



Nightingale Notes

August 2026

September Important Dates

- 1 Application window for CCP Spring 2027 opens--ends 11-1 at 5pm
- 7 **No School--Labor Day**
- 8 **First day of school--Pre-K**
- 11 **Bookmobile**
- 25 **Bookmobile, Midterm Q1**

Welcome Back to another year at Nightingale Montessori!

This year is full of exciting changes and opportunities for growth for everyone on campus! We are celebrating our **49th anniversary** in the 26-27 academic year, and getting things revved up for the school to turn FIFTY next year. What an amazing milestone! *What are some of your favorite memories from the last 49 years?*



We've only been in session for a few days, but things are off to a great start! Excitement and joy were evident in all programs as students and teachers reconnected and set off to dive deep into their learning endeavors. Many of these early efforts are shared with you in this first brief newsletter!

The school year started as usual with Parent Nights and Open Houses, but we are all adjusting to some big changes. Nightingale Montessori is starting this year without one of its founders: Nancy Schwab. The staff received word of Nancy's departure from this Earth at the beginning of the staff days on August 17th. That news led to some emotional days, but also a renewed motivation to bring the school to its highest levels and to reach as many students and families as possible. We want to keep Nancy's vision alive and thriving for another fifty years!

We are also adjusting to the school day without our fearless leader, Maria Taylor, who has moved across the country on a new adventure! Maria is still serving as Head of School remotely, while veteran staff Andrew Hahn, Jayne Woodward, Jared Martin, and Amy Smith are collaborating to keep things running day-to-day under Maria's guidance.

in
loving
memory

Nancy Nightingale Schwab (84), passed away peacefully at her home on August 15, 2026 under the care of Ohio's Hospice. Nancy is predeceased by her husband Louis Schwab, M.D. and her parents Barbara Moody Nightingale and Philip L. Nightingale. She is survived by her two sons Efstathios Potamitis and Martin Schwab, her two grandchildren Philip and Sophia Potamitis, and her sister Jeanne Nightingale.

Nancy was Co-founder, Education director, and Board Chair of Nightingale Montessori. The school is now in a newly renovated building located on a forested permaculture campus at 2525 N. Limestone Street in Springfield, Ohio, former headquarters of Bonded Oil. Over the school's 48 years, Nancy developed a uniquely successful approach to pre-school reading. Her educational philosophy was impacted by an uncommon set of learning experiences: her childhood in the "green belt" town of Greenhills near Cincinnati, her British schooling in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England, her life as a student in Perugia, Italy, and her work as an art teacher in an inner-city school in Cincinnati.

After earning her B.F.A. and B.S. at the University of Cincinnati and her M.Ed. at Xavier University, she co-founded Nightingale Montessori, Inc. with Sheila Brown, and together they began adapting Maria Montessori's revolutionary principles of child-centered learning. Over the years, Nancy designed an innovative approach to preschool reading instruction that leverages and empowers the agency of the toddler's inborn cognitive traits: unflinching curiosity, innate language processing skills, pattern recognition, creative thinking and logical reasoning, neuroplasticity and neurodiversity. (Rote memorization of phonograms may be the child's weakest trait.) Noting that the phonetic consistency of the Italian language lends itself more readily to Montessori's theories of early learning than the inconsistent phonemic structure of English, Nancy redesigned the American Montessori method to follow more faithfully Montessori's original practice, thus replicating the more fluid literacy experience of Italian children. With her program, she also noticed a dramatic reduction in dyslexic reading disorders which plague English readers with far more frequency. The sustained success of Nancy's discoveries propelled her to develop, with her sister Jeanne Nightingale, Ph.D., a pioneering pre-school literacy program--Sound Shapes Precision Phonics™.

A memorial service celebrating Nancy's life will be held at Nightingale Montessori, 2525 North Limestone St., Springfield, OH 45503, Thursday, October 15 at 6:30pm.

