

# Discover NCI...Experience More!

Nature's Classroom Institute  
Annual Report 2016-2017



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# Learning through our Expression, Discovering through your Experience!



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Dear Friends,

I have heard it said that the only difference between an adult and a child is that the adult has had more experiences. NCI's philosophy is based on the idea that we need to immerse each and every student with as many experiences as possible. This profusion of experiences will empower them to develop independent, critical and creative thinking. If society is to grow and flourish for all people, then we need this generation of children to walk on the planet with an open mind; a mind that is inquisitive and exploratory, one that is willing to take risks not only physically but also with relationships and ideas. Introducing students to a supportive community, a space open to ideas, providing resources and delivering fact, not opinions, allows them to discover their own path and their own moral values.

From the outside, looking at the work we do, it would be easy to say that each day we impart knowledge and resources to the children in our care. To a limited extent, that would be accurate. However, what we do give them is much more intangible and not always as obvious or measurable on a scale. As staff of Nature's Classroom Institute, we believe it is our responsibility to release the mind of the child, to allow them time to process their thoughts and to delve deep into the areas that will build their educational foundation. We must get out of the way of a child's learning because each time we step forward and interrupt a child's discovery, we rob that child of their potential. That is why we are committed to giving the children in our care, the gift of time - the time to develop robust, independent thought, to nurture a fearless curiosity and to discover their place and purpose in this world.

"A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement....If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder without any such gifts from the fairies, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in." (Rachel Carson: The Sense of Wonder).

A mutually respectful partnership between parents and the educators, based on trust of the child's ability to steer their own course through the world, is critical. We, the adults in a child's life, should aspire to be guides who encourage and accept the child for who they are and not who we want them to be - comfortable with the child's ability to take risk and their expression of themselves.

## Letter from the Founder & Executive Director

If we, as the adults in a child's life, commit to this support and companionship, then we would be sowing the seeds for an empathetic, independent thinking, risk-taking generation that would be comfortable assuming the mantle of being stewards of the planet.

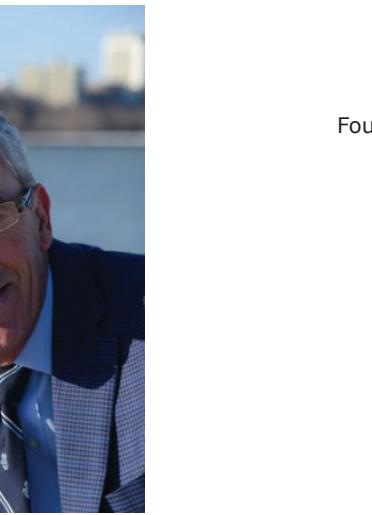
As faculty and staff of NCI, we feel at once privileged and fortunate to have gained national and international recognition for the work we do in providing quality environmental education as well as an authentic Montessori education to students. In 2016-17 alone we served over 3000 students and adult learners around the world and at our Wisconsin and Texas facilities. We also opened 2 facilities in California and they are poised for dramatic growth over the next 2-3 years.

The future promises to be exciting as we carefully plan and implement our vision of growth. NCI purchased 140 acres of ecologically diverse land, in Mukwonago, WI which currently houses our Montessori school serving children between 2 1/2 and 18 years of age. We are in the planning and designing stages of another building on this site. This will be the future home for our Environmental Education (EE) program, weekend retreat business, training center and summer programming. It will include offices, dormitories to accommodate 110 people, a dining hall, commercial kitchen and multipurpose room for community events and EE activities.

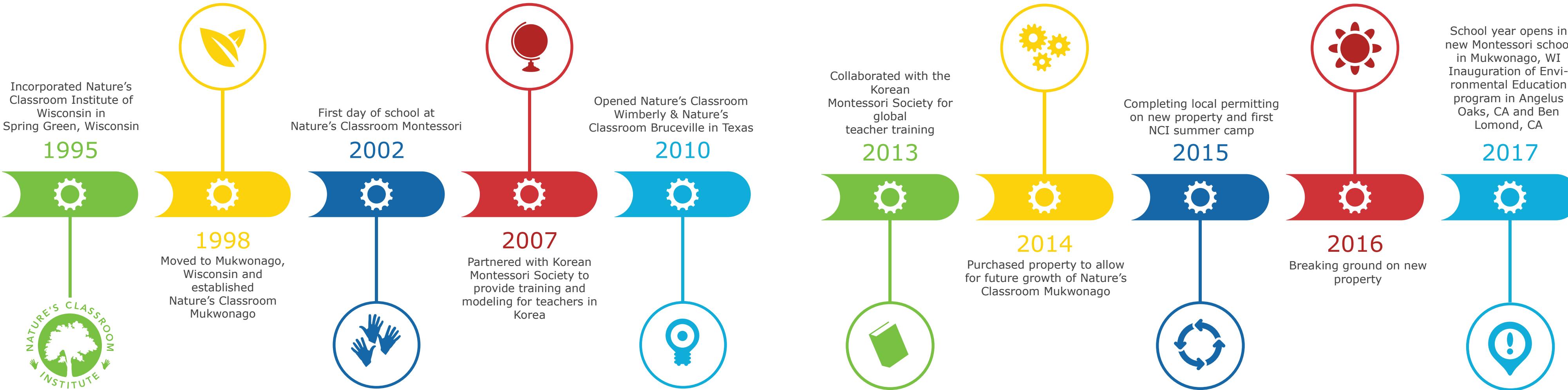
We look forward to your future support and invite your partnership as we embark on the next phase of construction to expand our commitment to community connections, environmental sustainability and land stewardship to students across the United States and around the world.



