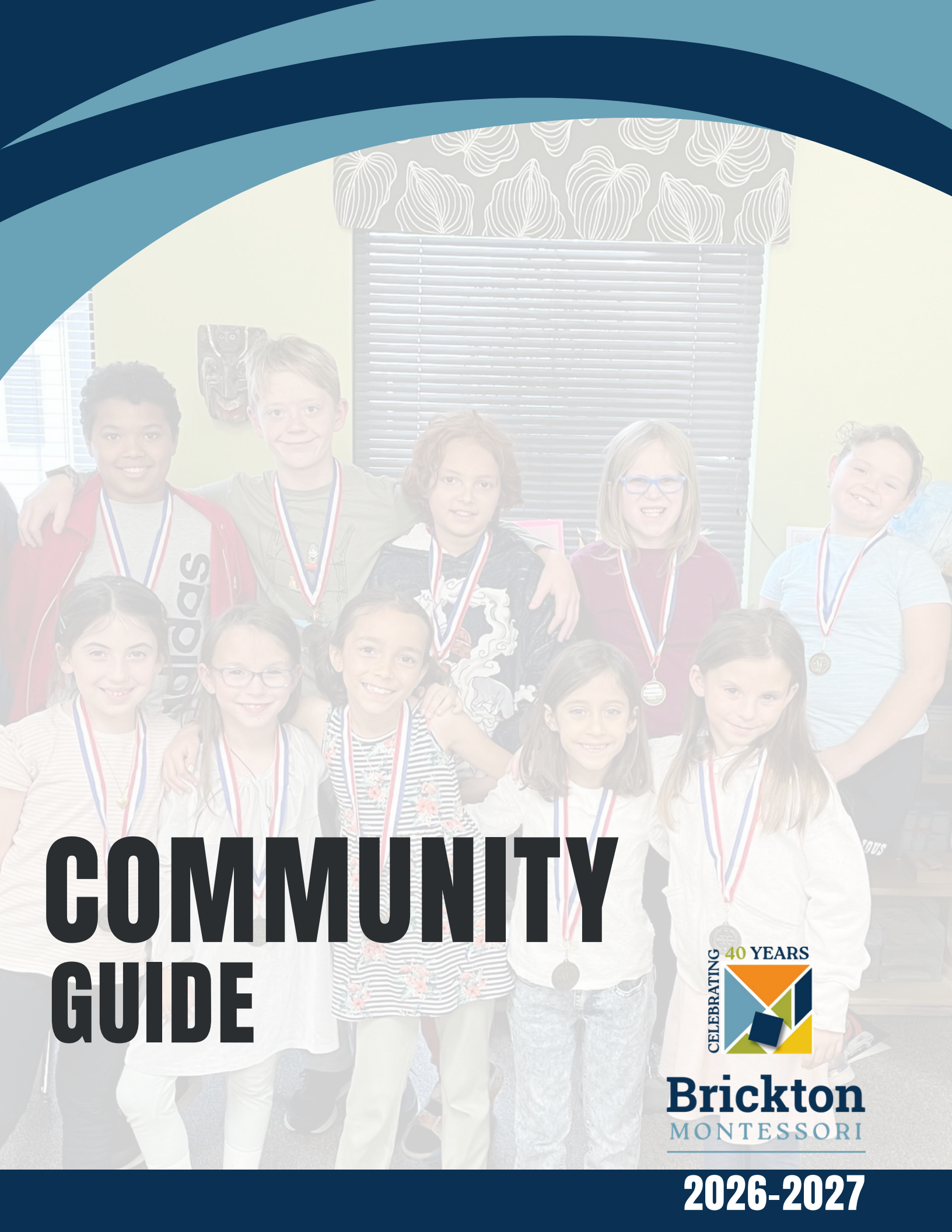


COMMUNITY GUIDE

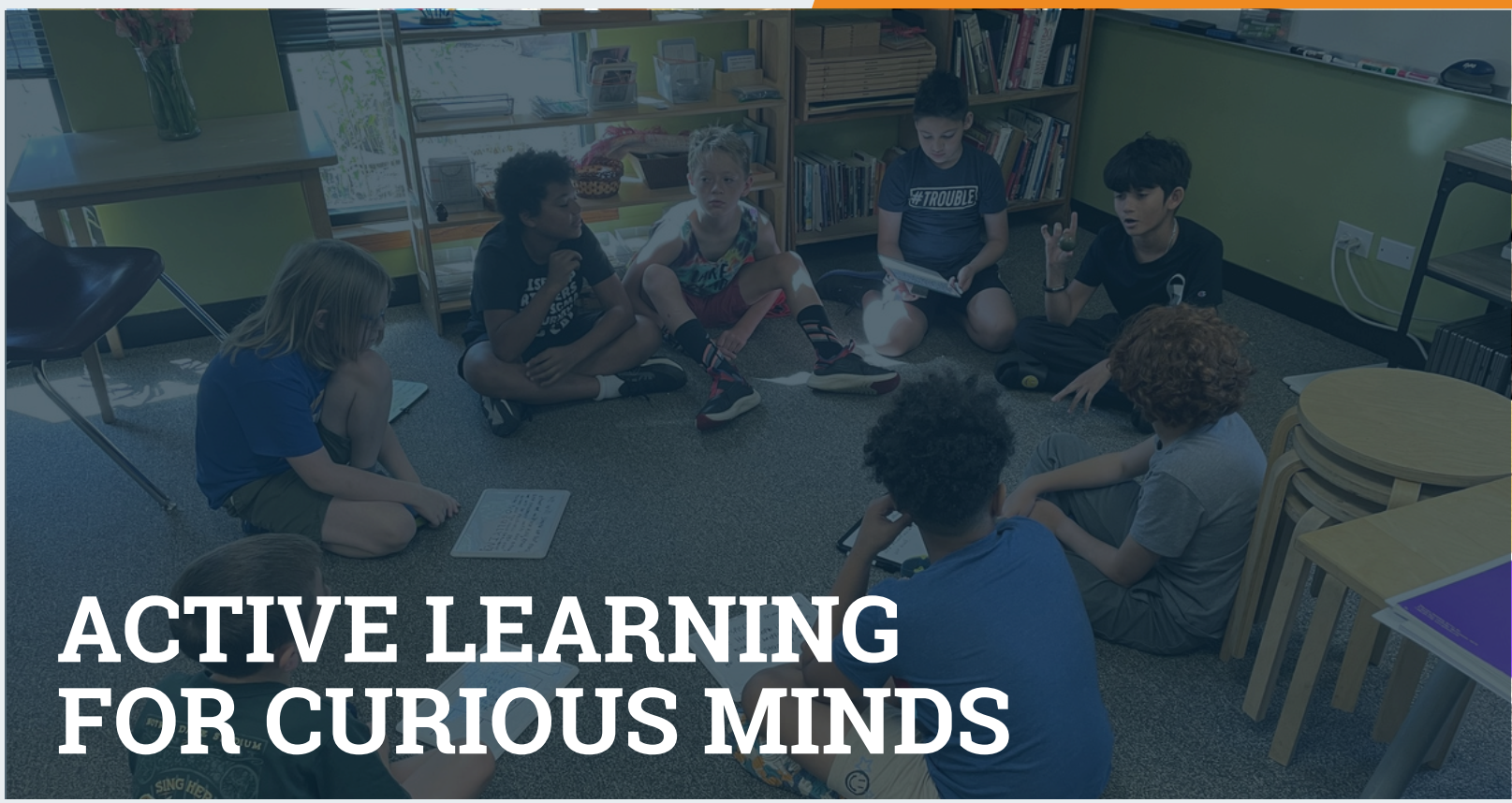
CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

Brickton MONTESSORI

2026-2027

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ACTIVE LEARNING FOR CURIOUS MINDS

Our Mission

Brickton Montessori creates an authentic learning experience that honors the whole child's identity, fosters belonging, ignites curiosity, and develops confident, adaptable individuals with academic mastery, real-world skills, and a strong sense of responsibility.

Our Vision

Brickton Montessori builds on a legacy of educational excellence to foster supportive, hands-on learning environments that prioritize personal growth, perspective-taking, and self-advocacy—cultivating compassionate, successful alumni who make meaningful contributions to the world.



