Julia:

Tonia Wheeler has brought so many things to Hilltop. When we were younger we didn't really recognize the changes that happened around us, but now we see and appreciate the contributions Tonia has made to our school.
She grew a small Montessori preschool program to a full school where children of all ages can learn. We grew in different ways in each classroom she added on.
Through all of these changes, a wonderful constant has been the little red house, that currently lives on the children's house playground. When it came time to move the new Hilltop Campus, Tonia made sure to bring the Little Red house. Tonia was always insistent on bringing the little red house with us form one hilltop location to the next. She recognized that this was our favorite place to play and meant a lot to each of us.

Anna:

The red house feel symbolic for me. Being in preschool when we moved the new campus seemed big and scary, but when it came time to play the little red house was still here. There I found comfort in the big, scary new place. We played the same games here as we had the old campus.

It was a place of security for Julia
The little red house was a place of security to me. Whenever I felt sad I would hang upside down from the bar above the door and feel happy again. I remember a particular time when I was three I hid there from my peacebuddy. As I sat in the corner crying, the bars felt solid and safe against my back.

Anna:

And now, in appreciation for all of the work Tonia Wheeler has done for all of us, we would like to present her with the Kahn Mason Award for Outstanding Contribution to Hilltop Montessori School. Tonia, the little red house is as special to you as it has been to us, so we would like to present you with this birdhouse made by the Upper Elementary, modeled after the little red house.

Nomi / Presented by Anna:

For me the little red house was a safe haven. Moving from the old campus was a big leap for everyone. For me, I was leaving behind the monkey bars. The monkey bars were a part of me. When I walked onto the new playground and I didn't see any monkey bars I did not know what to do with myself. For some reason the little Red house caught my attention. From then on it became my new monkey bars.