Geoffrey E. Bishop  
Founder & Executive Director



## NCI Through the Years



-  School year opens in new Montessori school building in Mukwonago, WI
  -  Inauguration of Environmental Education program in CA
  -  First NCI Montessori student graduates from high school directly to University
  -  Received \$30,000 Woodland Restoration Grant
  -  Received USDA Grant to plant 20 Acre Pollinator Prairie
  -  Launch of annual fundraiser event, Dinner in the Woods, in Mukwonago, WI
  -  1 National and international presentations by the Executive Director on the value of the  
 2 Outdoors in Education  

  -  Adolescent Trip to Catalina Island
  -  Construction of state-of-the-art chicken coop on NCI property in Mukwonago, WI

# mission values



## Testimonial



"First and foremost, I have found that Nature's Classroom prepared me to take my education, and choose for myself to apply it further, ask for more, and seek answers beyond the obvious; Montessori allowed me to be self-directed and self-sufficient in my learning. Secondly, I feel I am more efficient at critical thinking due to my time at Nature's Classroom; I do not intend to simply memorize facts, but to apply them to my situation as well as those greater than my own. Thirdly, due to the multitude of writing and presenting projects that characterized my learning, specifically in the adolescent program, NCM not only elevated my vocabulary and comprehension but allowed me to succeed in daily academic discussions as an articulate contributor, and even more, as a public speaker."

-Sophia Webber, Former Nature's Classroom Montessori student, graduating high school 2018

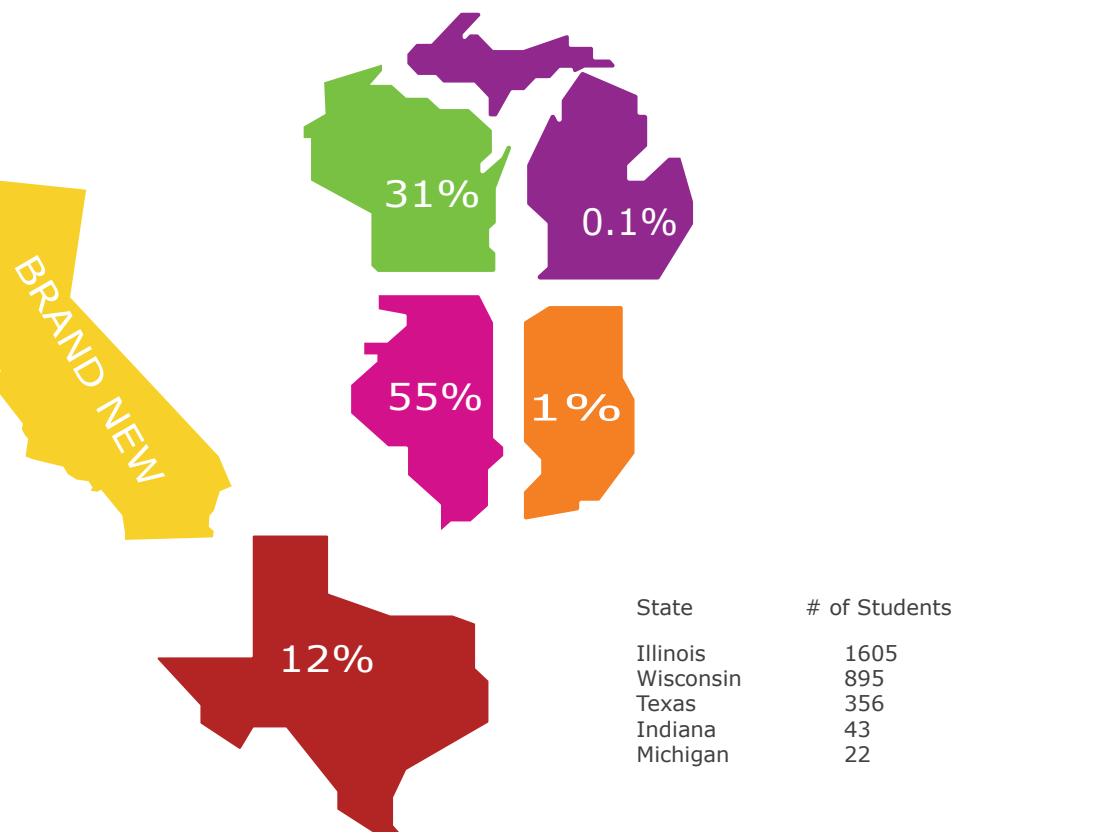


## Environmental Education

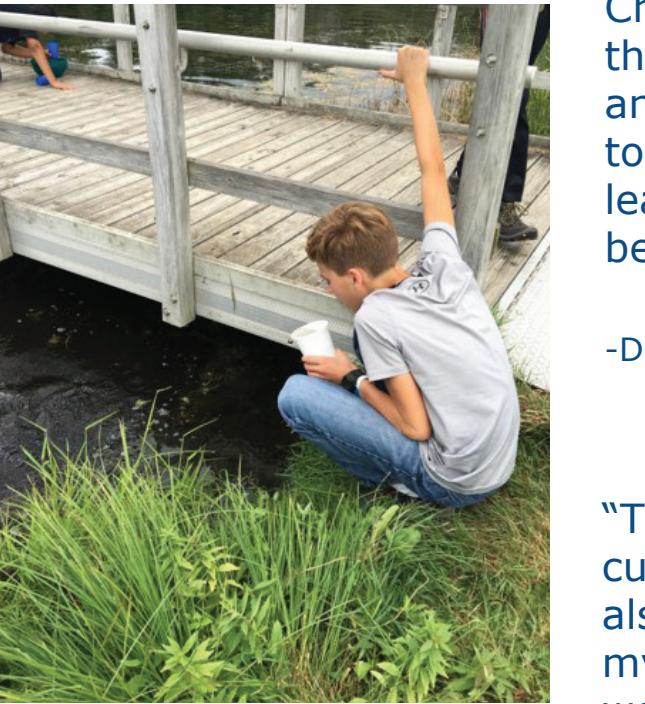
Through modeled values of a successful community, Nature's Classroom Institute Environmental Education (NCI EE) immerses students in a dynamic learning environment which inspires intrinsic learning & curiosity while nurturing mutual respect and understanding of ourselves, others, and the world. NCI EE challenges each participant to choose his/her areas of interest within our full complement of diverse subjects to explore new avenues of learning and one's place within community.

Many people believe "environmental education" is learning about natural science or participating in outdoor adventure activities. At Nature's Classroom, our program encompasses so much more than that!

NCI EE Participating Schools



## Testimonials



"My students are 4th graders from a low-income neighborhood in Chicago. They had never been away from home. In our classroom, they had struggled with issues of cooperation and collaboration, and while at NCI I saw a big change. They took only a few hours to warm up to the community atmosphere and dove right into the learning activities provided by the caring staff. NCI will continue to be a highlight and an integral part of our Montessori program."

