

Alumni Spotlight:

Brooke James



We caught up with alumna Brooke James (UE 2001) this summer and wanted to share snippets from our conversation. Our thanks to Brooke for her work as an Alum Rep for our school, and for spending some time with us.

TMS: What have you been up to since graduating from Upper Elementary here at The Montessori School?

Brooke: After Montessori I went to Weston Middle and High Schools. I graduated from The George Washington University with a degree in Economics. Going to school in DC, I was able to take advantage of the city and interned in marketing, licensing, and government affairs. I went on to a financial services firm where I ended up managing communications and executive stakeholders for a technology group. Now I am living in New York City where I am consulting

at EY (Ernst & Young) doing Mergers and Acquisitions.

As far as life goes, I enjoy spending time with family and friends, trying out new restaurants, cooking at home, reading, going to museums and travelling. I have been fortunate enough to do a lot of travelling in my life, and that is something that I put great importance on. Being able to travel and see other cultures—whether domestically, internationally or exploring in your own city—is so important because it opens your eyes and changes your perspective.

How do you feel the various stages of your education (Montessori and otherwise) informed the personal and professional goals you set for yourself?

I think that Montessori shaped my personality on so many levels. At a young age we were taught to be reliant on ourselves in a way that I don't think is taught in a conventional educational environment. This sense of independence and purpose helped me to interact with and feel comfortable with adults. Additionally, when faced with a problem, Montessori taught me to solve it in a collaborative way, to look at things from multiple perspectives and not to give up.

Another thing that Montessori stressed was completion of a task. While it may seem silly looking in to see a 4 year old rolling up a rug, or pouring water into a cup, these activities teach the importance of getting things completed during each stage of the task [and that] is something that is really valuable.

I really see the benefit of this in

both my personal and professional life. Currently I'm a consultant at EY where we need to work with a wide variety of people and think on our feet. I need to be able to delegate to our interns as well as brief a C-level executive, and I'm comfortable collaborating with both of those groups. This is something that I have Montessori to thank for.

What are things you are most grateful for?

My family and friends. I feel so lucky to come from such a big family that I'm so close with and on top of that to have so many good friends! I know it sounds cliché but I would say that clichés are cliché for a reason.

What are your fondest memories from your time at The Montessori School?

I used to love to play in the woods. Three qualities that stemmed from my time at Montessori are a sense of independence, curiosity and imagination. I remember loving recess and that we had the freedom to go outside and play in the woods behind the school, we would build forts and go on adventures! I was so perplexed moving to public school and not being trusted enough by teachers to go play in the woods, we had to stay on the field or the playground—which didn't really lend itself to building a fort. Playing in the woods during recess definitely ties in to why I love to travel, have a sense of adventure and am curious about the world. I so appreciate that I spent my formative years in a Montessori environment.