

Crissy W
New Orleans, Louisiana

I'm a Montessori alumni of Jim and Roberta's and I also put my own son in Montessori. I've spoken across Los Angeles for the past 10 years in various Montessori schools about the benefits of Montessori education and its lasting impact.

Let me start by saying that I've known Jim and Roberta since I was 2 years old! I was part of their first class at Montessori de Terra Linda, in Marin County California. I'm now a 40 year-old Mom of a 12 year-old son who also attended a Montessori Toddler and Primary program in Los Angeles.

The Cummeskys are simply put, A GIFT TO EVERYONE who has been fortunate enough to have had them as teachers, and certainly the parents who've had their children guided by them. They are hands-down a major part of why I feel like I can succeed in my life, a major part of my development of confidence as a child (and into adulthood), and helped shape my views about how to treat nature and my fellow man. They are INCREDIBLE people and this opportunity for more than just one school of children to be taught by them makes me want to cry tears of joy. They are the embodiment of Montessori education, and I believe that if Dr. Montessori herself was alive she would be so deeply honored to know how many lives Roberta and Jim impacted through her method. You are getting two of the greatest gifts in education and in my humble opinion, this WORLD, has to offer.

My love of travel and my ability to be a good single parent, a good friend, and good co-worker, etc, this is directly impacted by Montessori and the Cummeskys. They guided me, through Montessori, to be true to who I am, to take responsibility, to be curious and seek answers, to learn how to survive in the wild, how to run a business, to dig deep into our world history to search for the truths in it and be inspired by what I found. They raised me just as much as my own parents did, and that's not to take away from my parents, but to say that the Cummekys enhanced my life beyond what my own parents had dreamed for me, and both my parents would enthusiastically endorse them and are also deeply grateful for them in our lives. I wish the magic of the Cummeskys and Montessori for every child and family, and now with this online program, it's a reality.

I could write volumes about how Montessori has impacted my life for the better but I'll try to narrow it down to some very key factors.

1.) Very simply put, the implementation OF the Montessori Method BY the Cummeskys, as I've stated above. Their ability to teach/guide families through Montessori education is a major factor as to WHY it was so impactful to me.

2.) Montessori is an all inclusive environment, both in terms of being ethnically diverse and inclusive but also educationally diverse. I was in classrooms with kids of various degrees of learning capabilities and skills, backgrounds, family situations, financial situations and what that meant to ME as a kid was that there was no "normal" bar set that I was expected to keep up with, or held back by, and certainly no judgements based on my family's beliefs or status in the world. My Montessori teachers each knew ME, what I excelled in and what I needed extra time with, and I was not judged by my peers, but encouraged to be the best ME. The way the classrooms are set up by age groups of 3 years allows for the child to not only develop at their pace, but to learn from older peers and also help their younger peers. This is how the WORLD works, it's ideally how adults behave in work environments, you learn from others, you are hired based on your specific gifts and you have to participate in a (hopefully) diverse group. Being in that type of environment as a child makes you more capable.

3.) The Montessori curriculum is a masterpiece! Many parents who don't understand Montessori think "the kids just play" or "the kids teach themselves so how in the heck does that work". To be clear, there IS a curriculum, a BRILLIANT one and when done by trained Montessori teachers like the Cummeskys, it's the most incredible learning experience there is. The Montessori materials that help children grasp concepts, have been so thoughtfully and specifically created by Dr. Montessori, that they are truly incredible to not only experience as a child, but get to witness as a parent. They give children at a young age, tactile understanding of concepts, a number is not merely a number, you SEE it and you can create it with the materials. It's more than just a bunch of concepts you're expected to memorize. You truly understand what you are learning. You use Montessori materials to see math problems in the physical form, to understand sentence structures by physically creating sentences with the materials and identifying the correct elements of each word, to see and experience science hands on, to create and learn music, I could go on! Another important part of Montessori is the connection to nature, plants and animals, the geographical world around us and how we all fit in together. Montessori curriculum in its essence is holistic, by the philosophical definition of the word, **"characterized by comprehension of the parts of something as intimately interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole."** Dr. Montessori saw the WHOLE child and the WHOLE world and created a way to connect them to each other.

How exciting that Jim and Roberta are able to take this opportunity to bring Montessori into your home!

It's a GIFT!

Thank you Jim and Roberta! I wish all your new families the joy of learning and the impact it has had on myself and my own son!

Much Love,

Crissy