

A Word from Our CEO

"When we speak of education, we are proclaiming a revolution, one in which everything we know today will be transformed." - Maria Montessori



Dear City Garden Community,

This week, we celebrate our educators!

May 5-9 is Teacher Appreciation Week, and we LOVE showing love and gratitude to our guides and staff. They are the engine behind our mission, making our bold vision come to life every day through their unwavering work with our children and families.

In Montessori, we call our teachers "guides." The word "*guide*" more aptly describes the role of the teacher in a Montessori classroom because they *guide* each child to take ownership of their development, grow independence, be strong community members, and fall in love with learning.

What does it mean to be a Montessori guide?

In a Montessori learning environment, guides individualize each child's learning experience, planning lessons and activities for each student based on their unique needs. This enables children to develop at their own pace, free of competition. Personal agency and autonomy foster intrinsic motivation and deep learning. Guides work tirelessly to prepare the Montessori environment so children can independently engage with the hands-on materials. With their peers, they co-create their learning communities.

Being a Montessori guide is an exquisite labor of love.

What does it mean to be a public Montessori guide?

City Garden's Montessori guides also ensure that our Montessori curriculum aligns with state standards and that we deliver our promise to provide an excellent public education.

As a public Montessori school rooted in equity, City Garden is committed to placing guides in every classroom who hold both Montessori and state certifications. This goal presents a unique challenge, as few educators possess both credentials.

The City Garden Montessori Institute (CGMI)

In 2020, City Garden established the City Garden Montessori Institute to address the challenge of finding educators who **meet our uniquely high standards**. Our goal is to prepare teachers to deliver authentic Montessori education in diverse, public school settings rooted in anti-bias, antiracism (ABAR) principles.

To date, 11 City Garden guides have participated in CGMI's elementary teacher education program, and we will start a new cohort in Summer 2025.

CGMI's Lower Elementary training program became accredited in October 2024

through the national **Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education** (MACTE) – the international standard-setting body for Montessori teacher education. City Garden also joined a consortium of schools and the **National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector**, working to establish a **public Montessori residency affiliation**.

If you or someone you know is interested in learning about City Garden's unique Teacher Education Program, please email institute@citygardenschool.org.

City Garden Is Committed to Investing in Our Guides

- City Garden recently funded five (5) individuals to pursue early childhood Montessori certification through our partner, **Hope Montessori Education Institute**.
- City Garden currently supports two (2) individuals participating in the **Teach In Residency** program at the University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL) for their early childhood state teaching certification.
- City Garden partners with Saint Louis University to support three (3) individuals pursuing their bachelor's degrees + state teacher certifications in the School of Education's **Rising Teachers Program**.
- In recent years, City Garden has added three (3) **instructional coaches** who provide ongoing, individualized support for all lead guides. We also invest in robust professional development for all staff with **Public Montessori in Action** and other partners throughout the school year.

Increasing Teacher Pay in the 2025-26 School Year

I am very excited to share that, in the 2025-26 school year, City Garden will implement significant salary increases to acknowledge the deep work our lead and assistant guides do.

- The new **lead guide salary scale** reflects increases across all steps and increases the starting lead guide salary from \$41,712 to \$45,000. It also provides additional pay for special education guides and 5% increases each year for the first 5 years a lead guide is with City Garden. A second teacher certification (Montessori or state certification) results in a blanket salary increase of \$7,500.
- The new **assistant guide salary scale** reflects an average increase of 10% for all assistant guides and ensures that our assistant guide scale aligns with **MIT's Living Wage Calculator**.

We know that teachers have the most impact on students' development, academic achievement and perceptions of school—and that investing in guides is the best way to ensure every child's needs are met.

Please join us in celebrating our incredible educators this week, and every week!

If you want to support City Garden's focus on investing in the excellence of our educators, please make a gift on (or before) **Day of Giving on May 21-22**, 2025. This important campaign will support teacher salary increases and continued investments in training and professional development. Your sponsorship, gift, and volunteer efforts will enable us to continue providing an excellent, equitable Montessori education to all of our children.

With tremendous gratitude and hope for the future,



Christie
CEO/Executive Director, City Garden Montessori School

Let's Grow Together: City Garden's Day of Giving



It's time to plump up our piggy bank! City Garden's annual Day of Giving is May 21-22, and it's your opportunity to help ensure we have the resources needed to provide an exceptional Montessori education to our students.

Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, each gift during this event is **QUADRUPLED**, meaning your \$20 gift becomes \$80, and your \$100 gift becomes \$400. Every donation is an important step toward reaching our goal of raising \$400,000 in 24 hours!

