

To Whom it may concern,

During the time Shannon (Christy) Barrett spent with us in a mixed age K-2 Montessori classroom at the Olympia Regional Learning Academy. She observed and shadowed the teacher working with students to build foundational skills in reading, such as phonemic awareness and phonics. She helped assess students' reading levels and helped them with guided reading under the teacher's guidance and supervision. She also helped the team of parent volunteers keep progress notes for letter names and sounds for each student. Christy asked important questions which helped her understand the Montessori Method and the different ways to introduce the lessons. Since we are a public Montessori school, Christy learned a great deal about how we align our teaching of Montessori lessons with Common Core Standards.

After the teacher introduced a lesson, Christy was invited to complete it. The teacher observed her teaching the lessons and gave her feedback. Christy wrote notes, asked great questions, and had conversations with students about academic topics and about their lives. It is so important for a teacher to get to know their students and show them authentic interest in their world. She listened to them while showing them how much she respected them. They adored her. During the work cycle, teachers walk around the classroom, helping students individually with their work. Christy rotated around conferencing with the students. When she wasn't sure about something, she requested assistance from the teacher, paraprofessional, volunteers, or our second-graders. In a Montessori classroom, we have the second-graders mentor kinder, first-graders and any adults that come volunteer with us. Christy has worked with students that need a little extra help, and she has done an amazing job working one-on-one. She is very flexible, accessible, and loved by all the students in this classroom.

Christy consistently observed and applied new ways of learning to the k-2 group following the Montessori-public school approach. Christy was respectful and efficient in beginning to lead a lesson. She led 3 lessons, and guided the children with patience and showed a lot of care, compassion, and empathy towards the children. Christy learned to appreciate the art of observing students and not offer them help when they don't need it. Helping them to become independent learners. She possesses great teaching qualities.

I appreciated very much that Christy didn't impose her way of dealing with social emotional learning but rather observed and shared ideas and concerns with the teacher, paraprofessional, other teachers, and parent volunteers. She helped the students follow the routines of the classroom and assisted them in finding work when they were off-task, always making sure that they had a choice, which is an important Montessori principle. Christy also guided students to complete challenging work when she noticed that they were not choosing meaningful assignments. If she encountered a difficult behavioral situation, she made sure to let us know and remained calm and interested in learning how to deal with it. She has an amazing ability to work as a team player and is very understanding and respectful of other methods and ideas. She is also very easy to talk, respectful, and interested in learning about people of different cultures. She collaborated with teachers and paraeducators that speak English as a second or third language, showing respect, consideration and professionalism.

In our classroom, we serve children of varied socio-economic backgrounds, children that speak two or three languages, and students that have families that come from other areas in the world. We encourage our students to be themselves fully. Some students identify as a different gender than that assigned at birth or are trying to understand who they are. Christy recognizes and appreciates neurodiversity and tends to students' unique needs. Christy has an ability to accept and protect these very amazing children. She is trusted by our students and her gentle approach is appreciated.

Christy is very curious, and she is always ready to do the work that is required to learn something well. Christy is an amazing human being and an excellent educator.

Thank you,  
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