



6 Kahn Road, Morristown NJ 07961 • 200 Hartshorn Drive, Short Hills NJ 07078 • 286 Main Street, Chatham NJ 07928
(973) 410-9669 (973) 258-1400 (973) 665-0071

December 6, 2018

Dear MCA Parents,

We are pleased to share with you information about a special event that recently took place at The Montessori Children's Academy. Shanna Truffini, author of the children's book *You Are a Gardener*, visited each MCA campus and spent time with the Kindergarten and Lower Elementary students. As stated on her website, Ms. Truffini's mission is to spread the seeds of emotional and social education to promote mental wellness in children. Her book and school visits allow her to share this message, and we were fortunate to have her join us here at MCA.

You Are a Gardener is a book for young children that teaches them how to understand and manage their emotions. Using a gardening theme, Ms. Truffini writes about the "weeds" in our gardens, which are those things that make us feel angry, hurt, or sad. She then introduces a concept of creating flowers in our gardens to make us feel happy again. To be happy, we have to "pull the weeds" out of our garden (sometimes with the help of others) and allow space for flowers to grow in order to create the most beautiful garden we can imagine.

During her time at MCA, Ms. Truffini read her book to the children and then invited them to join her in some role-playing activities. She shared visuals and introduced vocabulary to reinforce the message of the book. At the end of the presentation, each Kindergarten and Lower Elementary student received a "seed package" with seeds to bring home. The children really seemed to enjoy her visit!

Ms. Truffini also spent some time with the teachers during a recent in-service day to discuss how they can implement activities related to this concept in their classrooms. MCA has purchased copies of *You Are a Gardener* so that it is available to all of the children here at school. Several of our teachers are now reinforcing the gardening message with follow-up activities such as creating flower petals with happy statements and jars with weeds that hold examples of sad statements.

For more information about Ms. Truffini and her work, or to learn how you can purchase your own copy of her book, we invite you to visit her website <https://www.youareagardener.com>. Under the "Resources" tab, you can also find free printable "Flower Charts" and "Little Gardeners Guides", which

you might enjoy using at home. In addition, there is a visual, emoji-based dictionary for the youngest gardeners who aren't yet readers! There is also a link to a video series named "Hello Gardeners" which gives more information about how to turn weeds into seeds.

We were delighted to be able to support this local author, and we look forward to assisting Ms. Truffini in her mission by helping our own MCA children learn how to create and maintain their own healthy, beautiful personal gardens.

Sincerely yours,



Camilla Nichols-Uhler
Director of Montessori Development

cc: Campus Directors
Tori Inkley, Executive Director

