



SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2025

The Albrook Almanac

Rain Garden Installed at Albrook

By Karin Baird

In late August, engineers from the Rutgers Cooperative Extension led a team to break ground on a new rain garden for the Albrook School. As part of a partnership with schoolchildren from both Taiwan and New Jersey, the Rutgers team designed and installed several rain gardens in New Jersey schools to bring awareness of green infrastructure to elementary students.

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, November 26

Thanksgiving Break
Early Dismissal

Thursday, November 27

Friday, November 28
Thanksgiving Holiday
School Closed

Friday, December 19 through Thursday, January 1

Winter Break
School Closed

Friday, January 2
Classes resume

Through our correspondence with children in Taiwan, we have been able to see examples of rain gardens and rain-water harvesting in several schools throughout Taiwan. Our children learned how rain gardens can help combat climate change by absorbing storm water runoff and by filtering pollutants from the water before it enters the local watershed. The NJ/Taiwan Rain Garden Project culminates with a Google Meet video call where Albrook children will exchange ideas and learn from the children in our partner school, Datong Elementary School in Taiwan. We are so excited to have been able to participate in this project and have learned a lot throughout the process.



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The Albrook School

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Summer Camp 2025

By Ms. MacNeill

Putting the “Sun Fun” into Learning! There’s nothing quite like seeing smiling faces and eager feet skipping their way into summer camp! This past summer was truly a camper’s dream, sunny skies, endless laughter, and days filled with outdoor adventures and creative indoor fun. At Albrook Summer Camp, we know how to put the “Sun Fun” into learning! When our doors opened on June 16, campers were greeted with record-breaking heat, bursts of humidity, and a few refreshing rain showers. But nothing could slow down their excitement! They dove into every opportunity, making new friends, joining exciting programs, taking swim lessons, and splashing through afternoon free swim.

Here are just a few highlights from the amazing programs our happy campers enjoyed:

Explore the World – our campers journeyed across Africa through hands-on art projects, experiments, and multimedia activities. They discovered the continent’s vibrant cultures, stunning landscapes, and incredible wildlife.

Cooking Around the World – Young chefs explored spices of the world, tasting delicious new flavors while creating recipe books and decorating aprons, and tea towels.

Exploring Nature – young campers studied animal habitats, camouflage, and ocean life while learning what creatures need to survive. Nature walks around campus led to exciting discoveries and close encounters with the natural world.

Soccer Camp – students built skills in dribbling, shooting, and passing while learning teamwork, sportsmanship, and the joy of the game.

Digital Art – Students tapped into their creativity through technology, designing digital masterpieces with Paint 3D, Adobe Photoshop, Sketchbook Pro, and Kid Pix, as well as exploring hands-on art projects in the classroom.

STEAM Adventures – students explored the wonders of Energy and Chemistry, experimenting with potential, kinetic, solar, and electrical energy. They tested non-Newtonian fluids, viscosity, and surface tension, integrating math, science, art, and technology in innovative ways. **(STEAM) Probability of Fun**– through games and creative challenges, students learned about chance, uncertainty, and probability, capping it off by designing their own board games.

Creative Writing – Our creative campers really were a creative and talented bunch. Each child came in ready to let their imaginative ideas flow. The end result was an amazing,

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handwritten, illustrated book. They focused on fairy tales and superhero stories as a framework for their writing. The campers had a lot of fun writing and sharing their books. It was a great way to end the summer!

Drama – Our young performers shined on stage! Over two weeks, they learned acting, line memorization, and character expression, culminating in a delightful family performance that showcased their confidence and creativity.

Not forgetting our toddlers, the Stepping Stones students, our youngest campers explored themes like ocean life, bugs, pets, the senses, and Dr. Seuss. Lunchtime grilled cheese Tuesdays were a big hit, but nothing topped splashing through the water sprinkler and riding the mini roller coaster, a joyful end to their first school year before moving up to the “big” classes!

Time truly flies when you’re having fun! Watching campers build confidence, friendships, and a deeper respect for the world around them made Summer Camp 2025 a tremendous success. A heartfelt thank-you to our wonderful alumni and staff for their enthusiasm and energy.

Mark your calendars, Summer Camp 2026 registration opens in January!

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Albrook Family Picnic- 2025

by Barak Shimon

What a start to the school year! The APA Family Picnic took place on the soccer field in early September. It was truly a lovely evening with a tremendous showing from the Albrook community. All of us coming together is a wonderful testament of what our school is all about.

In the spirit of Albrook's theme, "Being our Best through Grace and Courtesy," the event was the perfect opportunity for families, teachers, and friends to socialize, bond, and welcome the new school year.