How You Can Help:

- [Click Here](#) to sign up to be a Team Leader!
- [Click Here](#) to contribute or recruit in-kind gifts for Power Hour Prizes.
- Volunteer before, during, or after the event.
 - [ECEC Day of Giving Volunteer Sign Up](#)
 - [EAEC Day of Giving Volunteer Sign Up](#)
 - [Hospitality Volunteer Sign Up for Day of Giving at ECEC Campus](#)
 - [Hospitality Volunteer Sign Up for Day of Giving at EAEC Campus](#)
- Make your gift on [City Garden's Day of Giving](#) page!

Career Day at Benjamin F. Edwards & Co.



A group of City Garden students enjoyed a Career Day field trip to Benjamin F. Edwards wealth management firm, where they made their mark on the professionals with attentive listening and good questions.

Senior Advisor Pam Edwards-Bunn said, "I was very impressed with the students' maturity, respectfulness, insightful questions, and polite, cheerful manner."

Plus, there may have even been a seed or two planted for a future high school internship!

Generations Celebrate at Grandfriends Day



We welcomed over 100 smiling faces on April 4 for Grandfriends Day, when older generations joined us to celebrate the incredible work of City Garden's students and staff. Older kids proudly walked their friends around, explaining their projects and what they're learning, while younger students read to their grandfriends and showed off their spaces. It was a wonderful event that demonstrated the community's commitment to the magic of our learning environment.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view a short video on Instagram.

Block Party Celebrating 30 Years of Transformative Education



Our Saturday celebration may have been rained out, but the Monday after-school Block Party was precisely what our community needed. It felt joyful, easy, and deeply connected – a beautiful reflection of who we are together.

The EAEC lot came alive with laughter, music, and celebration as we honored City Garden’s 30th Birthday. Families gathered in community while children delighted in BBQ, bounce houses, games, balloon art, dancing, and more. A sweet round of birthday cake topped off the evening, celebrating three decades of nurturing growth, belonging, and joyful learning.

The heart of the celebration came when our dance team gathered the crowd to hear seventh grader Addisyn Crowe speak. Addisyn shared how, after feeling unseen at her previous school, she found a sense of true belonging at City Garden. She spoke powerfully about building real friendships, being encouraged to grow with independence, and becoming a better version of herself through a culture of kindness, respect, and curiosity. Her words were a reminder of what makes City Garden unique—our commitment to seeing and supporting every child as an individual with limitless potential.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view a short video on Instagram.

CELEBRATIONS

Nurturing Growth – In Children and in Nature



At City Garden Montessori School, growth begins with a thoughtfully prepared environment and deep respect for the natural unfolding of life. This approach extends beyond our classrooms and into the soil of our city, most recently, in the new native garden on Folsom at Klemm next to our Elementary and Adolescent Education Center.

This vibrant new space features native plants purchased from the [Missouri Wildflower Nursery](#). It is designed using the Butterfly Berm garden plan from [Grow Native!](#), a program dedicated to promoting the use of native plants in Missouri landscapes. Like our students, native plants thrive in an environment that nurtures their individuality and roots them in community. These plants go on to support a thriving ecosystem, offering shelter, nourishment, and beauty for birds, insects, and other wildlife. In the same way, the children we nurture today will grow to strengthen and enrich their communities, becoming stewards of justice, connection, and care for generations to come.

Native plants aren't just beautiful—they're vital. They restore balance, build biodiversity, and support the interconnected web of life.

We're especially excited to watch this new garden come to life in the years ahead. Native gardens don't bloom overnight—they follow a gentle, magical rhythm: Year 1—Sow. Year 2—Grow. Year 3—Show. First, the roots settle in. In the second year, you'll notice quiet, steady growth. And by the third year, the garden truly comes alive, bursting into full, vibrant bloom.

Just like our children, gardens need time, patience, and love. With thoughtful care, they blossom into something beautiful that nurtures the space around them and all who encounter them.

The Power of Showing Up: A Record Year for Volunteers at City Garden



This year, *almost 350 volunteers* gave more than *4,000 hours* of their time to City Garden Montessori School—and we are deeply grateful. From helping in classrooms to coaching sports, repairing bikes, and cheering at events, our volunteers make City Garden more joyful, more connected, and more successful.

