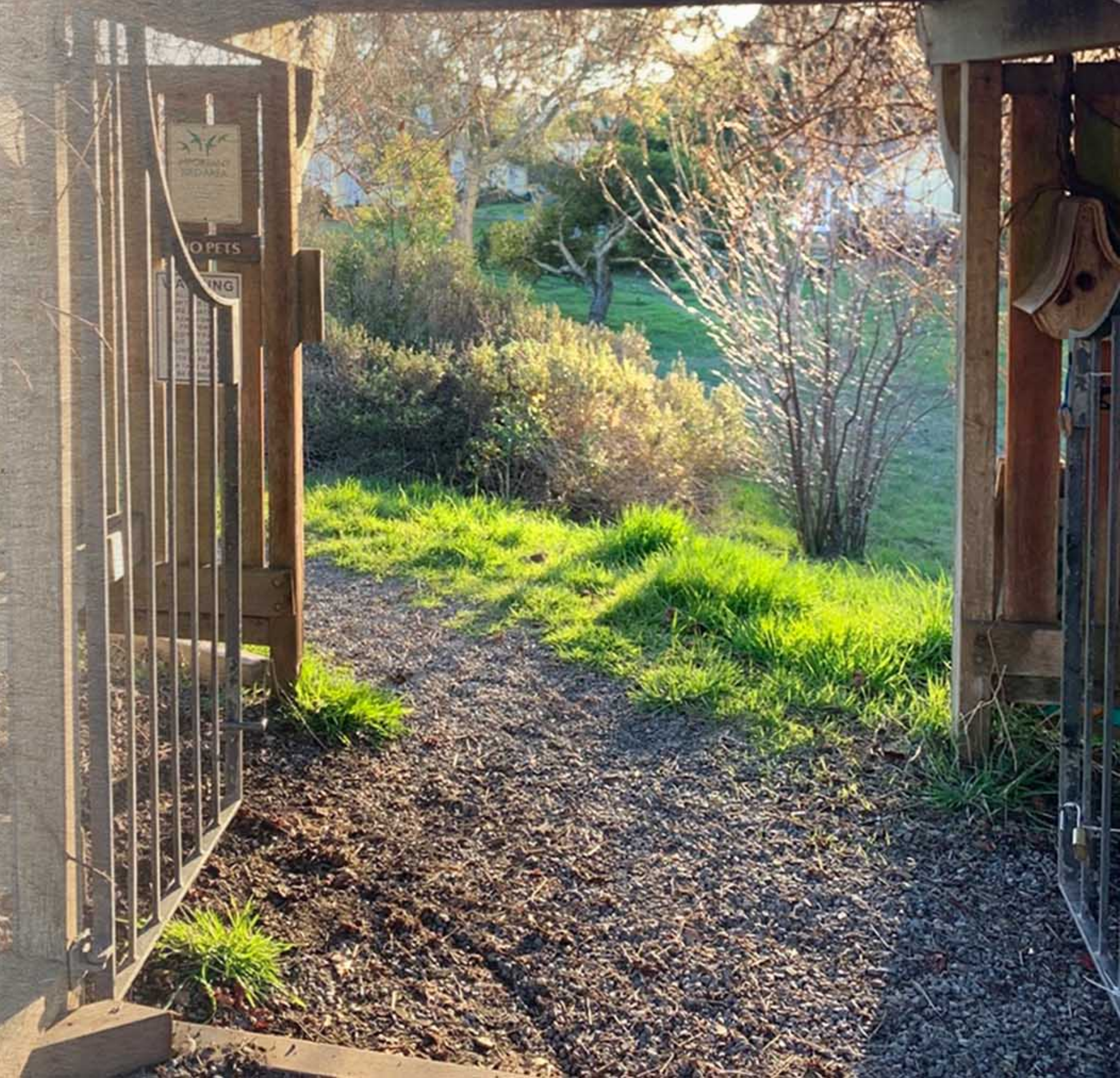


Harmony
montessori

Welcome to Harmony,
thank you for your interest in our program.

These tours are usually given to small groups of adults and are led in a conversational format, guided by the questions of the participants.