Obituary copied from the Cincinnati Enquirer



ACADEMIC CALENDAR 26-27



Nightingale Montessori 2026-2027 Academic Calendar

- ◆ First/Last Day of School
- ◆ No School
- ◆ Staff In-Service Days

167 Instruction Days (2051.5 Hours)
50.5 Incentment Hours (8 Days)
13 Staff Days

updated Feb. 2025

2026

AUGUST						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

August
17-25 Staff Days
26 First Day K-12

4 days
25 hours

SEPTEMBER						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

September
7 No School, Labor Day
8 First Day Pre-K
25 Q1 midterm

21 days
132.5 hours

OCTOBER						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

October
16-19 No School, Balance Days
23 End Q1

20 days
126 hours

NOVEMBER						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

November
20 Q2 midterm
23-27 No School, Thanksgiving Break

16 days
101 hours

DECEMBER						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

December
7-11 Holiday Gift Shop
17 Chick & Eagle Peace Night
21-31 Winter Break

14 days
88 hours

January
1 Winter Break
4 Staff day
5 All classes resume
15 End Q2
18 No School--MLK

18 days
113 hours

February
12 Midterm Q3
15 No School, President's Day

19 days
119.5 hours

March
18 Wax Museum
19 End Q3
22-26 Spring Break
29 Staff Day

17 days
107.5 hours

April
23 Midterm Q4
26-27 No School, Balance Days

20 days
125 hours

May
22 Graduation
26 Last Day Pre-K to 12, end Q4
27-28 No School
31 Memorial Day
June 1-4 Staff Days

18 days
114 hours

2027

JANUARY						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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FEBRUARY						
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MARCH						
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30	31					

APRIL						
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30	31					

MAY						
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



All School News



JOIN THE PTA!

Help us build up the NM community and create lasting experiences for our students!

From Little Moments To Big Memories

Looking back to some of the wonderful memories of last school year and feeling so grateful for all the moments we shared!

As we prepare to welcome our new and returning Hummingbird students, we're filled with excitement for another year of curious minds, exciting discoveries, and friendships!

We look forward to learning, growing, and making many new memories together!

We can't wait to see you!

Pre-K classes resume September 8th!



Friendship



Amal transfers soil to prepare her flower pot



Mackenzie prepares her own snack



Brayzen is curious during a lemon tasting



Enjoying Water Day



Exploring



New adventures with Owl friends



Planting flowers with Falcon friends



Hummingbirds

August Chickadee News

The year is off to a great start! We had an amazing two orientation nights! There were great discussions and fun opportunities for students and families to explore the yard and get to know each other and the teachers.



Families enjoying the Chickadee Open House



The Chickadees are learning the classroom routines and expectations, including the three R's:

- Respect yourself
- Respect others
- Respect the environment

We have had some great discussions about what each of those means.



Preston and Henry check off a scavenger hunt item



Mackenzie is focused



Ruby matches animals



Duncan sorts by size



Camp prepares a snack



Malauna explores animals of the continents

Chickadees

Parent Corner

Reminder:

Friday 8-28 was our first Bookmobile day. The Chicks visit the bookmobile every other Friday and must have a library card **at school** to participate. Let your student's teacher know if you want a library card application!

Olivia

Hello, I'm Olivia Westfall and I've had the privilege of being a guide at Nightingale Montessori going on four years. I view my work as being the banks of a river... just helping students discover and channel their own passions and unique gifts. You can find me in the woods, in the Hummingbirds, Chicks and Falcons.



Jen



This will be my second year at Montessori. I am primarily in the kitchen; however, I spent a lot of my time in the Hummingbird room during my first year. I have an eight-year-old daughter entering her 3rd year in the Eagle classroom. I enjoy encouraging the children to believe in their own abilities and gifts while helping foster their confidence to apply those gifts to their daily lives. I look forward to working with the Chickadees this year, helping where needed!

Chickadees



12 Montessori principles every parent should follow

1. **Avoid helping your child with a task they think they can do alone.**
2. **Follow the child.** Observe their interests and let them guide their learning.
3. **Never interrupt deep concentration** unless it's necessary for safety.
4. **Prepare the environment** so your child can be as independent as possible.
5. **Teach, then step back.** Give them space to practice without taking over.
6. **Focus on effort, not praise.** Encourage intrinsic motivation over rewards.
7. **Give real responsibilities.** Children thrive when they contribute to the family.
8. **Respect your child's pace.** Development isn't a race.
9. **Offer limited choices.** Freedom works best within clear boundaries.
10. **Model the behavior you want to see.** Children learn more from what we do than what we say.
11. **Embrace mistakes as part of learning.** Resist the urge to correct every error.
12. **Trust your child to become capable.** Independence grows when we believe in their abilities.