Our Programs

- Nido/Young Toddler
- Toddler
- Children's House
- Lower Elementary
- Upper Elementary
- Middle School

www.brickton.org
info@brickton.org
1695 S River Road, Des Plaines, IL 60018

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WHO'S WHO AT BRICKTON MONTESSORI

Nido (Infant)
ROOM 102 - Lead Teacher: **Lulu Rodriguez** ludwicka.rodriguez@brickton.org

Young Toddler
ROOM 103 - Lead Teacher: **Kearra Pastor** kearra.pastor@brickton.org

Toddler
ROOM 105 - Lead Teacher: **Zoe Bouris** zoe.bouris@brickton.org

Children's House
ROOM 207 - Lead Teacher: **Marcy Flanagan** marcy.flanagan@brickton.org
ROOM 206 - Lead Teacher: **Jane Paha** jane.paha@brickton.org
ROOM 203 - Lead Teacher: **Allison Potter** allison.potter@brickton.org

Lower Elementary
ROOM 202 - Lead Teacher: **Heather Wilcek** heather.wilcek@brickton.org

Upper Elementary
ROOM 213 - Lead Teacher: **Aarti Arora** aarti.arora@brickton.org

Middle School
ROOM 204 Lead Teacher: **Anna Carter-Goldsmith** anna.goldsmith@brickton.org

Specialists
Makers Space and Tech Director - **Selena Brosnan** selena.brosnan@brickton.org
Student Support Specialist: **Christin Anzalotti** christin.anzalotti@brickton.org
Reading Specialist: **Liz Skrodzki** liz.skrodzki@brickton.org
Music Teacher: **Samara McDermid** samara.mcdermid@brickton.org
Spanish Teacher: **Mercedez Mandujano** mercedez.mandujano@brickton.org
Yoga Instructor: **Danielle Fierce** danielleyogifierce@gmail.com
Physical Education Instructor: **Edward Congco** edward.congco@brickton.org

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WHO'S WHO AT BRICKTON MONTESSORI

Administration

Head of School:
Erica Lane erica.lane@brickton.org

Early Childhood Director:
Megan O'Hehir megan.ohehir@brickton.org

Director of Advancement
Community Volunteer Coordinator
Kelly McDermott kelly.mcdermott@brickton.org

Administrative Coordinator:
Lori Pistol lori.pistol@brickton.org

Development Coordinator:
Jamie Kendall jamie.kendall@brickton.org

After School Coordinator:
D'Arcy Mies darcy.mies@brickton.org

Business Manager:
Larry Pence larry.pence@brickton.org

Board of Directors

President
Warren Lapham

Vice President
Alexandra Derec

Secretary
Kevin Gates

Treasurer
John Rams

Director
Brian Leong

Director
Joana Quargnali-Linsley

Director
Brendan O'Sulivan

Director
Steve Berger

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Board of Directors

Brickton Montessori School's Board of Directors has three main roles:

- **Fiduciary**: Oversight and assessment of Brickton's mission and finances
- **Strategic**: Focus on a two-to-five-year planning window
- **Generative**: Develop and share a vision for the future of Brickton Montessori

Brickton's head of school and administrative staff lead the day-to-day operations of the school. The Board is not involved in decisions regarding student admission, curriculum development of faculty and staff hiring or evaluation.

How is Brickton's Board organized?
Brickton's Board operates via a committee structure. Committees focus on promoting outstanding education, effective learning environments, nurturing community, building awareness, and financial discipline. The Board also appoints task forces to address topics such as strategic planning and technology.

The full Board meets on a regular basis during each school year. Typically, committees meet monthly. Their agenda is set by our strategic plan, direction from the Executive Committee and emerging needs of the school. The committees make recommendations for consideration by the entire Board.

All policy decisions and major expenditures are discussed and voted on by the entire Board. **Meetings of the full Board are open to any members of the community**. Please check the school calendar for meeting dates and times.

The Board is always looking for dedicated parent volunteers to assist with school events. Many of our current members were elected as directors after volunteering for community events.