Our volunteers include:

- *Parents and Staff Members* who show up day after day with love and care
- *Grandparents and Extended Family, Alumni Parents, and Alumni Grands*—generations of City Garden pride
- *Students from SLUH*, bringing energy and support to every task
- *Alumni, Students, and Earn-a-Bike Volunteers* who model leadership in action
- *Board & Committee Members, Friends, and Community Partners* who continue to invest in our mission

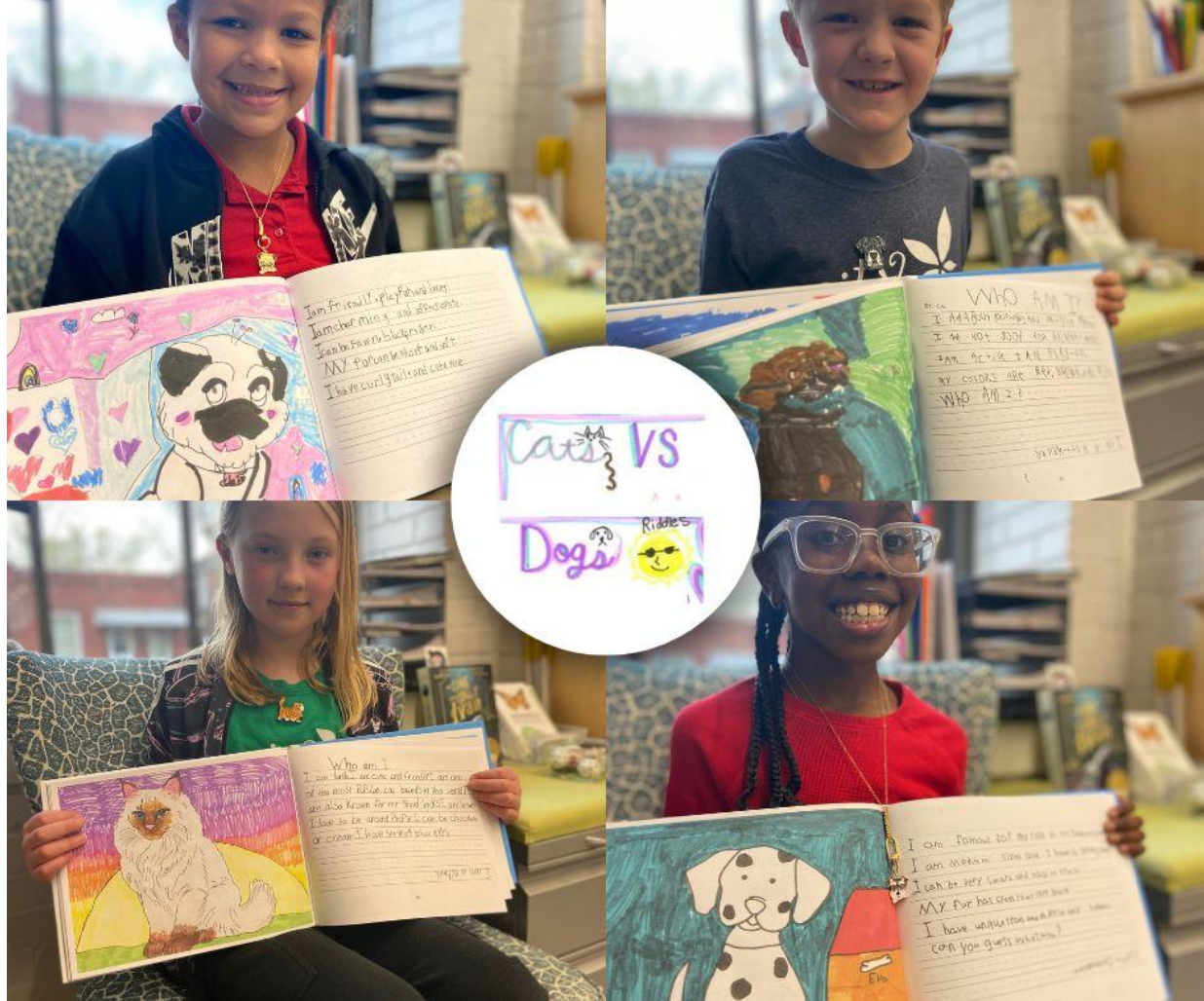
These hours add up to more than just numbers—they represent hundreds of acts of care that help our children thrive. Volunteering is one of the most powerful ways to live City Garden’s mission. When you give your time, you create the kind of school—and world—we all want to see.

We celebrated this incredible impact at our Volunteer Appreciation Party on April 25, where we gathered in gratitude, laughter, and community.

Thank you, volunteers. Because of you, we are growing together.

Interested in volunteering at City Garden? Contact Kim Dixon at kim.dixon@citygardenschool.org.

Lavender Class Publishes Cats Vs. Dogs Book



We are thrilled to announce that our Lower Elementary class, Lavender, has successfully written, illustrated, and published our very own book! We can now proudly call ourselves authors of a REAL book! Throughout this project, we have witnessed our students develop a deep love for writing, and their enthusiasm has been contagious.

