

Journey

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One on top of the other, the pink blocks slowly started to rise. Suddenly they all crashed to the ground. I watched in desperation as my creation started to crumble. A little blonde girl came over, sat next to me, and started to help me rebuild the pink tower. The little blond girl's name was Maddie Hoggan. She was the first friend I made at Montessori and she soon became my first best friend.

But this is also my first memory of FMS and the first story of my FMS journey. We have all had a different FMS journey, with different struggles and experiences. But we have been through everything together at this school, so it really has been our journey. I have always said that Foothills Montessori was my second home. My oldest sister Emily began her journey here when it was still in a trailer that was parked where the basketball court stands today. I was a baby when FMS was brought into my life, younger than six months old. I spent time here before I was ever a student. Then before I knew it, it was my turn to be the student at Montessori, and so my very own FMS journey began!

One of the dictionary definitions for journey is "to travel upon or across". Every one of us have traveled across Montessori in a triumphant way. I believe that we left a mark on the school and that we left a mark on the people. FMS and its people left a mark on all of us. The bond that was created between this school, its people, and us is unfathomable. The experiences and friendships made here will never be forgotten because we taught each other so much and we faced everything together.

When I try to explain to other teenagers what it was like at Montessori, they never understand. They hear small and private, and that is all they need to know. Sometimes when people ask, I just tell them it's a small, private school because I know they won't understand. The thing is, that for me small is positive, allowing for a different, unique connection with each and every person. For me, private means safe and comfortable. As long as we remember that when we think back on our years at FMS, it doesn't matter where we end up going or what people think of where we came from. At the end of the day, Foothills Montessori is and forever will be our second home.

Ernest Hemingway once said, "It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters in the end." Nine of us have been here since we were three years old. We all wondered what it was like in other schools because we couldn't imagine a life different from ours. We all grew up together in our own little world that was Foothills Montessori and now we get to find out the answers.

Ironically, now that the time has come for us to explore new worlds and the unknown, I don't want to find out. I want to keep reliving our journey here at FMS and continue to be curious. Unfortunately, there is a time when you have to leave even though you are comfortable and

happy with the way things are. We can feel upset, or happy, or even scared. But no matter what, we shouldn't be nervous because the entire time that we have been here, we have been preparing ourselves for our next journey.

Our teachers and friends, that became our family, were preparing us. They didn't only teach us the fundamentals of science, math, language, Spanish, and history. They taught us what it meant to be a genuine, kind, loyal person. We were raised in a safe environment that allowed us to become our own unique individuals and we were given many opportunities to find our own passions.

The perfect way to describe our class, to me, is by saying that we are a puzzle. Each puzzle piece is a little different. Together, the pieces make a beautiful whole picture. But if just one piece were missing then the pieces would be shaped differently or the puzzle would just be incomplete. We molded each other and together we represent an amazing journey to where we are today. Not only did my class shape one another but the FMS community as a whole also influenced our journey immensely.

We made older friends who served as our mentors and leaders, guiding us. Our younger friends looked up to us and encouraged us to always be the best we can be. Our teachers, they loved us, supported us, and allowed us to grow as individuals. It was evident that they taught from their hearts. And finally we need to thank our families for the sacrifices that they made to ensure that we were raised in a loving, nurturing environment. They saw our potential even before we did and believed in us no matter what. They stood by our sides our entire journey and we know that they will forever be there. Another definition for journey is "traveling from one place to another." Our new journey will be our transition to and through high school. Now we are figuring out what's next for us. We have already been sculpted and now it's up to us to find out where we fit in the larger world.

No matter what journey we go on next, our FMS journey and lessons will always be with us. We can always come back if we need to remember who we truly are and there will always be more for FMS to teach us. I referenced building the pink tower as my first real memory at Foothills Montessori and I find it blissfully ironic that one of our last memories will be of rebuilding the pink tower together one final time making my journey come full circle. All of our journeys will lead us to different places, but we will always share and remember the journey that made us possible.