@Motherhood.And.Montessori

Meet the Teachers

Introducing Olivia and Jen! The Chicks are excited to welcome Olivia to our morning routine, helping with arrival and breakfast. We are equally excited to have Jen join us at the end of our day, helping with circle time and car line. Jen will also be our on-call sub this year.

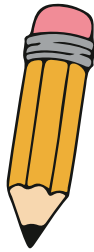


Camp and Nora jump right into reading work

August Eagle News

We would just like to remind Eagle parents that the only beverages that the children may consume at school are water (in a reusable water bottle) and milk. We will provide both of these options for lunch. Juice boxes create waste and pop cannot be consumed in our program during school hours. We would also like to remind parents that packaging such as lunchable boxes and jello cups will be returned inside of the lunch box and not be discarded in the classroom. The whole school of Nightingale is working very hard to reduce our carbon footprint. Thank you for your consideration and help in this matter--it takes everyone working together to make a big difference.

As always the Eagle yard is bustling with work and exciting new experiences! The children have started a potting station and plan to work in the garden beds. New ropes have gone up to help children with their balance and the rope swing is always a big hit.



Meet the Teacher

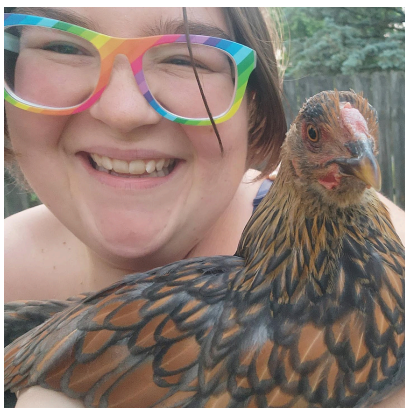
Hello! I'm Sarah Lee. I am so excited to be joining the incredible team at Nightingale this year. I am honored to be working in the Eagle room. I have an immense passion for children's literacy and can't wait to pass on my love of literature to my students. I believe that we can create lifelong learners with endless curiosity!

I am not a bookworm, I am a book dragon!

Quote: If the sky could dream, it would dream of dragons. -Terry Pratchett

I am a certified teacher's aide. I am in my last year at Sinclair Community College, where I am completing my Associates of Arts.

Eagles



Eagles Work the Mud Kitchen

Eagle students Oliver and Beckham took apart and repaired the outdoor sink for use in their mud kitchen and potting table. The functioning space was utilized by Zamirah potting 'hens and chicks'. The space allowed the students to combine their imaginative play with the real work of potting the plants. The students enjoyed a sensorial experience while they were able to get done the work for the day.

Meet the Teachers

My name is Eve and this will be my first year in the Owl room. For the past three years I was a teacher down the hall in the Chickadee classroom. Some of the fly up Eagles remember me from there when I started my journey here at Nightingale. I have a passion for Science and Ecology and I am looking forward to sharing this joy with the Owls. It is my hope that they too will find their place and passion along the way, both in the classroom as well as in the yards and gardens. I have a lot of fun plans and can't wait to get started.



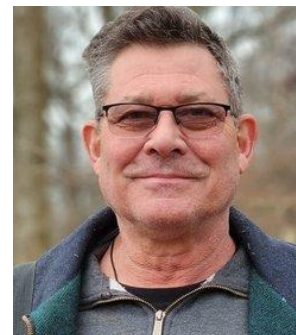
I'm Emma! This school year begins my 3rd year as an Owl teacher! I teach history and individual goals as well as a variety of activities on Fridays. My favorite things to learn about with students include the wildest ways that people have progressed through history and ways that humans have understood their deep cosmic plan as we have watched the world change. I have a background in curriculum writing, development, and non-profit management, and my graduate research was in the patterns and development of coming-of-age adolescents. The chance to teach at Nightingale with the Owls (where my daughters attend as a Chickadee and an Eagle) is such a gift to use skills, wisdom, and playfulness as we grow along with our students!