The following are commonly asked questions:



- What is Montessori?
- What is the history of the school?
- What is the rhythm of your day or the daily schedule?
- How is Montessori different from a play based program?
- How do you incorporate Waldorf methodology or philosophy?
- How do you handle discipline? Do you give timeouts?
- What are the five areas of the classroom?
- How does Harmony differ from other Montessori programs?



What is Montessori?

The Four Cornerstones of the Montessori Philosophy

1 Nurturing potential

Innate potential is something that exists within each of us, whether we realise it, and utilise it, or not. The primary goal of a Montessori program is to help each individual child reach his or her fullest potential in all areas of life. Activities promote the development of social skills, emotional growth and physical coordination, as well as cognitive preparation. The curriculum and environment empower children, inspire creativity and build a strong sense of self, encouraging children to enjoy the process of learning and the excitement of accomplishment.

2 The Prepared Environment

Children learn by touching, seeing, smelling, tasting and exploring, in addition to just listening. The whole environment—the classroom, materials and social climate—is carefully designed to ignite a child's natural desire to learn through exploration and discovery.

3 The Teachable Moment—Sensitive Periods

Sensitive periods in a child's life are when he or she is deeply interested in and highly motivated to learn a particular skill or understand new information. It's during this unique time that he or she learns a task easily. The teacher's role is to identify these sensitive periods in each child and to connect the child to the appropriate learning activities and materials.

4 Montessori Materials

Children enjoy and repeatedly gravitate toward certain activities. Specially designed materials stimulate, isolate and self-correct a specific activity or skill. These beautiful materials are multi-sensory, demonstrating concepts at the concrete level for the 3 year old, and moving to the abstract for the 5 year old.





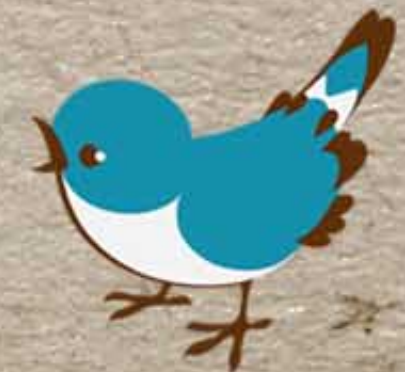
The History of Harmony Montessori:

After several years as a local Montessori school teacher, Wilana opened her own program in 2004, out of her home in Sausalito.

In 2005 the school moved to Shell Road in Mill Valley, where the program grew and flourished for thirteen years. It was during this time that Wilana took the Early Childhood Waldorf Teacher Training and began to weave aspects of Waldorf philosophy into our Montessori program.

After a lengthy search for a new location that would secure the schools future and allow for continued growth, we were able to enter into an agreement with the Richardson Bay Audubon Sanctuary to renovate Rosie's cottage and the Willow classroom, while procuring a 25 year lease.

Nature education, exploration and discovery has always been a very big part of our program, so to be given the opportunity to share these beautiful eleven acres with the Audubon Society has been a dream come true.



Our Rhythm:

We offer three and five-day programs. Our three-day program is offered Monday through Wednesday. An age and gender balance is seen in each classroom, each day.

The school day begins at 9:00 AM and ends at 1:00 PM. Free after care is provided daily until 2:30 PM.

- 9:00 - 9:30/45 AM: Welcome, wash hands, gather for circle.
- 9:30/45 - 11:15 AM: Morning work period and snack, children work by themselves or in small groups, the teachers observe, give lessons and facilitate.
- 11:15/12:15 PM: Outside time and lunch.
- 1 - 2:30 PM: Transition, story time, youngest children go home, afternoon work period/outdoor adventure.
- 2:30 PM: Dismissal.





Our Day Begins:

Children walk down to our classroom, taking in the view of Richardson Bay noting the weather, the tide, the cloud formations and what birds are present. It's amazing how much our scenery changes from day to day with the weather and the season.

Once in the classroom the children deposit their backpacks, lunch boxes and outerwear in their personal cubby. They remove their shoes, wash their hands and sit down for circle time.

At circle time, we do the calendar, sing a greeting song to start the day, share personal news, and review weekend or current events as seen through the eyes of preschoolers. A lesson is often given on one of the materials from the five areas of the classroom—the letter of the week, continent or an animal we are studying at that time.





At Harmony, the Montessori philosophy is our foundation, but other philosophies, materials and principles complement our program.

From Montessori, we create our framework utilizing the masterfully created materials to impart lessons that build an understanding of math, language, geography, zoology and botany.