Please contact Warren Lapham at **bmsboardpresident@brickton.org** if you are interested in serving. Board volunteer positions have a tenure of three years.

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Parent Alliance (PA)

The purpose of the Parent Alliance (PA) is to bring families together, to promote volunteerism, to foster connections within Brickton's community, and to sponsor special events. All families are included as members of the PA, once enrolled.

Parent Alliance Mission Statement

- To serve as a liaison among parents in the spirit of volunteerism for our school, our children, and our staff.
- To communicate to our parents efficiently and effectively about upcoming events/meetings.
- To actively foster a spirit of inclusion, cooperation and enthusiasm to promote and nurture the vibrant community within our Montessori school.

When are PA meetings?

General PA meetings are held three to four times per year. All parents are invited to attend. At these meetings, upcoming events are discussed, volunteer needs are assessed, and committees report on progress. Please check the school calendar for PA meeting dates and times if you would like to attend.

Volunteer Opportunities

The Board of Directors has launched an initiative to encourage and document the strength and uniqueness of our school community. Families learn more about the culture of the school and, in turn, our community becomes richer and stronger. Therefore, we are asking families to participate at a minimum of 10 hours of service throughout the year.

Examples of how some families have contributed include building playground equipment, setting up or cleaning up at school events, attending the annual Montessori Journey, participating in a Parent Alliance meeting, joining a committee, or volunteering in your child classroom (chaperoning field trips, assisting with special projects, helping with laundry, reading to the children etc.).

Please contact **Kelly McDermott** kelly.mcdermott@brickton.org for more information on upcoming volunteering opportunities.

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Community Events

Back to School Night/Welcome Back Breakfast

The Monday before school begins, families are welcomed back to Brickton. Students drop off school supplies, reconnect with friends after a busy summer, and enjoy refreshments in their classroom while the teachers share their plans for the year ahead. On the first day of school, parents also come together for coffee and treats in the Great Room.

Back to School Block Party

The Block Party is the first Parent Alliance event of the year. This event is held on a Friday in mid-September to welcome new and returning families back to school. Dinner, desserts, games, and fun activities are provided. This is a great volunteer opportunity, with many ways to get involved.

Taste of Montessori

Every classroom hosts their own Taste of Montessori on a select Fall evening in October. Families and teachers gather together for a potluck dinner, followed by families working with their child in the classroom and learning about their favorite activities.

Halloween Parade and Trunk-or-Treat

For Halloween, Children's House through Middle School students wear their costumes, parade through the school and into the parking lot to "trick or treat" with Brickton family members who decorate their trunks/cars and hand out treats. Note: Trunk-or-Treat celebrations move to the Great Room if the weather does not cooperate.

Montessori Journey

Guided by the Head of School, parents take a structured tour which includes teachers sharing their classrooms and the Montessori know-how. The Montessori Journey is and exciting way for families to experience a classroom through the eyes of their child.

Breakfast with Santa

This event is traditionally held in early December. Families gather together for breakfast, arts and crafts, and a visit from Santa!

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Community Events

Transition Nights

Current students moving from Children's House, Lower Elementary, and Upper Elementary have the opportunity to experience the next level of their Montessori education. Then teachers welcome families into their classroom to field questions, share learning materials, and help students become comfortable with their new surroundings.

Friends of Brickton Day

Students are invited to have a parent or special friend (grandparent, aunt or uncle, neighbor, etc.) visit their school. Visitors spend time in the classroom working with their student host. Coffee and snacks are provided.

Art Expo

During Friends of Brickton Day, the Great Room will be transformed into a dazzling gallery featuring unique student artwork across all ages. The Art Expo will be on display throughout the day so it can be admired at your leisure. Light refreshments will be served.

Fine Arts Night

A celebration of music! In a joyful springtime performance, kindergarten through Middle School students showcase their talents using voice, and instruments.

Staff Appreciation Day

This event in organized and hosted by parents as a way to celebrate Brickton staff. Parents donate items throughout the week, including desserts, breakfast, and gift cards. Sign-up sheets are shared before the event.