My Name is Ashleigh. I am the ELA teacher for the Owls and the Eagles. During Language Arts the children will be exploring the wonder of language through writing exercises. I love to read and write. My favorite book is *Howl's Moving Castle* by DianaWynn Jones. This year I am excited to spend time outdoors with both the Owls and the Eagles and to teach them all the ways English is unique and fun.



My name is Trish. As a Nightingale Alumni, I am extremely excited to be teaching in the Owl room. I look forward to learning about each child and encouraging their individual talents to grow. I firmly believe in the expression of each child through various modalities and the freedom to explore our environment in order to facilitate a symbiotic relationship of learning and creating. I am thankful for this opportunity to share in this experience with the Owls this year.

My name is Todd Kreeger. I am a second year Owl. That is to say that this is my second year teaching in the Owl classroom. This is my 11th year teaching at Nightingale. I started as a Falcon teacher and quickly moved up to the Wings where I created the Micro Business program and taught many subjects such as health, personal finance, and culinary. I am very excited to be back with the Owls. I will be working with the ELA teacher and the other teachers to make this a great year for our Owl students. Outside of Nightingale, I am a grandfather to two wonderful grandboys, father to two adult children who both live nearby, and a husband to a wife of 42+ years. I also sing in multiple choirs and serve on multiple non-profit boards. That's me in a nutshell!



Owls

“All things are part of the universe, and are connected with each other to form one whole unity.” Maria Montessori

In the Owl classroom, we begin with wonder.

We seek to understand the relationships that connect all living things. We recognize we are a part of, not separate from, the living world. Through observation, imagination, knowledge, and meaningful work, we learn to participate in ways that care for the whole.



Todd introduces Owl students to the Bucket Band



Vivian and Willow



New student Ace moves mulch



Myron and Jorden on the first day of school



Paxton and Cambria enjoy outdoor work



Owls



Jackson and Becca focus on building garden components



Becca, Astro, and Evan



A visitor outside the Falcon classroom

Falcons' First Days

The Falcon class broke the ice on the first two days with a variety of team-building games as well as introductions to their academic classes. Montessori education focuses on preserving innate traits that humans all have that help us learn how to thrive within our social conditions and environment. These attributes are easy to see in younger children but at the adolescent level we are encouraging our students to keep cultivating these valuable skills through challenging academic pursuits as well as team building activities.

The 8 innate traits we focus on at NM are:

1. The Absorbent Mind: Curiosity and Desire to Discover
2. Independence
3. Self-Reliance
4. Desire to Self-Perfect Through Repeated Effort
5. Maximal Effort
6. Order
7. Concentration
8. Repetition

The Falcon curriculum is designed to help students follow their interests for learning but also to start to shift their thinking to what gifts they have to bring to the wider society. We will consider educational paths, career paths and work opportunities to help guide their interest.

Dr. Maria Montessori said:

“The child is endowed with unknown powers, which can guide us to a radiant future. If what we really want is a new world, then education must take as its aim the development of these hidden possibilities.” (*Absorbent Mind* pg. 4)

Developing the whole child through integrated assignments, work and even play prepares them for the variety of challenges and possibilities they will face moving into high school. Team building activities are tools for building motor skills, cognitive abilities, practicing emotional regulation and building social competency. The picture below shows River and Jayne both trying to build the balanced pyramid. Close at hand are Becca and Clifton, providing encouragement and often insight from another perspective.

Montessori, Maria. (1995). *The Absorbent Mind*. New York. Henry Holt LLC. 4, 17.



Montessori Math in the Falcon Classroom

Math is absorbed best when it is being applied to a project in a real world setting. Students activated their prior knowledge of the metric system and precise measurement by building a waddle fence garden bed outside our classroom. We also reviewed appropriate PPE, personal protective equipment, and procedures for how to transport and use various tools.

