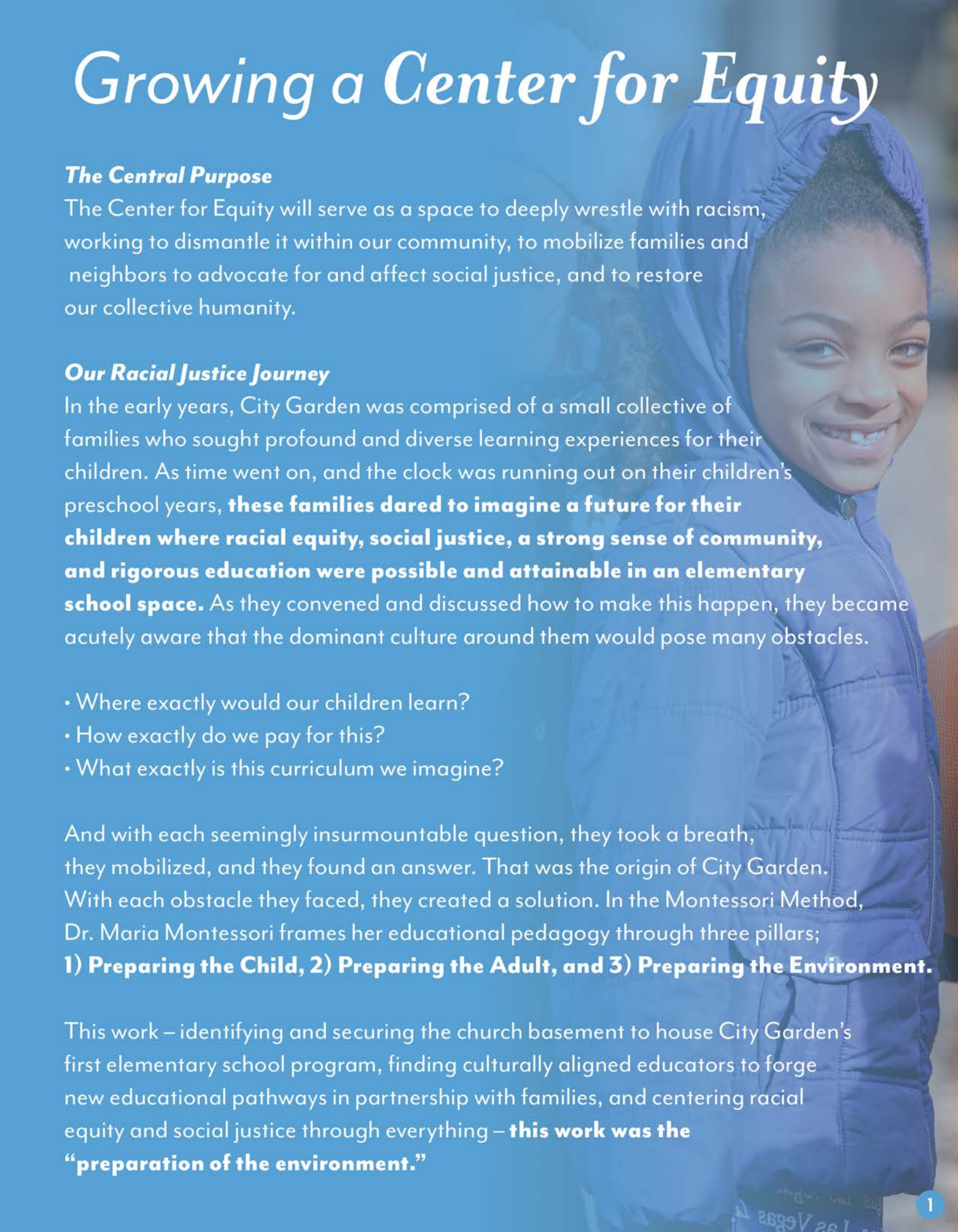


Growing a Center for Equity

A young girl with dark hair, wearing a blue hooded jacket, is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting.

The Central Purpose

The Center for Equity will serve as a space to deeply wrestle with racism, working to dismantle it within our community, to mobilize families and neighbors to advocate for and affect social justice, and to restore our collective humanity.