Peace Picnic

Families bring a picnic dinner and meet on campus to celebrate the school year, and honor our school as an International Peace Site. The Parent Alliance provides activities, organized games and more.

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Frequently Asked Questions

How will I receive school communications?
Parent communication may come from a variety of sources including the weekly Brickton Bulletin, emails from the office, and classroom blogs. We also maintain a social media presence on Facebook and Instagram.

What is the best way to contact my child's teacher?
All teachers are available to communicate with families outside of class. Our staff maintain email addresses and check them regularly. Pre-arranged appointments are preferred for more specific and individualized needs. For urgent needs, please call the office.

How can I acces Veracross and the Brickton website?
The school calendar, important forms, program information and the family directory may be found on your Veracross account - accounts.veracross.com/bricktonmontessori and on our website brickton.org.

How will I know if the school is canceled due to inclement weather?
School closings will be announced via emails. Brickton is also listed on the Emergency School Closing website (www.emergencyclosingcenter.com/ecc).

What is an In-School Celebration?
In-School celebrations are short assemblies/presentations, hosted by Brickton classrooms. These assemblies take inspiration from our yearly themes. Families are welcome to attend. At the conclusion of the celebration, students return to class and continue their school day.

What is a Club Day?

Club Days are non-academic days when Brickton offers care for registered students. Non-academic days include holidays, spring break, parent conferences and record days. On these days, students participate in a variety of indoor and outdoor recreational activities. Full-day students are automatically enrolled for Club Days at no additional cost. All other students may register at an additional cost of $25 for half day or $50 for full day for Children's House and Elementary students, or $35 for half day or $60 for full day for the 0-3 program.

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Frequently Asked Questions

How often is Brickton Montessori closed?
We try to balance the needs with what is best for our families and students. Brickton is closed on Labor Day, Staff Inservice Days, Thanksgiving (Thursday/Friday), Winter Break (2 weeks), Presidents Day, and Memorial Day.

What extracurricular activities does Brickton offer?
We offer three sessions (fall, winter, spring) of rotating after school extracurricular activities. Sessions sometimes include dance, chess, sport, art, book clubs etc. For more information, please contact D'Arcy Mies.

What does it mean that Brickton is a nut-free school?
No peanuts, nuts or other products containing nuts of any kind may be brought into the school to protect our students with severe food allergies. Many families have found that soy butter and sunflower butter are tasty peanut butter alternatives. Thank you for reading the labels!

What is a pizza/hot dog day?
Approximately twice per month on Fridays, the Upper Elementary students coordinate special lunches as a fundraiser to support overnight class field trips. Students who wish to participate must be pre-registered. To sign-up or make modifications to your order, please check with the front office.

How can I contact another family for a playdate, birthday party etc.?
There is a link to "Student Directory" on Veracross. This list contains each family's information for those that have consented permission for the information to be shared.

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Fundraising Opportunities

What are the expectations?
As a private school, tuition can only go so far. It is imperative that each Brickton family participates and contributes to our fundraising at whatever level they find comfortable.

Major Fundraising Initiatives

The Annual Fund
This is our annual campaign for monetary donations, with the goal of 100% participation from all families. The campaign goes live in the Fall, with promotional emphasis on Giving Tuesday (following Thanksgiving). All donations are appreciated, and are tax deductible as a charitable contribution.

“The Big Leap” Annual Benefit
At this adult (and alumni) - only event, we celebrate our extraordinary Brickton community. There are many ways to participate in this exciting fundraiser, from raffles to online and live auctions. Our community puts on their party clothes and enjoys a night out with food, drinks, and dancing while building connections.

What additional fundraisers are available for easy participation?

In-person Fundraisers - Offerings include a Brickton 5k Walk/Run, Scholastic Book Fairs, student-led bake sales, and more.

Meal of the Month - Restaurants give a percentage of daily sales to Brickton. Families can dine out/order in while supporting a local business and our school!

Gift cards - With RaiseRight, you can buy digital or physical gift cards from hundreds of popular retailers—like Target, Starbucks, Amazon, and more—and a portion of every purchase comes right back to our school. Whether you’re stocking up on essentials or picking out gifts, those cards can help fund Brickton’s programs at no extra cost to you.