-Dakota Prosch (Teacher) Oglesby Montessori School, Chicago, IL

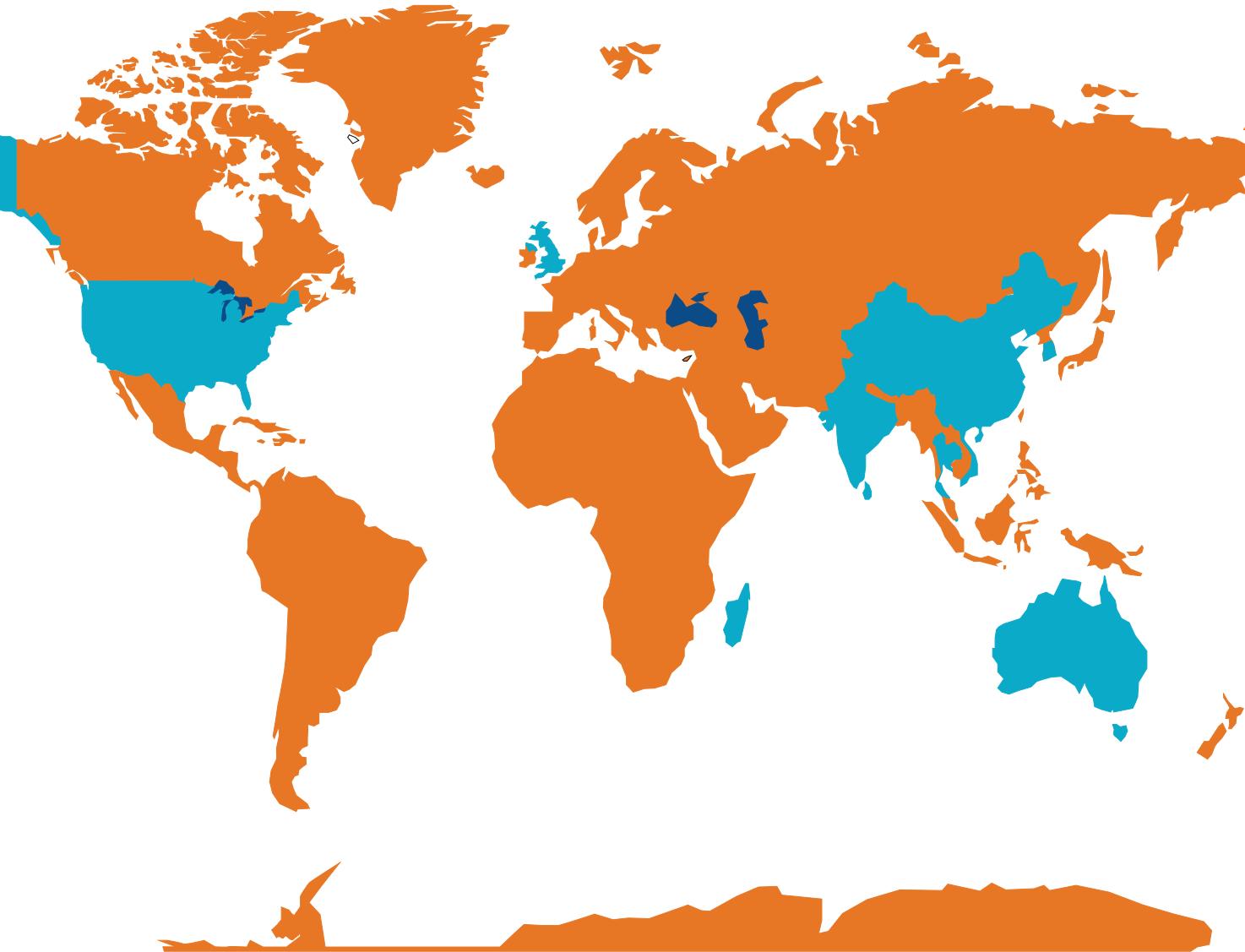
"The activities provide an experience for them to connect with the curriculum. I love that everyone has a variety to choose from and also love the relationship the students have with the staff. I saw my students helping out one another, working together, responding well with the instructors."

-Ashley Zupan (Teacher) at Joliet Montessori, Joliet, IL



"Educators trained at NCI become versatile, adaptable and highly sought after employees in education, non-profits and other professional organizations both nationally and internationally."

-Geoffrey E. Bishop, Founder & Executive Director  
Reach of NCI EE Staff



## Testimonial

"I recommend this program to everyone I know. It's the only program of its type that I trust. The philosophy and methods are sound and consistent over the last eight years! Thank you!"

-Danielle McFarland (Teacher) Montessori School, Champagne Urbana, IL



"Teambuilding, independence, confidence and competence, social responsibility all achieved."