We offer exercises that build gross and fine motor coordination, leading a child to a successful sense of independence.

Mixed-age groups, free children to enjoy their own accomplishments rather than compare themselves to others.

Older children provide leadership and guidance, and benefit from the satisfaction of helping others. Younger children are encouraged by the attention and help they receive from older children.

They learn through observation of older children. At the same time, older children reinforce and clarify their knowledge by sharing it with younger ones.

Children easily learn to respect others, and at the same time develop respect for their own individuality.



How is Montessori Different From Play Based?

We believe, that in essence, Montessori is not very different from play-based. What is different is the materials we give the children to play with.

The Montessori classroom is a very purposefully prepared environment. Children learn through play, therefore Maria Montessori developed materials that were designed to offer a key experience which would be a building block for additional learning, laying the foundation if you will.

Maria Montessori's observation of the kinds of things that children enjoy and return to repeatedly, led her to design a number of multi-sensory, sequencing materials that facilitate learning by offering key experiences that reflect all facets of life.

These materials are designed to be self-correcting. This allows children to learn through their own errors instead of having the teacher point them out.

The materials offer lessons in a concrete, hands-on way rather than in an abstract manner.

Children move freely throughout the classroom, choosing the activity in which they wish to engage.



How Do You Incorporate Waldorf Methodology or Philosophy?

Montessori is without a doubt our foundation, however, the Waldorf philosophy and methodology complement our program. Waldorf helps us to soften the edges of what is sometimes perceived as a sterile Montessori environment, by recognizing the importance of warmth. This is the warmth in the physical environment as well as warmth in the teacher's interaction with the children.

Environmental warmth is offered through the way that the classroom is prepared: the smells, sights and sounds that greet the children as they enter. The interpersonal warmth comes from the recognition of the child's state of development and interacting in a loving and respectful way.

In addition, the Waldorf curriculum for early childhood is centered around the work of the home. Food is lovingly prepared with the children, the table is thoughtfully set. The environment is intentionally cared for by taking pride in cleaning and restoring order after food prep, meals and work periods.

Waldorf takes a spiritual view of a child's development. Looking at a child through the lens of how they are incarnating into their physical body helps us observe where they are developmentally and how to best facilitate for them.





How Do You Handle Discipline? Do You Give Timeouts?

We deal with discipline by spending time facilitating and teaching conflict resolution. Our conflict resolution process is the Peace Table, where we help give the children the tools they need to resolve conflicts with one another. This involves them making amends for their actions and figuring out better ways to communicate their wants and needs rather than through hitting, throwing, pinching, biting, yelling or bullying. These things are usually at the root of discipline issues. Once the problem has been worked out, there is no need for punitive punishment.

We don't believe that children are inherently naughty and need to be taught discipline through punishment. It's more productive to teach them how to appropriately communicate and how to successfully obtain their goals. That doesn't mean that we are not firm or hold high expectations of conduct; we are consistent, fair, and predictable in our expectations.



Another area that creates the need for discipline is trying to make children share, or making children do something they don't want to. In the Montessori classroom the children create their own personal space by putting down a rug to work on, or choosing a workspace at a table. They are free to choose their own activity and work on it for as long as they wish without the expectation that they need share or within an arbitrary time frame set by the teacher. If a child wants to join another child in their work they must ask, "may I join you?" If a child prefers to work alone they are expected to employ the lessons they have been given in how to be graceful and courteous.

While it is ok to not share your work or engage with another person, it is not ok to reject them in a hurtful manner. Not only does this eliminate conflict, it helps a child learn respect for personal boundaries, both their own and for others. It also facilitates for a child to enter the flow state. It is in this flow state that learning occurs. Remember, in the Montessori classroom the lesson is offered through working with the materials, not through instruction from a teacher, so this flow state or attention to one's work is essential.



What Are the Five Areas of the Classroom?