Each vertical post was 40 cm long and cut from invasive buckthorn harvested from the property. These posts were cut using a hand saw and kevlar cut-resistant gloves. Then the posts were sharpened on one side with a small hatchet. The garden space was laid out and students used a hammer to set each post to a height of 30 cm tall and 20 cm apart. The final construction steps involved cutting another invasive plant from the property: Johnson grass. Students then wove the grass around the bed. We have not filled the soil or planted the garden but keep an eye out in next month's newsletter and we will include an image of the finished product.

Math in the Falcon class consists of various hands-on activities. There are also lessons from Math U See, a very materials-friendly and Montessori-esque math sequence for middle school curriculum. We also have an online component to math utilizing Khan Academy. This platform allows students to practice math in the format the state of Ohio uses for end of year tests, which is digitally. The class will also rely on traditional Montessori methods and materials for more concrete learning of new concepts. The year will start with lessons on the Coordinate Plane materials. This work is based on collecting, organizing, analyzing, and interpreting data. Seeing math through these four perspectives will ideally help each child to find an avenue to understanding and I dare to say, even *enjoying* their math work.



Astro chops posts for Waddle Garden Walls



Jovie and Bella measure the garden placement



Astro, Bella, Jovie and Jayne learn to identify poison ivy



Addie, Lily, and Ka'myah remove invasive plants in the Falcon yard



Tim participating in the cup relay

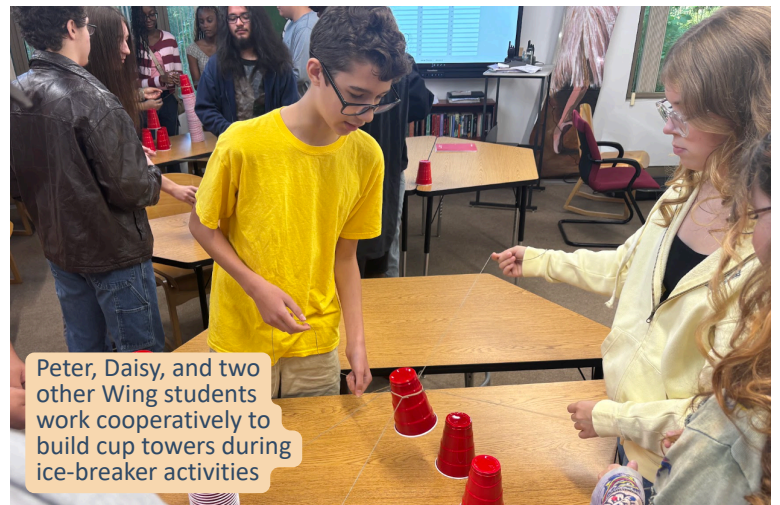
Wings News August 2026

The Wing classroom has begun its second full academic year of having an academic schedule based on fostering interest-based learning, choice in assignments, and time management skills. Students have the entire morning (with a few exceptions) set aside for their four core academic classes. Throughout the morning, their English teacher, for example, may call the class over for a lecture or some instruction to augment their learning before allowing them to go back to independent work based on their class checklists. Each class provides checklists with multiple assignment types and options to guide students in the direction of their interests and passions within the framework of state standards. Students could, by choice, spend multiple hours or mornings on one science project, putting aside other work while they are in the flow and engaged. It is then their responsibility to balance their other classes once they have completed what they were working on. Other students prefer to divide their mornings equally between classes and do a bit each day for each subject.