-Saba Haider (Teacher) Montessori School of North Hoffman, Chicago, IL

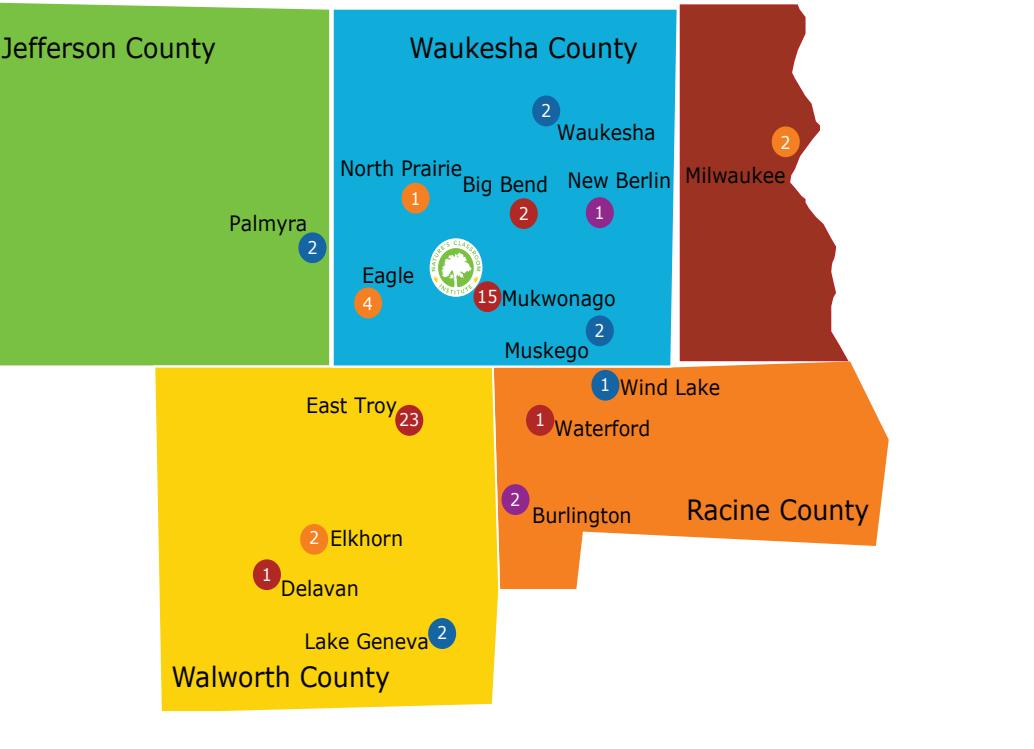


## Testimonial



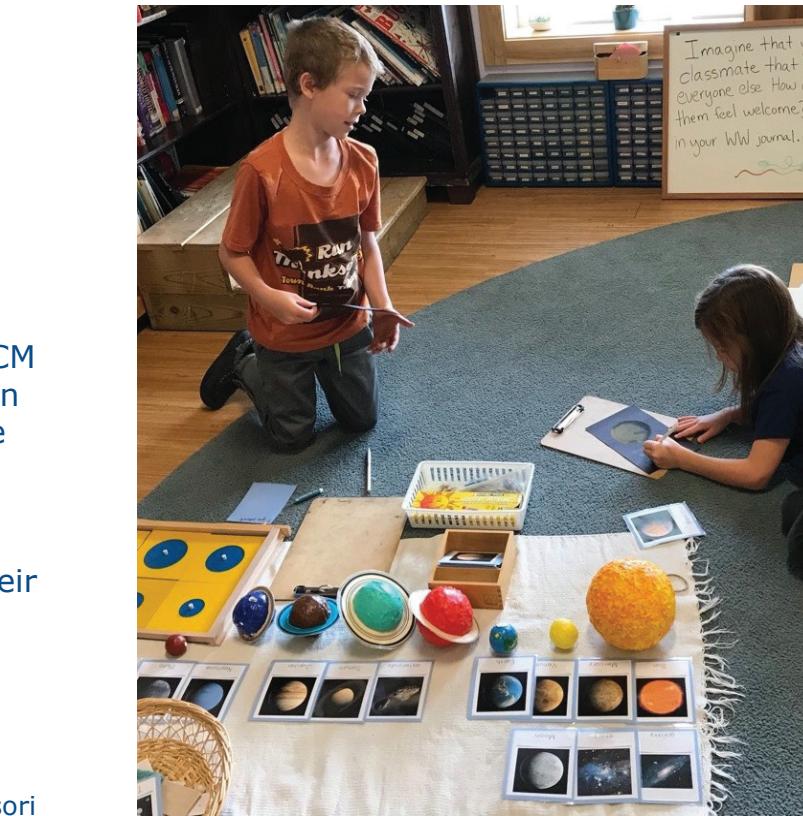
## Mission

Nature's Classroom Montessori will provide authentic Montessori learning experiences so as to develop vested learners, able to engage their curiosity and discover their purpose in the world. By implementing an authentic Montessori curriculum and using Montessori materials, the natural world and agribusiness, NCM educators will inspire intrinsic and self-directed learning. Through modeling community values, our educators are committed to nurturing the child's respect and understanding of oneself, others and the world.



"Our 5th grader has been enrolled in NCM since he was four years old. Since he was a toddler he has always been an unconventional learner. It was important to us to find an educational environment that would meet his academic needs while helping him develop social confidence. After visiting the classroom, speaking with staff, and doing extensive research on the Montessori method, we decided to enroll him in Nature's Classroom. We have not been disappointed. Right from the start, I was impressed by the extent to which his teachers knew him and understood his needs. The ability to move about and learn at his own pace has been vital to him. The small school environment has helped him develop strong friendships. He has flourished into a socially and academically confident young man who loves his school and can converse with us freely on subjects ranging from particle physics to vernal pools. We highly recommend Nature's Classroom."

- Colleen Ryan, Ph.D, Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Childhood Autism Treatment Team (Upper Elementary Parent), Nature's Classroom Montessori



"We found NCM when we were researching pre-schools in our area. Our twins were three-years-old at the time and we knew they were ready for socializing and a school setting. We fell in love with everything we saw during our visit--independent, confident, bright, happy children who were clearly thriving in this environment. From the moment the first four-year-old child introduced herself to us we felt like NCM was the right place for our children. We've stayed at NCM because we cannot imagine a more fitting place for our three children to learn and grow--at their own pace, to their own interests. It is the environment itself that shows them how to be kind, respectful, motivated, confident, curious children. The teachers and other staff have created this incredible place; where everyone feels safe, where patience is abundant, where belief in children is ever-present and their dedication to the Montessori method is core. We treasure the experiences they are given to stretch their minds and their hearts. We've joined a community of families that is now an innate part of how we are raising our children."

- Anna and David Janusz, (Children's House Parents), Nature's Classroom Montessori

## Testimonial

"The academic structure of NCM fostered my ability to be a self-motivated worker and learner, which has carried me through rigorous academic curricula in high school. The self-led projects of the Montessori curriculum heightened my sense of time management, prompting me to include my interests in all my work and still produce my best product. My experiences at NCM have helped me to be a critical thinker about environmental issues and topics of which I am interested in."

-Jennifer Zinniker, former NCM student



## Testimonial

"Thank you for impacting our students in such a positive way. Our annual visit is the highlight of our school curriculum. You're the best!"