Our Racial Justice Journey

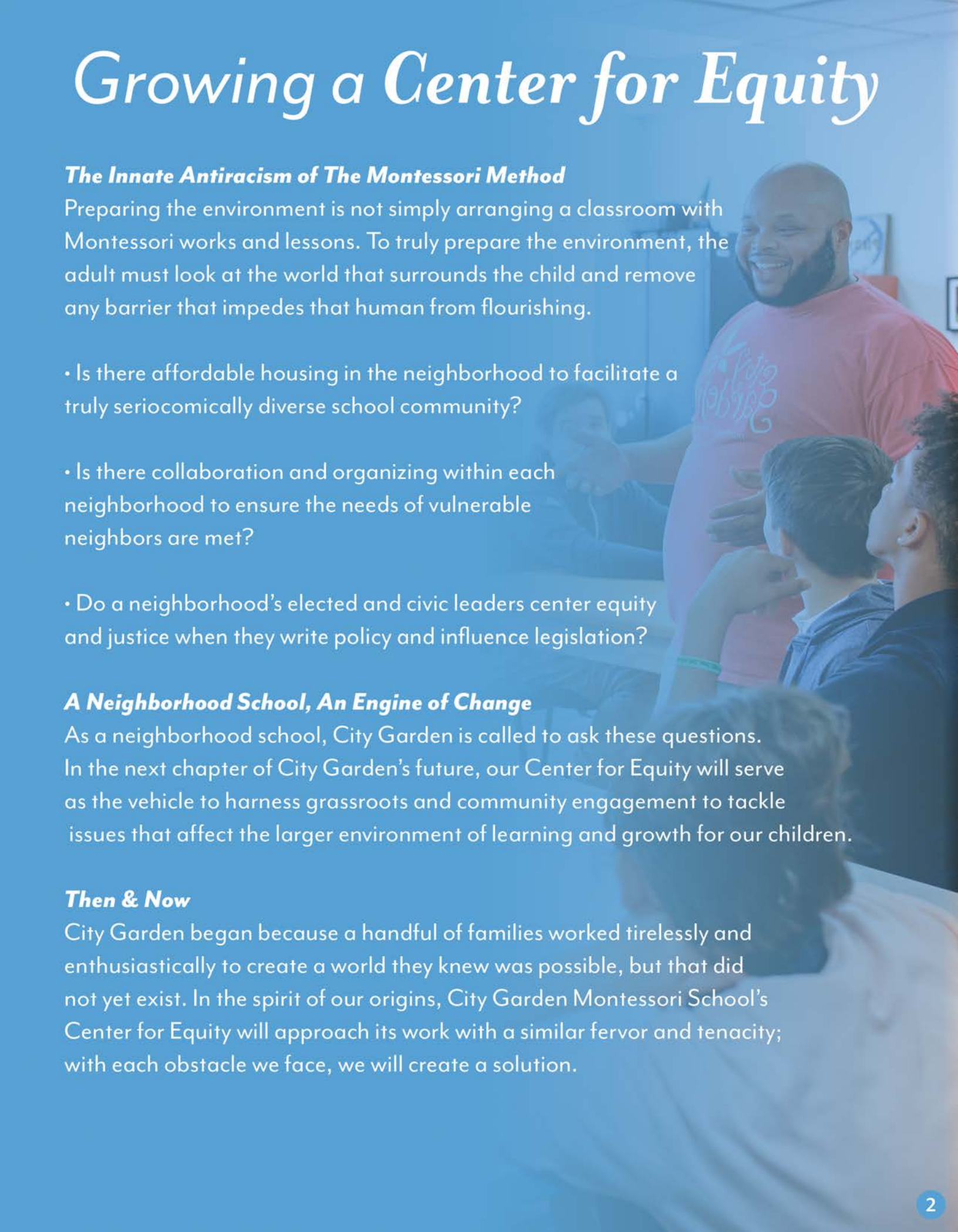
In the early years, City Garden was comprised of a small collective of families who sought profound and diverse learning experiences for their children. As time went on, and the clock was running out on their children's preschool years, **these families dared to imagine a future for their children where racial equity, social justice, a strong sense of community, and rigorous education were possible and attainable in an elementary school space.** As they convened and discussed how to make this happen, they became acutely aware that the dominant culture around them would pose many obstacles.

- Where exactly would our children learn?
- How exactly do we pay for this?
- What exactly is this curriculum we imagine?

And with each seemingly insurmountable question, they took a breath, they mobilized, and they found an answer. That was the origin of City Garden. With each obstacle they faced, they created a solution. In the Montessori Method, Dr. Maria Montessori frames her educational pedagogy through three pillars; **1) Preparing the Child, 2) Preparing the Adult, and 3) Preparing the Environment.**

This work – identifying and securing the church basement to house City Garden's first elementary school program, finding culturally aligned educators to forge new educational pathways in partnership with families, and centering racial equity and social justice through everything – **this work was the "preparation of the environment."**

Growing a Center for Equity



The Innate Antiracism of The Montessori Method

Preparing the environment is not simply arranging a classroom with Montessori works and lessons. To truly prepare the environment, the adult must look at the world that surrounds the child and remove any barrier that impedes that human from flourishing.

- Is there affordable housing in the neighborhood to facilitate a truly seriocoomically diverse school community?
- Is there collaboration and organizing within each neighborhood to ensure the needs of vulnerable neighbors are met?
- Do a neighborhood's elected and civic leaders center equity and justice when they write policy and influence legislation?

A Neighborhood School, An Engine of Change

As a neighborhood school, City Garden is called to ask these questions. In the next chapter of City Garden's future, our Center for Equity will serve as the vehicle to harness grassroots and community engagement to tackle issues that affect the larger environment of learning and growth for our children.

Then & Now

City Garden began because a handful of families worked tirelessly and enthusiastically to create a world they knew was possible, but that did not yet exist. In the spirit of our origins, City Garden Montessori School's Center for Equity will approach its work with a similar fervor and tenacity; with each obstacle we face, we will create a solution.