

Thank you....

First off I need to be clear that I did not start Hilltop...it was already a well-established Montessori nursery school when my children first started. I came to Montessori through the neighborhood carpool- I had no idea of the significance of “Montessori”. Then I watched my squirmy, active three year old son in the classroom, and I was dumbfounded. It was Friday and the closing circle included walking with a lighted candle around the circle and handing it to another child. I simply couldn’t believe it was possible for him to be that focused and respectful. That was the beginning of my love affair with Montessori. Every year it deepened as I observed more and took workshops and courses. I hope that many of you as grandparents/special friends have had a chance to observe how Montessori really does develop responsible independence in this very caring community.

There are so many people who have made this school, who allowed me to stumble and fall, who fixed what was broken – who led when it was deeply scary to move forward. I thank all of you – parents, grandparents/special friend, board members, and the admin team for your unceasing support. My deepest thanks to the teachers who dug in at the most difficult times and who are endlessly caring and creative – you are why parents choose this school. So really, I accept this award on behalf of the extraordinary Hilltop community.

A special thanks to Kevin Campbell who was head during the displacement from Austine and oversaw the design and building of this campus. And of course to Tamara who I think has Hilltop in her heart as much I do in mine.

Tamara suggested that I give you a brief history of Hilltop over the years. My thanks to Dr. Seuss for the inspiration.

OH THE PLACES WE'VE BEEN – A RIFF ON DR. SEUSS' OH, THE PLACES YOU'LL GO

At WVMH is where Hilltop first started
Oh those parents had vision; they sure weren't faint-hearted
They built shelves, did laundry, they mopped
Made lunches, drove carpools, no, they couldn't be stopped.

Why Montessori you might think to ask
Well, the very first teacher was trained in the task
Through hang ups and bang ups all through the years
Montessori's our guide, the calm to our fears.

Follow the child no matter how wild
Soon they'll be working, intent and so mild
Yes, Montessori guides us all the day through
Follow, observe find a "work" that is new.

A few years later there was mumble and grumble.
It's time to move on, can't falter can't stumble.
A church basement in town might seem a strange place
For a school named Hilltop... and yet, it was a good space.

OH THE PLACES WE'VE BEEN

More mumble, more grumble, let's start lower el
Those parents of course - you know the song well,
But where oh where could this program dwell?
Close by on High Street...two campuses... oh swell.

It grew and it grew until there was nowhere to sit,
Nowhere to park, nowhere that fit
What to do now, yes, we were panicked a bit
A new home was found thanks to luck we'll admit

OH THE PLACES WE'VE BEEN

The Austine campus, a dream come true
All under one roof, so what did we do?
We didn't stop...we just grew and grew
And yes, those parents, they wanted middle school too.

The middle school started with an unusual perch
Back in the basement at Center Church

When they moved to Austine ah, it all seemed so right
Until we were told Hilltop had to take flight...

We scurried, we hurried, we searched high and low
Oh, the places we thought we might go
Bank buildings, warehouses, we went to and fro
Everywhere, every place, the option was NO

And then one day we came to this spot...

This very spot where the campus is now
We knew this was it...we just didn't know how
The cost, oh the cost for this hilltop site
Seemed far out of reach yet we knew it was right

Those parents, you know, as is always the case
Reached out to grandparents and friends in this race
And Hilltop took shape in this very place...
Can anyone imagine a more beautiful space?

Thank you thank you for your support through the years
Through moves, many changes, worrying finances, some tears
Steadfast you stood, whatever the fears
To you and to Hilltop a thunderous three cheers!

OH THE PLACES WE'VE BEEN