-Mary Hughes, retired still participating teacher





Nature's Classroom Institute is dedicated to enhancing the skills and motivation of the individual educator. Through immersion and practical experiences in alternative forms of instruction, including Environmental Education and Montessori principles, we develop and strengthen the educator's ability to recognize and utilize teachable moments to foster natural curiosity. NCI provides the opportunity for educators to experience diverse populations and diverse developmental stages. NCI adapts to the individual educator's needs and supports the investigation of his or her areas of interest through collaborative and individual work. NCI supports educators in seeing themselves as architects of the many aspects of the child's learning environment.



Training locations include:

Jining, China

Hong Kong

Beijing, China

AMS Conference, San Diego, CA

Community Charter Montessori Schools, San Diego, CA

Seton Montessori Institute, Clarendon Hills, IL



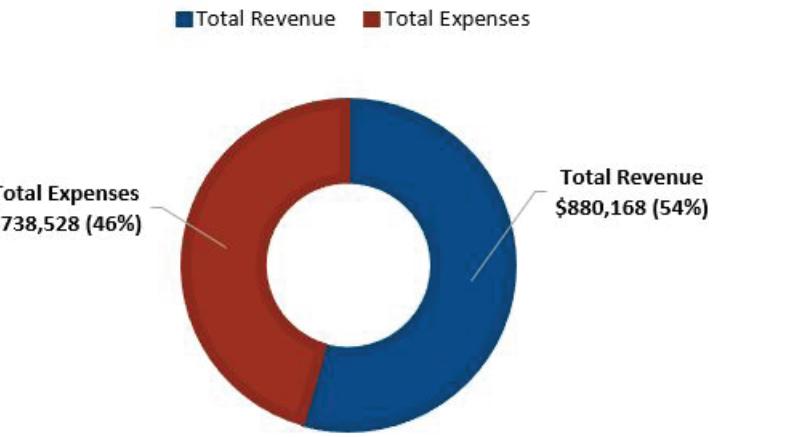
"I attended the lecture on outdoor education hosted by Seton recently and... wow. It was inspiring and amazing. I have been working with preschoolers and early elementary children for almost 20 years and have spent much time searching for a school that truly respects and embraces independent learning through exploration. I was ecstatic to hear Geoffrey's thoughts on education.

-Misty Swift (Montessori Teacher) Madison, WI

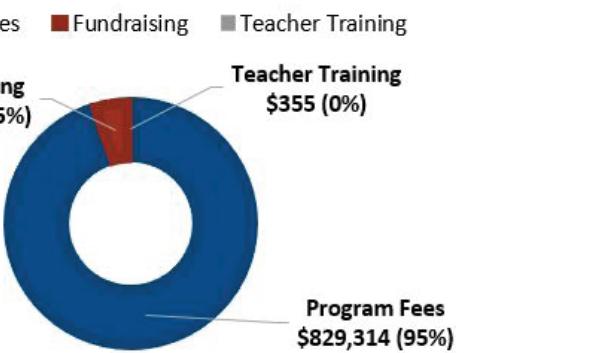


# 2016-2017 Financials

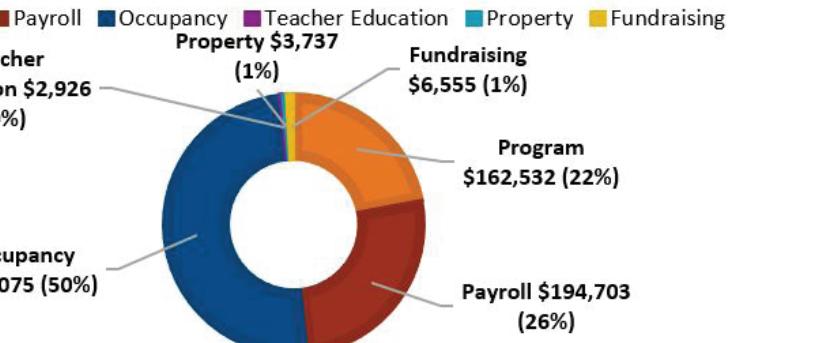
## NCI EE & NCI TE TOTAL EARNINGS



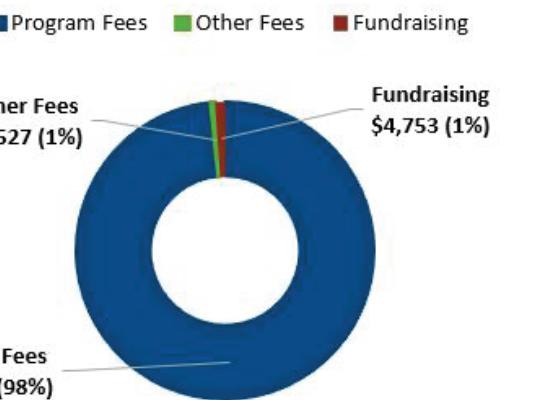
## NATURE'S CLASSROOM INSTITUTE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & TEACHER EDUCATION (NCI EE & NCI TE) INCOME



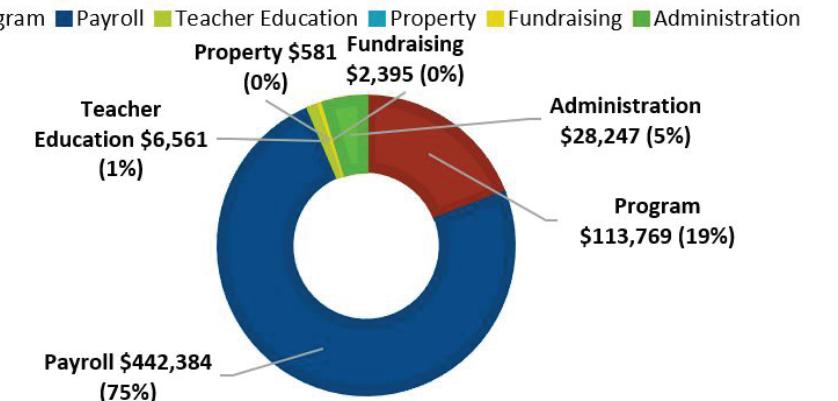
## NATURE'S CLASSROOM INSTITUTE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & TEACHER EDUCATION (NCI EE & NCI TE) EXPENSES