Now that you've had an opportunity to meet everyone, we're excited to see even more of our wonderful parent community join in and volunteer as the year unfolds. A heartfelt thank-you to all who attended, your enthusiasm and support make such a difference! Here's to a fantastic year ahead together!

The Albrook Community Celebrates World Peace Day!

By Ms. MacNeill and Ms. Virk

Celebrating the International Day of Peace in Our Classrooms, as Dr. Maria Montessori wisely said, "Establishing lasting peace is the work of education." During times of uncertainty and change, we are reminded of the importance of patience, compassion, and inner calm, values deeply rooted in the Montessori philosophy. These values came to life in our school-wide celebration of the International Day of Peace.

Established by a United Nations resolution in 1981, this day is dedicated to "commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples." Since 2009, The Albrook School community has come together each year to honor World Peace Day through song, reflection, and creative activities.

On the morning of Tuesday, September 21, our classrooms were filled with moments of connection and hope as students celebrated peace in their own unique ways. In the O'Keeffe classroom, children were introduced to the concept of a "love light," inspired by Sonnie McFarland's Honoring the Light of the Child. They talked about the love that lives within each of us, how it can sometimes grow dim, and how kindness and empathy help it shine brightly again. Each child created a love-light necklace as a reminder of the peace and love they carry inside. The Homer students explored mindfulness and music by reading *Peace: A Celebration of Mindfulness* and singing Jack Hartmann's "A Song of Peace." They practiced deep breathing, listened to calming music, and lit their peace candle each morning to center

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themselves. Reading Todd Parr's *The Peace Book* led to thoughtful discussions about bringing peace into both the classroom and the wider world. Lower Elementary students made lists in their journals of things that make them feel peaceful. They also spoke about the history of this day during the morning meeting and read a story focused on inner peace. They shared how inner peace can help lead to peace in the world. In the Picasso classroom, students watched the song video "Light a Candle for Peace." As the new school year began, they planted simple yet meaningful "seeds of peace" through reflection and gentle activities that encouraged unity and kindness. The Van Gogh classroom read Karan Katz's *Can You Say Peace?* and discovered different ways how to say "peace" in languages from around the globe. Students created beautiful drawings showing what peace means to them, which were displayed outside the classroom, sharing their messages of harmony with the entire school community. Across every classroom, children celebrated Peace Day through song, story, silence, and creativity, learning that peace begins within and grows through small, everyday actions.

Later that morning, the entire school gathered in Albers Hall for a community celebration. Ms. Vazaios opened the assembly with reflections on why we honor International Peace Day. Amelia, one of our Upper Elementary students, rang the chimes, symbolizing the "Peace Bell" tradition observed in Japan and around the world as a call for unity and hope. Clement and Mishti followed by sharing and modeling ways we can all practice peace in our daily lives.

The Community Peace Candle was lit, followed by a moment of silence and the harmonious voices of our students singing "Light a Candle for Peace." Under the guidance of Mrs. Marvi and Mrs. Dignam, the children also performed beloved songs such as "This Little Light of Mine" and "We Are Flowers in One Garden." The assembly closed with our school song, "We Are Albrook School," a joyful reminder that peace grows stronger when we nurture it together. As the day ended, students reflected on how they could continue to honor peace, in their classrooms, on the playground, and in their hearts, every single day. Thank you to our entire Albrook community for helping to keep the light of peace shining bright.

Grace and Courtesy

By Ms. Pando

In Montessori education, Grace and Courtesy are much more than good manners; they are the foundation for building kind hearts, confident voices, and caring relationships. Through these daily lessons, children learn how to move through the world with empathy, respect, and awareness of others.

In our Homer classroom, we gently guide children to:

- Treat others with kindness, respect, and empathy
- Use polite and thoughtful language
- Listen carefully and communicate clearly
- Consider other people's feelings and perspectives



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- Contribute to a warm and caring classroom community

These lessons are not taught in isolation; they are part of everything we do each day. You can see them in moments like:

- A cheerful “good morning” greeting upon arrival at the car-line and when they enter the classroom.
- A child saying “please” and “thank you”
- Taking turns during work or play
- Saying “excuse me” when passing by
- Offering help to a friend in need
- Cleaning up after themselves
- Washing hands before a snack and after using the restroom
- Sharing stories and reflections during circle time that show kindness and respect

Our teachers model these behaviors with care, knowing that children learn best through example. When they see adults treating others with gentleness and respect, they naturally begin to do the same.

Through these small, everyday moments, our students gain the social and emotional skills that help them grow into thoughtful, confident, and compassionate members of their community, living the true spirit of Grace and Courtesy.



