Caravan & Diwali in the Monet Classroom