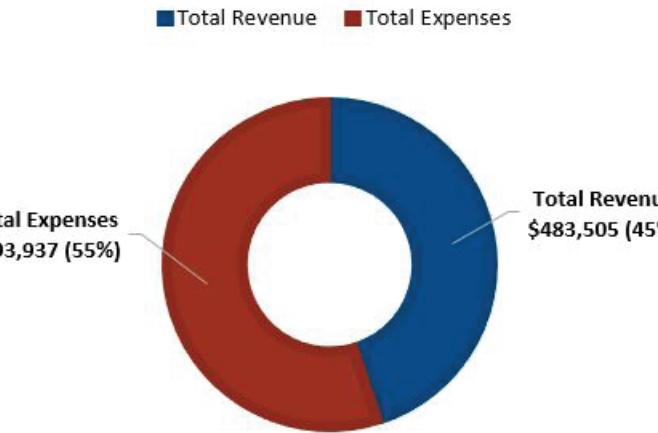
## NATURE'S CLASSROOM INSTITUTE MONTESSORI (NCIM) INCOME



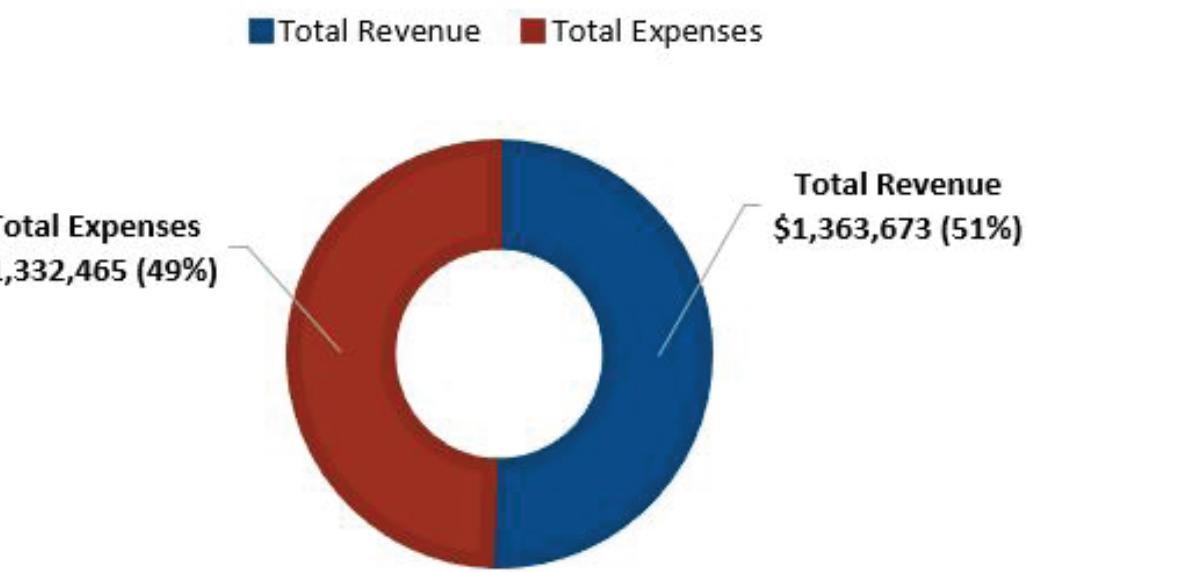
## NATURE'S CLASSROOM INSTITUTE MONTESSORI (NCIM) EXPENSES



## NCIM TOTAL EARNINGS



## COMBINED NCI EE, NCI TE AND NCIM TOTAL EARNINGS



## Help us Fund:

### New Facility

Montessori Classroom Materials

Environmental Education Supplies

Environmental Restoration

Farm Buildings & Implements

School Garden & Animal Care

Montessori High School Program

Science Laboratory

Arts & Humanities

Community Outreach

Educational Field Trips

Each year, students at NCI are given positive experiences in the outdoors. For some children, with little to no access to nature, Nature's Classroom opens their eyes, often for the first time, to the wonders of nature.

"The first time I saw the stars."

"The first time I climbed a tree."

"The first time I held a chicken."

"The first time I heard a coyote howl."

"The first time I ate a tomato from the garden."

Today, NCI is asking for your help to support our programs. Through your donation, NCI will be able to continue to serve youth locally, nationally and internationally as we continue to develop and grow.



### One-Time Giving

The easiest of all gifting options, simply log on to [www.discovernci.org](http://www.discovernci.org) and click the "Donate" button or to mail your donation to P.O. Box 660, Mukwonago, WI 53149. Your tax-deductible donation will be used to support continued academic programming at Nature's Classroom Institute and Montessori School.

### Employer Matching

Many employers offer matching gift programs that will double or even triple a donation's value. Before you complete your individual donation, please check with your company's human resources department to find out if your employer will match your gift to NCI.



### Planned Giving

Planned giving is an opportunity for you to arrange a major gift to Nature's Classroom Institute and Montessori School. A planned gift creates a lasting legacy in your name while distinguishing your wish to share NCI's commitment with present and future generations.



### Fundraise for Nature's Classroom!

Not able to provide a fiscal donation at this time? Show your support by becoming a Nature's Classroom ambassador and fundraising through your social media and email networks. Simply email [info@nciw.org](mailto:info@nciw.org) and let us know of your interest!



Nature's Classroom Institute and Montessori School (NCIM) hosted Dinner in the Woods, our first major fundraising event, at our new Mukwonago location. The fundraising concept came from a clear understanding of who NCI is and what we represent. Integrating the natural environment into everything we do is a critical part of the culture of our organization. NCI's premier Dinner in the Woods event was a great success! The atmosphere was picturesque - from the expansive lawn in front of the school adjacent to the towering Oaks to the subtle lighting of Vietnamese lanterns and cabanas dotted along the edge of the woods. Families, EE friends, staff and visitors enjoyed a mouthwatering meal from LD's BBQ of East Troy with live music provided by a NCI graduate, Sophia Webber. With the amazing support of our silent auction, tickets sales and outright donations, we raised \$33,000 to support the infrastructure and ongoing commitment to building our new home.