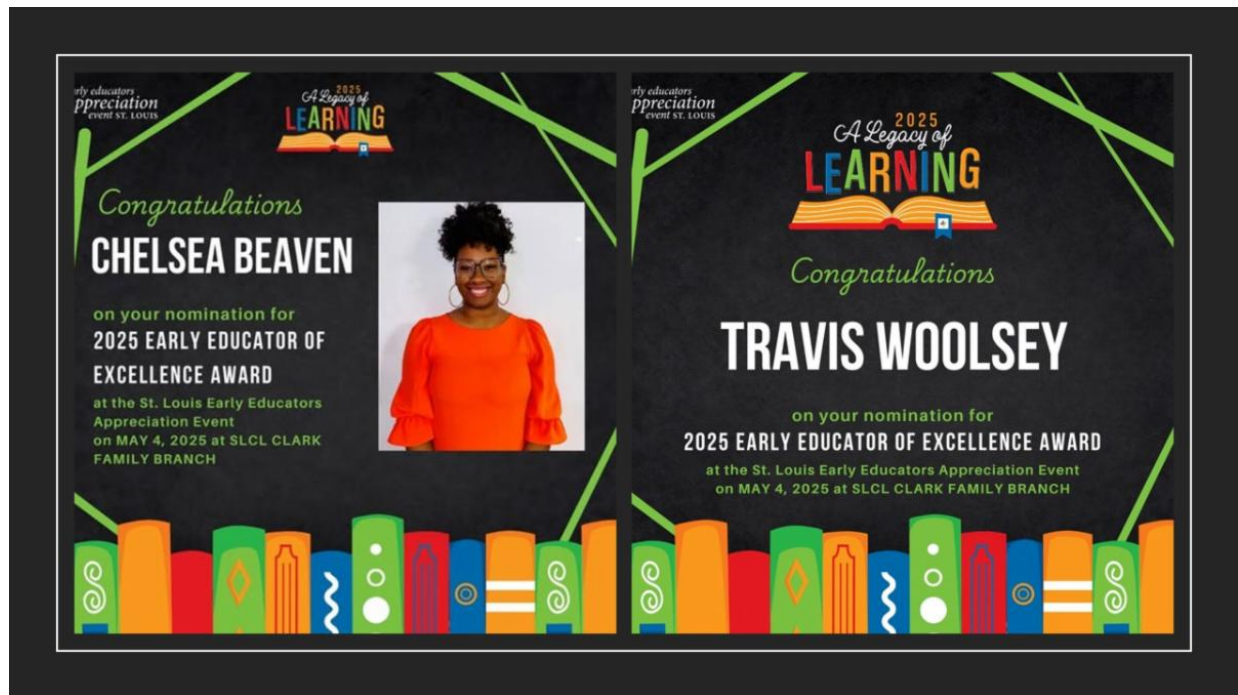
Over several months, the entire class has dedicated themselves to this project, resulting in a BIG and beautiful final product. We are incredibly proud of what we have created together. Each student has chosen their published author pins, and we even took special author photos to commemorate this achievement. Our book, titled *Cats Vs. Dogs*, is a delightful collection of "Who am I?" riddles accompanied by charming illustrations.

Our class consists of 30 students spanning first, second, and third grades. For our first-year students, this is their very first published book. The second-year students are excited to share their second published work, while the third-year students celebrate their third book.

Our class has a passion for research and learning about a variety of topics. We had a fantastic time exploring the wonderful world of cats and dogs, and we are excited to share this knowledge with our readers!

Other works by these students include *Mycology Mysteries* and *Prehistoric Pets*. Look out for more works by the students of Lavender in years to come.

Early Ed Guides Recognized for Excellence



Congratulations to Travis Woolsey and Chelsea Beaven for their well-deserved nominations for the 2025 Early Educator of Excellence Award!

Travis, a Lead Guide known for his exceptional teaching and consistent high student achievement results, was recognized for his commitment to integrating student interests into lessons and advocating for diverse student needs.

Chelsea, an outstanding Assistant Guide, was celebrated for her leadership, excellent relationship-building with students and families, and her crucial role in facilitating remarkable student achievement alongside Travis.

Both educators were honored at the 2025 Early Educators Appreciation Event on May 4th at the Clark Family Branch of the St. Louis County Library, and we couldn't be prouder of their dedication to excellence in early education.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Get Ready!

Wednesday, May 21 - Thursday, May 22

2025
Day of Giving



Last Week of School

- 8th Grade Promotion Ceremony 5/27/25
- ECEC Field Day 5/28/25
- EAEC Field Day 5/29/25
- Kindergarten Promotion Ceremonies 5/30/25

Subscribe to the City Garden online calendar [here](#).

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City Garden Montessori School Mission

City Garden exists to **redefine education** by developing the whole child in an excellent, inclusive, Montessori school; to **reimagine community** by creating spaces and systems that help to restore our collective humanity, and to **reinvigorate our world** by creating a culture in which individuals and communities thrive without disparities or barriers to success

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