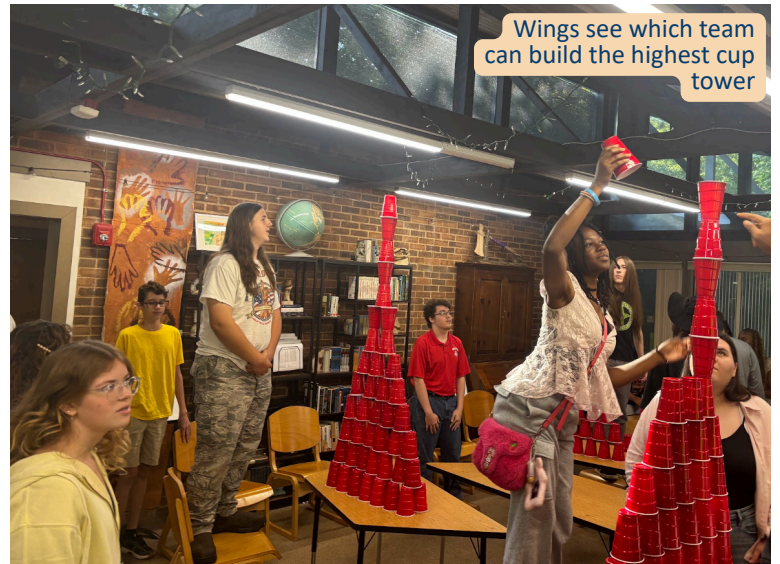
In the afternoons after the daily class meeting and lunch, students have 30 minutes of free time to be outdoors or indoors and socialize before going to their afternoon elective class. Currently our Erdkinder electives are ecology, Micro Business, and a capstone project where a group of seniors are passing down some specific skills to the next generation of Wings; this will include certain art skills as well as work like sewing new handcloths for our bathrooms.

On Thursday afternoons we will be continuing our tradition of community service, doing work at locations where we already have developed relationships (OPAI, Gammon House, Buck Creek State Park) while looking to develop new relationships as well.

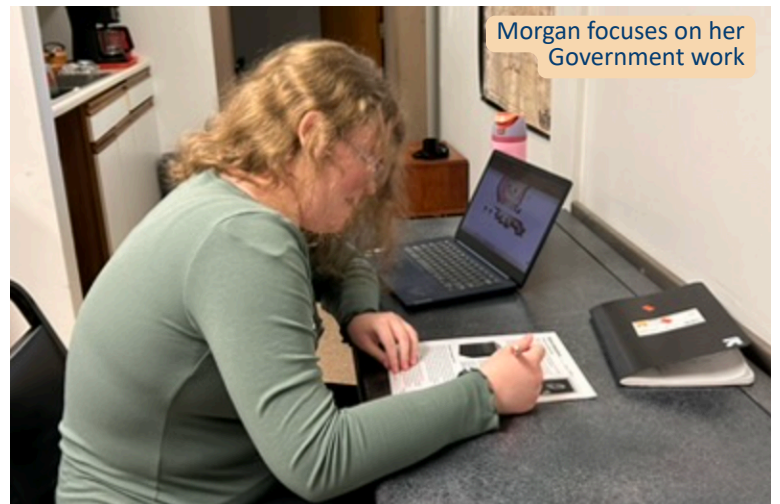
Our goal for our students is that we can together cultivate a community of diverse humans that respect each other and their differences, while each develops and pursues a path of their own towards a future flourishing in life.



Peter, Daisy, and two other Wing students work cooperatively to build cup towers during ice-breaker activities



Wings see which team can build the highest cup tower



Morgan focuses on her Government work



Mina, Kailee, Ja'miyah, and Peter do research in Ecology class



Older Wing students use Miss Nancy's art room to pass down art skills to new Wings

Wings

Plant Sales and Microbusiness Events 2026 - 2027

NM Yard Sale Fundraiser September 10th and 11th

Accepting donations of toys, tools, jewelry, books, records, tapes, antiques, collectables, housewares on September 8th and 9th.

Welcome Spring - Early Bird Plant Sale in March 2027

We will celebrate spring with a late March sale. The equinox brings an infusion of sun and students start to shed a few winter layers. Start planting early and often!!

Fall Plant Sale Closing Out The Growing Season October 14th and 15th

Autumn is the best time to add any native plants. Dormant plants grow roots in winter and really pop in Spring.

Earth Day Celebration 2027 will last a week in April

The secondary programs, middle and high school, host the other classes, showcasing projects about our Earth. We wonder if there is interest in inviting families??!!

Gratitude and Giving Vegan Pumpkin Pie Sale November 2026

Students will learn traditional techniques for pumpkin preparation, homemade crust and utilizing vegan ingredients.

Last Chance! Seniors Host a Sale in May 2027

The senior capstone class will be following their curiosity and career interest all year. They will host one last plant/microbusiness sale in May before taking those next steps.

