



New Head of School Announced! Welcome to Kira Donnelly



Dear Summit Montessori Community,

We are delighted to announce that Kira Donnelly has been unanimously chosen as Summit's next Head of School, with her tenure set to begin on 7/1/2025. After an extensive search, we are confident that Kira will bring the vision, leadership, and passion for Montessori education that will help guide our school into the future.

Among the many strengths in Kira's rich background of educational and Montessori leadership, several that felt particularly decisive to this outcome are Kira's child-centered and collaborative leadership style, her deep understanding of child development and Montessori pedagogy, her skill and fluency with the budgeting process and financial management, her understanding that strategic vision must be grounded in and preceded by relationship-building and immersion in the Summit community, and her demonstrated commitment to staff development and retention.

This decision reflects careful consideration of an array of data: feedback on Kira from faculty, staff, parents/caregivers, Trustees, Martha Torrence, and Upper Elementary students. Over three campus visit days, several rounds of search committee interviews, and multiple comprehensive reference checks, Kira consistently demonstrated a keen understanding of Summit's vision and ethos.

Please join us in welcoming Kira to the Summit community as we look forward to the exciting journey ahead.

Sincerely,

The Summit Board of Trustees

Celebrating Martha Torrence

Now that the hard work of finding a new Head of School has concluded, we turn our attention over to celebrating Martha's 13 year tenure here at Summit. Make sure to keep an eye on your Parent Square for news of events happening this spring where we plan to celebrate Martha and her many accomplishments as Head of School ahead of her retirement in June.

We would love for you, your fellow classmates, and your parents to join us at these events in celebration in Martha. If you're still in touch with friends from your Summit days, please have them reach out to Ali at anash@summitmontessori.org with their contact information so we can make sure to invite them!



Campus Plan Updates

Now that construction has finished at 303 Pleasant Street and our new Beginners building has been welcoming students and families for its third year, we are planning to move on to our newest project – an updated full campus plan. We will be taking a look at the entirety of our almost three acres of land with fresh eyes and reenvisioning what our campus could look like with a focus on three key areas – learning, playing, and stewardship of the environment.

The first step took place at last year's spring auction. The Raise the Paddle campaign, "Raising the Future Forest," raised approximately \$13,000 for landscaping services to retire trees on campus for safety and ecological health and plant native species of trees and plants that ensure we create the campus we wish to leave for future generations. The next step was brainstorming with our faculty and staff on how the campus could best serve their students' needs. With the commitment of funds from the Board of Trustees, early planning stages are now underway to hire a landscape architect to draft a multi-year comprehensive plan. We look forward to sharing it with the community over the coming year!



January Open House

On Saturday, January 25th, 2025 from 10am-12pm, we are hosting a Winter Admissions Open House for prospective families interested in joining us for the 2025-2026 school year. We'll be giving an overview of our school and the admissions process and offering tours of the building.

If you know of anyone who will be ages 18 months to 11 years who might be interested in our school, please pass the invitation along!

Montessori in the Long Run

On October 23rd, we hosted our annual Montessori in the Long Run Alumni Panel. We were pleased to welcome back Emma Davis (class of 2020), Hannah Davis (class of 2023), Polina Chubarov (class of 2022), Leo Sampson (class of 2019), Katie DiGeronimo (class of 2018), Hazel McGrath (class of 2024), Hazel's mother Laura Woollett, and Maria Ganong-Bauer, mother of alumni Matthew, Lawson, and Julianna. They shared what they've been up to since they left Summit, how Summit prepared them for their next schools, and what they valued from their time at Summit. Let us know if you would be interested in joining a future panel! We would love to have you!



Re-Accreditation

As you may already know, Summit is accredited by both the American Montessori Society (AMS) and the Association of Independent Schools in New England (AISNE). In order to stay up-to-date with this accreditation, we must go through a rigorous process every ten years to ensure that we continue to deliver a high-quality experience to families. Next year marks the ten year point since our last re-accreditation, so we have been immersed in the preparation for our visiting teams in spring of 2026 since the summer.

Up first is the preparation of our self-study, a lengthy document that examines every facet of our operations and practice, from the mission statement, to the finances, to the curriculum, and provides evidence to demonstrate the quality of our program. All of our staff have been working hard to collect evidence and begin drafting a comprehensive narrative. Once the full self-study has been written and compiled, it will be turned over to both AMS and AISNE, who will then read the report and visit our school for a few days next school year to make sure that what we're doing in practice reflects what we shared in the report.

Most of our professional development time this year has focused on this work and making sure that we are looking critically at ourselves through the lens of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The result should reveal both our strengths as well as well recommendations for the decade ahead.