A MOTHER’S TESTIMONY

At the end of school this past spring we received an e-mail from Lorelei Edwards whose
son, Bryce, attended Our Montessori School for eight years. She asked that we reprint
her letter in its entirety as an aid to all OMS parents looking for confirmation that they
have made the best decision possible in sending their children to OMS. We are grateful
for and heartened by her comments and pleased to honor her request.

Dear Werner and Betty,

First, I must say, with spring in full bloom and another school year coming to an end, this
note of praise is long overdue, especially since it’s been Bryce’s first time in nine years
(or ever) that he has not been a student at Our Montessori School. It has been my intent
to write sooner, to express my gratitude, compliments and thanks for all those wonderful
years at this school, where Bryce had experienced so much more than he would have
anywhere else. At Our Montessori, Bryce had a home away from home filled with
learning, love and joy, and there wasn’t a single day in all those years that Bryce wasn’t
completely happy to be there. His school was everything to him and he often expressed
to me that his teachers and classmates were like his family.

There is a lot I would like to say, and I guess that’s why I took so long to write this. I
wanted to get it right and not leave anything out. One thing that I wanted to point out
was that while Bryce was a student, I always wished there was documented testimony
from a Mom whose child was also in the school for the long hall. A testimony that was
strong enough to make me realize that indeed, my intuition was correct and I’ve made all
the right choices. I’m pointing this out because maybe there are parents out there now
who need to hear this from a Mom like me. Maybe they’re considering this school but
have doubts or concerns. I want them to know their children are in the best of hands. I
never had any input from other parents—just went on intuition. Years later it is very
clear. The decision was right.

Here’s our story. Bryce attended Our Montessori from two years old until 10 and I
can proudly say, as his proud Mom, that he’s done quite well. He thrives academically,
skipped a grade, and still he performs well above grade level. He also is an artist, writer,
singer and actor. He thrives creatively. With all these skills the one thing he surprisingly
lacks is arrogance. He is kind, modest and a very good friend. I believe all these traits
are contributed not only to his upbringing at home but also to the nurturing environment
that Our Montessori provided for him, and I am forever grateful.

Today, Bryce is 11. He attends Soundview Preparatory School and although should
be in the sixth grade, attends all seventh and eighth grade classes. Finally he gets a report
card, and guess what? So far, for the first three quarters, Bryce has gotten straight A’s
and A+’s in all subjects. Plus, on his midterms, his lowest grade was 97%. So what can I
say? Cheri and Susan, you were always right! You always reassured me about Bryce’s
academic strengths, and I really see now for sure, how fantastic your teaching styles are.

One particular aspect that I’d like to point out, is the effectiveness of Cheri’s style of
teaching. I have to admit, many times I wished there was a textbook with a page number
to flip to, but the truth of the matter is this: Cheri has a program that works and it
challenges your child no matter what his or her academic performance level is. The
concept of a weekly assignment that entails writing and research with flexibility for the
child to work at his or her own pace really challenged Bryce. Bryce, who has always
performed above grade level, is a gifted writer, and that skill was nurtured and finessed in
Cheri’s class. Honestly, I can’t express my gratitude enough because honestly, in a more
traditional academic setting we may not have even discovered that Bryce had this
incredible talent.

Now that I have observed a more traditional style of teaching with textbooks and work
sheets, I really see how difficult it could be to get excited about a subject or even have an
opportunity to shine. Needless to say, Cheri, the textbooks are boring and I really miss
all those wonderful assignments that allowed Bryce to become the writer he is today!
Also, the creative aspects of Our Montessori are greatly missed. I believe the foreign
languages, art, music and dance classes were really superb, plus they built so much self-
confidence.

Bryce is embraced at his new school. He is given continuous praise, academically,
artistically and theatrically. All old news to everyone at Our Montessori, but equally if
not more importantly is the praise he receives based on his goodwill and kindness
towards others. Bryce was spoiled at Our Montessori. The atmosphere was filled with
love and I believe it was contagious, completely unique to any other school. Bryce has a
big heart and is filled with integrity and I only have his warm and loving teachers to
thank for that.

In this letter, I tried to focus on the teaching style of Our Montessori for parents that
may question this alternative style. The teachers are superior. Your children will learn
more and be intellectually smarter. Plus, your child will be in an environment where he
or she has confidence in whom he/she is because the school is filled with so much
genuine love and care.

I am so proud of Bryce and the young man that he has become. It’s been hard to close
this chapter in our lives, with so many fond memories and wonderful accomplishments.
Our Montessori was a wonderful experience. Bryce basically grew up there, from the
time he was two starting out with the wonderful energy of doting Alice Lee and the
loving warmth of Enza. Three years in Tamiko’s class, so thoughtful and patient, and
Deb with her big heart, and of course the thought of our loving Nancy which brings tears
to my eyes. These ladies might as well have been Bryce’s aunts, they couldn’t have been
more wonderful, and I completely relinquished all my trust to them. Already, before first
grade, Bryce was learning so much and making an impression.

I have so many fond memories of Bryce in Susan’s class. To express my compliments
towards Susan, I wouldn’t know where to begin. An attentive and caring teacher, she
always impressed me, especially because of her level of modesty. I hope she knows what
a terrific teacher she is. Susan couldn’t hide her emotions. I was often moved by her
level of love and the care she had towards her students. I literally could see it in her eyes.
I always knew her class was a perfect fit for Bryce just because of Susan’s genuine
warmth and attentiveness. She gave Bryce an incredible amount of personal attention
and was in touch with his academic needs. It was also a great mix of teachers. All the
kids loved Athina, Bryce included. And I mustn’t leave out Adriana. What an excellent
teacher whom Bryce adored and learned so much from.

Finally, the Senior Class. When Bryce first graduated to the older kids’ class, this first
year was the happiest of his life. He still points this out to me all the time. He was so
proud to be a part of Cheri’s class, where learning, exploring and discovery were all enthralling wonderful things. Cheri was a breath of fresh air, and Bryce adored her whimsical classroom. Joan’s sophisticated art curriculum added to the magic. But most of all, I really think this is where Bryce developed a mature level of respect and integrity. There really was something powerful about this classroom, especially today in a society where bullying has become epidemic. Cheri’s kids really cared about each other. Everyone was embraced and included. Everyone felt like they belonged. Everyone was special. That was Kelsey’s last year. I also think Bryce really benefitted from having Cheri’s own daughters, Ally and Kelsey, in class with him. Wonderful and talented girls, I believe they were strong and positive role models to Bryce. I admired both of them too. Bryce tells me this was the happiest time of his life. To this day, Bryce longs for that experience again.

What more can I say? Thank you all for shaping those formative years of my son’s early life. So many happy memories. He has left Our Montessori with so much to be proud of and I can’t thank you all enough. What an amazing school.

All the Best,

Lorelei Edwards