- **Language:** Is presented initially by offering lessons that teach the sounds that the letters of the alphabet make, followed by the graphic symbol that represents it. Writing and prewriting exercises are offered in this area of the classroom as well as in every other area of the classroom.
- **Sensorial:** The sensorial materials offer lessons in discrimination of dimension and grading and sorting by utilizing all of the senses. This lays the foundation for the mathematical mind.
- **Math:** Mathematics are introduced first through quantity and then by symbols, then combining the two.
- **Cultural:** Maria Montessori believed that children who had a broad, global view would be more peaceful individuals. Therefore she developed a rich cultural curriculum. This curriculum is both regional and cultural. We also dive into the study of geography and zoology each month. We choose a different continent and a different animal from the five animal kingdom's to study. While studying the continent we look at peoples of different countries: how they meet their fundamental needs of food, shelter, clothing, transportation, and the similarities and differences between how we meet ours.
- **Practical Life:** Practical life activities help develop care of self skills and strengthen fine motor coordination.





Other Areas Include:

- Art
- Dramatic Play
- Library
- Building blocks and open-ended play materials



How Does Harmony Differ From Other Montessori Programs?

While going through the areas of the Montessori classroom, it may seem like a very academic environment. Over time, Montessori has been prized for the early academics that it offers. The Montessori materials are designed in an ingenious way that leads children easily to reading, writing and early math. However it was never Maria Montessori's intention to create early readers and writers or to push this agenda.

The job of the Montessori teacher is to follow the child, facilitate for their interests and remove obstacles from their learning path. This means we do not hold our own agenda of what a child should be learning and when, but rather observe and be tuned to the child's readiness and interests so to be prepared with the proper materials in order to facilitate. By observing how a child works with the materials, interacts with others and uses their body (both gross and fine motor skills), we are given a plethora of information as to where a child is developmentally and what support they need to progress in a healthy and mindful manner.

In summary, we do not present ourselves as an "academic program," though many children in our care do reach academic heights at a young age, it is not because we have pushed the agenda forward.





What Percentage of Time Do You Spend Outdoors?

As much as we can! We believe there is no such thing as bad weather—we go out rain or shine.

Our formal outside time as a group is from 11:15 - 12:15 PM but we take every invitation to go outside—often inspired by something we are exploring in the classroom—that leads us outdoors.

Small groups will often break off for impromptu outdoor expeditions. We either adventure to the beach, the grassy fields, the redwood grove, the oak woodlands hilltop, or our rocky barnacle beach. In the rainy season we visit our seasonal pond and observe the changes as the pond fills.





How Much Parent Participation do You Require and/or Allow?

We welcome participation and we also understand parent availability differs. At Harmony, you can be as involved as you want, or are able to be. We require two parent work days a year.

The biggest opportunities for parent participation are during holiday or seasonal events/festivals.

Our Events/Festivals are:

- Harvest Festival - October
- Spiral of Light - December
- Earth Day - April
- Graduation - June





Next Steps:

- Harmony accepts children between the ages of 2.5 and 6 years old.
- Submit an inquiry form and sign up for a parent group tour via the website on the Tours/Admission page.
- After your tour, submit an application via the link button on the Tour/Admission page.
- Once we have reviewed your application, and we determine your child is eligible for admission, we will contact you to schedule a Family Visit. A family visit is for the applicant student and their parents/guardians only. It is an opportunity to see the classroom/property and meet teachers. Family visits last 30 - 40 mins.





Harmony Tuition for 2023-2024 School Year:*

- Five-day tuition and material fee = \$25,157
- Three-day tuition and material fee = \$19,151

* Tuition is adjusted annually.



SICK POLICY

HEALTH CHECK PROTOCOL:

- We ask each parent/caregiver to get down and look your child/ren in the eye each morning and check in. Use your innate knowledge of them to discern any changes in their health—glassy eyes, a cough, shortness of breath, listlessness, feeling warm, change in appetite etc.
- Take each child's temperature, **before leaving for school**, if they have any signs or symptoms of illness. A temperature over 100.4 is considered a fever. (Stay home until fever free for 24 hours.)
- **The onset of a cold is when your child is most contagious.** Please be diligent in keeping them home during this period and if they have a new cough, new runny nose with green or yellow mucus or continuous sneezing. Your child may return to school after the worst of their cold has passed.
 - The onset of symptoms is characterized as new symptoms, for example a runny nose or cough that your child did not have yesterday. Colds linger so we do not ask for your child to be home for the full duration of a cold but it is important they stay home at onset—to avoid spread.
- Teachers will also assess each child on arrival at school. We will be applying an abundance of caution—any doubt over a child's health will mean we ask them to stay home—or be picked up—if something develops while they are at school.
- Allergies: Due to Covid 19—children who are sneezing, coughing or have a runny nose because of seasonal allergies should have a Doctor's note to support that.