Holiday Gift Shop - Microbusiness Evergreen Tree Sale December 2026

Students find the joy of giving while visiting NM Holiday Gift Shop. They learn to budget the money they bring, count & make change and even the process of wrapping.

Summer Program Outdoor School in June 2027

Nightingale Montessori knows that learning never ends, even when students leave school. However, we can help facilitate seamless summer learning in June!!

Call for Details (937) 324 - 0336 or check social media for weather updates.

Montessori philosophy for adolescent programs includes opportunities for career exploration. In Dr. Maria Montessori's life and practice, older students learned in farm schools that they managed as beds-and-breakfast for visitors and produced farm and animal products that they then sold at local markets. Today, Montessori schools run 'micro' businesses with their school programming. At NM one aspect of Micro Business is the native plant nursery we call Our Earth Nursery. The focus for students is research, propagation, care, and then installation of native plants in various restoration projects.

Over the summer we received a thank you letter from The Johnny Appleseed museum for supporting a new pollinator garden they planted. The museum is located on College Street in Urbana, Ohio. They are growing an orchard of apple trees including genetics linked to the trees propagated by Johnny Appleseed himself. However they realized the lack of pollinating insects was affecting the fertilization of fruit on their trees. Our Earth Nursery worked with them to plant a variety of native perennials that will support populations of pollinators as well as beautify their orchard space. We received a letter of thanks from Johnny Appleseed Museum this summer and we hope to continue to grow this relationship through educational experiences for our students.



THE JOHNNY APPLESEED
Educational Center and Museum™



**WHOLE FOODS MARKET
FOUNDATION**

Congratulations on your 2026 Garden Grant award for
Nightingale Montessori!

Establishing a Learning Community Garden for the students and families at Nightingale Montessori has been a goal since we started dreaming about the move to this property at 2525 N. Limestone Street, in 2017. So many renovations and additions to the building were needed along with the restoration of the land from crippling invasive European Buckthorn. We now have an amazing building, managed woods and developing Outdoor School spaces for each classroom. The next step is to engage our families with individual plots for growing fresh food in a community garden here on the north end of the property.

Our Ecology team plans to start this school year and a \$3,000 grant from Whole Foods Market Foundation will be the jump start we needed! Students will build ten raised beds for a Learning Community Garden. This project is being supported by Brain Lumber who agreed to help the students learn how to 'cure' the lumber with heat and advise on the construction of the beds. We are locating the garden on the north end in part of what is now the nursery. We are planning to write and share curriculum differentiated for different learners, abilities and subject matter to share with the staff as a catalyst to get all teachers and students to engage in the garden. Guides will make sure that all the students are able to enjoy planning, building, planting, harvesting, processing and eating food from the gardens.



Nightingale Montessori is supported through Kroger Community Rewards. Money is donated to the charity of your choice when you use your Kroger Card at checkout. Kroger also offers discounts on gas for spending money there. Let your grocery run be another way that you support Nightingale Montessori.

Once you link your Card to our organization, all you have to do is shop at Kroger and swipe your Shopper's Card. Here's how it works:

1. Create a digital account.

A digital account is needed to participate in Kroger Community Rewards. If you already have a digital account, simply link your Shopper's Card to your account so that all transactions apply toward the organization you choose.

2. Link your Card to an organization.

Selecting the organization that you wish to support is as simple as updating the Kroger Community Rewards selection on your digital account.

1. Sign in to your digital account.

2. Search for your organization [here](#).

3. Enter the name or NPO number of the organization you wish to support.

4. Select the appropriate organization from the list and click "Save".

Your selected organization will also display in the Kroger Community Rewards section of your account. If you need to review or revisit your organization, you can always do so under your Account details.

3. Your organization earns.

Any transactions moving forward using the Shopper's Card number associated with your digital account will be applied to the program, at no added cost to you. Kroger donates annually to participating organizations based on your percentage of spending as it relates to the total spending associated with all participating Kroger Community Rewards organizations.

Our goal is to empower students toward healthy eating choices, homegrown food to increase security and connect students with the entire process of food production from compost to soil, seeds and harvest.

Thanks to the Whole Food Market Foundation!!