## Dinner in the Woods



# Friends of NCI

Academy for Global Citizenship  
 Admissions Dept  
 Agee Family  
 AGLOW Soy Candles/The Garden Party  
 Alcuin Montessori School  
 Alex Senkevitch  
 Alexander Graham Bell School  
 Alison McDole Art & Illustration  
 Alpine Insurance Agency  
 Amato Ford-Matt Weinstock  
 American Family Insurance  
 American Montessori Society  
 American Science and Surplus  
 Amman Family  
 Ancarrow Family  
 Anderson Family  
 Anich's Liquor & Beer Store  
 Anthony Family  
 Antigua Real  
 Arbonne  
 Armitage School  
 Art Movz  
 Association Illinois Montessori Schools  
 Austin Jewish Academy  
 Backyard Bikes/LaGrange General Store  
 Baker Family  
 Barker Family  
 Barnett Family  
 Bartle Jewelers  
 Belchfire  
 Bemis Family  
 Benin Family  
 Bernard Zell School  
 Bishop Family  
 Black Point Estate  
 Blessed Sacrament High School  
 Blue Bay Restaurant  
 Boehland Family  
 Borges Vliet Family  
 Bowser Family  
 Bratz Family  
 Breber Family  
 Bret Achtenhagen  
 Brickton Montessori School  
 Bryant Family  
 Buck Rub Archery  
 Bula Family  
 Byrnes Family  
 Callies Family  
 Camp Stomping Ground

Capitol-Husting Co Inc  
 Caradona Family  
 Casey Family  
 Catherine Cook School  
 Ceranske Family  
 Cesarz Family  
 Chappellet Winery  
 Chartier Family  
 CHATT  
 Chen Family  
 Chesterton Montessori School  
 Chiaravalle School  
 Children's House School  
 China Spring ISD, middle school  
 Christy Family  
 Cichacki Family  
 Circle Rock Prep School  
 Circus World Museum  
 Citizen's Bank of Mukwonago  
 Clariden School School  
 Cole Family  
 Corner Stop Beverage  
 Corpus Christi Montessori School  
 Cosmic Montessori School  
 Costco-Pewaukee  
 Council Oak Montessori School  
 Country Meadows Montessori School  
 Country Springs  
 Cousins Subs-Mukwonago  
 Craig Montessori School  
 Crazy Water Restaurant  
 Creative Learning School  
 Crystal Lake Montessori School  
 Cudahy Middle School  
 Custer Family  
 Dague Family  
 Daube Family  
 Delboy Family  
 Denk Family  
 Desimone Family  
 Dettman Family  
 Dingeldein Family  
 Dirksen School  
 Discovery School  
 Discovery World Museum  
 Doering Family  
 Dominos-Mukwonago  
 Donovan Family  
 Dorrlar Family  
 Douglas MacArthur School  
 Downtown Montessori School

Dresden Family  
 Drummond Montessori School  
 Dudkiewicz Family  
 Duneland Montessori Academy LLC  
 Dupage Montessori School  
 Eagle Springs Pub  
 Eagleville School  
 East Troy Acupuncture  
 East Troy Chamber of Commerce  
 East troy Electric Railroad  
 East Troy Shell  
 Elegant Farmer  
 Elkhorn Veterinarian Clinic  
 Ellen Burling  
 Engel's Outdoor Experience  
 Environmental Consulting Group-Madison  
 CHATT  
 Chen Family  
 Chesterton Montessori School  
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 Dorrlar Family  
 Douglas MacArthur School  
 Downtown Montessori School

Hernes Family  
 Hickory Hill Farms  
 Hill Country Montessori School  
 Hoepner Family  
 Hofmann Family  
 Holy Ghost School  
 Home Depot-Mukwonago  
 Hometown Pharmacy  
 Houlihan FamilyLemus Family  
 Huennekens Family  
 Hyde Family  
 Intercultural School  
 Ivan's on the Square  
 Jakubczak Family  
 Jamberry Family  
 James R Taylor & Sons  
 Janet Berry School  
 Janusz Family  
 Fan Family  
 Farley Family  
 Felske Family  
 Joe and Donald Family  
 Fernwood Montessori School  
 Forman Family  
 Forsman Family  
 Fort Worth Montessori MS  
 Fort Worth Montessori UE  
 Foster Family  
 Fox Valley Montessori School  
 Francis Family  
 Frederick Family  
 Frieders Family  
 Friends of the Mukwonago River  
 Gavers Pavers & Cornerstone Filling Station  
 Geist School  
 Gilchrist Family  
 Gingerbread House  
 Gino's East of Chicago  
 Grape Creek ISD, Intermediate school  
 Grape Creek Montessori  
 Grass Family  
 Green Bay Packers  
 Growing Impressions School  
 Gucciardi Family  
 Guild Family  
 Half Time Sports Grille  
 Hamilton Family  
 Hanover Highlands School  
 Hanson Family  
 Harbor Shores Lake Geneva  
 Hart Family  
 Hartland School of Community Learning  
 Haslam Family  
 Haslam Family  
 Hawkinson Family  
 Hawks Family  
 Heinrick Family  
 Hemken Honey  
 Henke Family  
 Herbert Hoover School

Magister Family  
 Marc & Katie Callies  
 Marler Family  
 Marshall Family  
 Martin's Hardware & Rental  
 Maryland Ave Montessori School  
 Maternowski Family  
 Mathews Family  
 Maurice's  
 Maxwell Family  
 McBride Family  
 McCarthy Family  
 McCormack Family  
 McIntyre Family  
 McKinley Jr High School  
 McWilliams Family  
 Meier Family  
 Melzl Family  
 Miller Family  
 Milwaukee Brewers  
 Milwaukee Montessori School  
 Milwaukee Public Museum  
 Milwaukee Repertory Theater  
 Milwaukee Steak House  
 Milwaukee Steak House  
 Milwaukee World Festival - Community  
 Donations  
 Miranda Family  
 Misner Family  
 Moden Family  
 Monteagudo Family  
 Keystone School  
 Khabele School  
 Kindi Academy  
 Kirschan Family  
 KM Explore (Wales)  
 Knopow Family  
 Korman Family  
 Kornerstone School  
 Kowalczyk Family  
 Krysiak Family  
 Kwik Trip  
 Kyle Family  
 La Casa Montessori School  
 La Crescent Montessori Academy & STEM  
 School  
 LaGreca Family  
 Lake Geneva Cruise Line-Gage Marine  
 Lancaster Family  
 Laufer Family  
 Laura Family  
 Le Duc's Frozen Custard  
 Lectura Montessori School  
 Lemus Family  
 Lord Family  
 MacDowell Montessori School  
 Madden Family  
 Madison Community Montessori School