Back to School Night at Albrook

by Ms. MacNeill



On Thursday, October 18, Albrook opened its doors for a memorable Back to School Night, held on a beautiful, warm fall evening. The event was thoughtfully designed with two purposes in mind: to bring our school community together and to offer families a closer look at their children’s classroom experiences for the year ahead.

The evening opened with a wonderful opportunity for parents to mingle, reconnect, and share in the excitement of a new school year. Over a light supper and a glass of wine, parents toasted to the months ahead, surrounded by an impressive spread of appetizers and desserts, many of which were lovingly contributed by members of our community. It was delightful to hear the buzz

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of conversation and laughter filled the room, creating an atmosphere of warmth and camaraderie that truly reflected the Albrook spirit.

Following the social gathering, Ms. MacNeill welcomed everyone and offered a heartfelt reflection on the past year. She introduced this year's school goal "Being Our Best through Grace and Courtesy" reminding us of the values that guide our work with the children. Ms. MacNeill also expressed gratitude for the tireless efforts of our APA and parent committees, whose dedication and generosity enhance the life of our school. She encouraged continued parent participation, noting how deeply this partnership enriches the Albrook experience.

A warm round of applause followed the introduction of Albrook's long-standing and dedicated staff, whose commitment to the Montessori Method and to nurturing each child's potential is the heart of our school. Parents

were then invited into their children's classrooms, where teachers shared insights into the year's curriculum, classroom goals, and upcoming activities. These discussions provided a meaningful glimpse into the engaging learning environments that inspire our students each day.

As the evening drew to a close, there was a deep sense of gratitude and community. We extend our deepest appreciation to all parents for your continued support and trust, and to our exceptional staff for their unwavering devotion to the children they guide and inspire each day. Together, we look forward to another wonderful year of learning, growth, and grace.

Grace and Courtesy: Our School's Focus

by Nina Marvi

Grace and Courtesy. What's the point? Sure, it's a tenet of Montessori philosophy but what does it mean in this day and age? A valid question to be sure and I hope to answer it. We all aspire to ideals of respect. Respect for elders, respect for individuals that we meet on a daily basis. Do we really practice it, though? How does this respect manifest itself? Yes, it means encouraging the 'please' and 'thank you's' along with 'you're welcome' and 'please may I have's'. It's more than that, though.

Behind these important words are the development of empathy. Empathy and understanding that those who might be holding the door, passing us a napkin or a tissue are doing so out of choice. Even the gas station attendant or waitress are doing their work out of choice. A choice to be polite, or even caring and compassionate. A choice to be kind, you might say. A choice nonetheless, the recognition of which is a basis for further growth and development. Ours is the choice to say, in response, 'I see you', and I understand your impact and importance.



In Montessori terms: “Grace and courtesy are among the first lessons in human relationships that we give to the child”. We model these virtues daily in the classroom. Our Practical Life lessons embody these ideals. We learn to refrain from eating until our classmates are ready. We ask to be excused before leaving the table. We serve food to our classmates with polite entreaties. We learn to decline politely. We learn to be aware of and to acknowledge the needs of others as we become aware of our own. These lessons are a constant work in progress and are a cornerstone of our daily routines.

What about grace then? All of us fall short. In the classroom the children learn to resolve many conflicts through taking turns to talk, through developing listening skills and learning to walk in the shoes of another classmate. Forgiveness is part of this process, along with learning to accept an apology with an expectation that transgressions won’t be repeated, ideally. Lofty goals to be sure but as we model these procedures, so the children absorb and process them.

During the coming months we look forward to sharing more specific examples of how we approach Grace and Courtesy lessons in each classroom. We hope that you enjoy these insights.

Getting to Know You Maureen Davis

Maureen joins Albrook with many years of experience leading teams supporting global mobility programs for Fortune 500 companies. She’s worked with teams around the world to make sure everything runs smoothly and managing the process end to end from logistic support to ensuring compliance with global tax requirements.

After spending time teaching in local schools, Maureen is excited to return to business in a place that values community and learning. She loves helping people grow, solving problems, and making sure the behind-the-scenes work supports the amazing things happening in the classroom.

Outside of work, Maureen enjoys golf, mentoring others, and spending time with her family. She’s thrilled to be part of the Albrook family and looks forward to supporting our school in every way she can.



“It is tremendously important that we should understand the spontaneous way in which the child develops himself. We are so anxious to help, to us it seems the burden of growth and development is so great that we must do all we can to make the pathway easy. And so our love may easily overreach itself and by providing too many urges, too many cautions and corrections.” Maria Montessori