SAMPLE ACADEMIC CALENDAR

AUGUST - TBD – Summer Play Date. Late August – First Day of School.

SEPTEMBER - Labor Day – **No School**. TBD – Back to School Night.

OCTOBER - Indigenous Peoples Day – **No School**. TBD – Harvest Festival & Pumpkin Patch.

NOVEMBER - Veterans Day – **No school**. Thanksgiving Break Week – **No School**.

DECEMBER - TBD – Spiral of Light Celebration (Evening). Third Week-Winter Break – **No School**.

JANUARY - 04 – School Resumes. MLK Day – **No School**.

FEBRUARY - Valentines Celebration (Students only). Third Week-Mid Winter Break – **No School**.

MARCH - St. Patrick's Day (Students only).

APRIL - Second Week-Spring Break – **No School**. TBD – Earth Day Celebration (Afternoon).

MAY - Memorial Day – **No School**.

JUNE - Thursday of First Week – Graduation. Friday of First Week – Last Day of School.



Kevin and Wilana Anderson Owners and Teachers

Wilana grew up between the Central Sierras and Marin County. Kevin hails from the Central Valley where his family farms grapes and almonds.

Married since 1999, both love to travel, enjoy live music, camping, hiking dreaming and art. Kevin's hobbies include woodworking and disc golf. Wilana enjoys hand sewing, paper mache and mountain biking. Their greatest personal achievement is their daughter Paige, the original inspiration for Harmony and now studying at Lewis and Clark College.

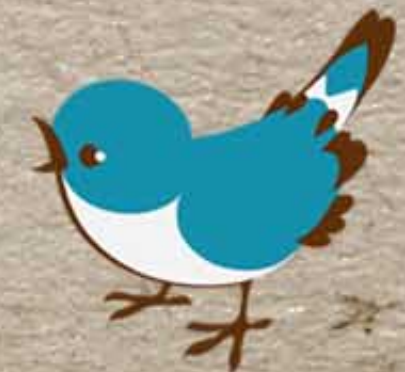




Rania Bassous Head Teacher

Born in Antioch, Turkey, Rania moved to New York in 1987, after completing her BS in Early Childhood Education in Ankara. Life then took her to Pennsylvania, Atlanta and finally to her favorite place—Marin County. Working in a Montessori school in Pennsylvania inspired Rania to get her Montessori certificate. Rania has been part of Harmony Montessori, as a head teacher, for 15 years.

Married with a son she adores, her favorite things to do are cooking, reading, traveling and gardening. She loves sea glass blue and puppies.

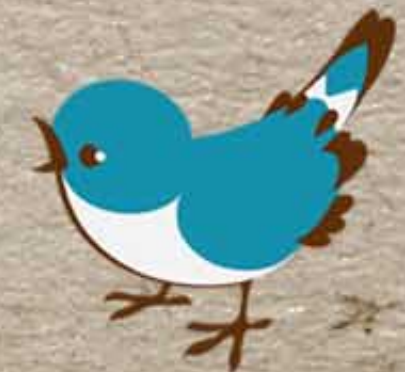


Lensi Jimenez

Asst. Teacher

Born and raised in Fairfax, Marin County. Lensi joined the Harmony team, as assistant teacher in 2018 but is not new to The Audubon Sanctuary. For over 3 years, she has spent her summers there as a Teacher Naturalist, where she supervises children on field trips, planned lessons and activities centered around Richardson Bay. A graduate of CSU, Chico where she earned a degree in Health Science with a focus in Education and a minor in Child Development, Lensi plans to continue her early childhood education and become a head Montessori teacher.

She enjoys concerts, swimming and running, loves pastel green and purple and is a cat person.





Joy Latimer Office Manager

Originally from Edinburgh, Scotland, Joy has lived in Marin county with her family for over 25 years. She is an Occupational Therapist, writer and has been in school administration for 7 years. Married since 1994, she is a mother to two incredible young women (one in high school and one at UC Santa Cruz). This position gives her the opportunity to work with her good friend Wilana and support the magic that is Harmony. She enjoys swimming, travel and a good book. She loves green and is a dog person.