Old World Wisconsin  
 Oraedu Family  
 O'Reilly Auto Parts  
 Oscar Mayer Montessori School  
 P N Promotions  
 Pakulski Family  
 Papa Murphy's  
 Paul-Manager Family  
 Peggy Magister  
 Peoples Bank  
 Performance Running Outfitters  
 Perry Family  
 Petco  
 Peterson Family  
 Pick n'Save  
 Pieper Porch Winery  
 Pignotti Family  
 Pizza Ranch  
 Pochert Family  
 Poolside  
 Popeye's  
 Potter Family  
 Print Pack & Ship  
 Prohealth MA-Muskego  
 Promenzio Family  
 Purnell Family  
 Quad City  
 Quadracci Family  
 Quaranta Family  
 Racine Montessori  
 Radics Family  
 Radler Family  
 Rahmlow Family  
 Ramon Family (Miller)  
 Ranke Family  
 Rasmussen Family  
 Reichelt Family  
 Reinkober Family  
 Renaissance Academy  
 Revere's Wells Street Tavern & Restaurant  
 Rogers Park Montessori School  
 Rohrer Family, Mary & Justin  
 Rohrer Family, Rebecca & Jamie  
 Rohrganics  
 Roma's  
 Ros-Dukler Family  
 Roselle Middle School  
 Rosemary & Michael Quaranta  
 Rubingh Family  
 Ruland Family  
 Ryan Family  
 San Antonio Montessori School  
 Scharine Group-Whitewater  
 Scheirer Family  
 Schnuelle Family  
 Schroeder Family  
 Schuett Farms  
 Seasonal Services  
 Seaverson Family

Self Family  
 Senkevitch Family  
 Weber Family  
 Wegal Family  
 Weigand Family  
 Weingart Family  
 Wern Valley  
 Wern Valley Sportsmens Club  
 Westwood Health Center  
 Whale Tales Archery  
 Whittaker Family  
 WI Bingo Supply & Equipment Co  
 WI DNR- Ben Heussner  
 Wildflour Bakery  
 Wiley Family  
 Windsor Family  
 Winston Churchill  
 Wisconsin Montessori Association  
 Wood House Day Spa  
 Woodman's Markets-Janesville  
 Wright University  
 Wroblewski Family  
 Yocom Family  
 York Family  
 Young Family  
 Zimmermann Family  
 Zorko Family

Wauwatosa Montessori School  
 Webber Family  
 Weber Family  
 Wegal Family  
 Weingart Family  
 Wern Valley  
 Wern Valley Sportsmens Club  
 Westwood Health Center  
 Whale Tales Archery  
 Whittaker Family  
 WI Bingo Supply & Equipment Co  
 WI DNR- Ben Heussner  
 Wildflour Bakery  
 Wiley Family  
 Windsor Family  
 Winston Churchill  
 Wisconsin Montessori Association  
 Wood House Day Spa  
 Woodman's Markets-Janesville  
 Wright University  
 Wroblewski Family  
 Yocom Family  
 York Family  
 Young Family  
 Zimmermann Family  
 Zorko Family

## Testimonials

"My daughter is in her 4th year at Nature's classroom. After only a few minutes of Children's House classroom observation my daughter's father and I made eye contact across the room and the decision to enroll her in the school was made. I have never regretted that decision and my confidence in it grows stronger each year. I love that NCIM nurtures her development as a whole person — intellectually, spiritually and socially. I love the connection with nature that is fostered and the learning opportunities inspired by being immersed in the natural world; especially in a society and culture that moves more and more away toward learning from devices and simulated reality rather than face-to-face, real world experience. I love the caring and extremely supportive and perceptive staff that are always available to answer questions and work thru any issues my daughter may be having. It is obvious that they love their work and truly care about the children entrusted to them. In addition to the teachers, the role that the other children in the school play in our daughter's development is invaluable. A single child, the 3-year classrooms offer her an opportunity to learn from the experiences and expertise of older children while developing her own leadership abilities as a mentor for the younger children. This is an opportunity she cannot get at home and would not get at a non-montessori school. Lastly, I love the community of Nature's Classroom. It is one that fosters caring, awareness, empathy and responsibility at all levels, parent, teacher and child. I cannot imagine my child at any other school."

-Heather Ancarrow (Lower Elementary Parent), Nature's Classroom Montessori



"My love for NCIM began fifteen years ago. Serendipity: I happened across a tiny, new pre-school just four miles from my house. At that time, living on the outskirts of Mukwonago, nothing was close to my house! I feel a sense of pride knowing we've been with NCIM since that humble beginning. As I sit in my office attempting to garner the words that could possibly explain my reasons for choosing and continuing my children's education with NCIM, I feel overwhelmed. What profound message can I share? How can I sum it up? Pondering my answer, I have to giggle; I realize my office is littered with artwork and class pictures collected throughout the years spent at NCIM. The memories of so many happy faces flood my heart with love. As simple as it may seem, that is my reasoning. LOVE: my children's love for NCIM, and more importantly their love of learning. How many 13-year-old boys tell their parents that they cannot wait to get back to school at the end of summer? Like me, learning has not always come easily for my children. I was a square peg forced into a circle, which made my educational career extremely difficult and psychologically painful. Thankfully, at NCIM not only were my children's learning differences embraced, but they were empowered to think outside of the box. Much to my relief, my children's education has fostered their love of learning, preparing them to succeed as independent thinkers. I am enormously grateful my children have been provided with the opportunity to ascertain such skills and so thoroughly enjoy the process; furthermore, I am endlessly thankful for the love that has been fostered along the way."

-Rebecca Pochert-Caradonna (Adolescent Parent), Nature's Classroom Montessori

