

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS School Year 2012-2013

1. What is Community Montessori Charter School (CMCS)?

As Montgomery County's first charter school, Community Montessori Charter School combines Montessori educational practice, Crossway Community's acclaimed model of intergenerational development, and public school access. Now authorized by the State of Maryland and the Montgomery County Board of Education, planning is underway to open in August 2012 with classrooms of three and four-year-olds, CMCS will grow over the next few years to serve up to 180 students between the ages of three and nine. *(This is not a conversion of the existing Montessori programs at Crossway Community but a new and separate entity.)*

2. What is the relationship between CMCS and Crossway Community and Montgomery County Public Schools?

Crossway Community is the sponsoring organization of Community Montessori Charter School. CMCS is one of several Montessori programs managed by Crossway, some of which are tuition-based. As a public charter school, CMCS functions as a separate entity, accountable to the Montgomery County Board of Education and the State of Maryland, without tuition and/or admission fees. CMCS benefits from the outreach, adult education, and wrap-around services already in place at Crossway, but there is no formal connection between Crossway's tuition-based programs and CMCS. Current Crossway students are not given preference in the lottery.

3. Who is eligible to attend CMCS?

Any Montgomery County resident who will be three (3) or four (4) years old by September 1, 2012 is eligible to participate in the lottery.

4. Why is CMCS starting with three-year-olds?

Montessori education is a developmental approach to teaching and learning that serves children from birth to adulthood. As a Montessori school, we regard the years from birth to age six as a critical period of development, one that can be optimally supported in a highly enriched learning environment that features mixed age grouping. Montessori classrooms are typically organized to include three age levels: birth-3, 3-6, 6-9, 9-12, and so on.* Students remain with their community for three years and benefit intellectually, socially, and emotionally from being both the youngest and the oldest in the class. Likewise, children benefit most when they enter the community at the beginning of a three-year cycle. Therefore, CMCS begins at age three (3).

5. Will siblings of current CMCS students be given preference in the lottery?

In future years, younger siblings of currently enrolled CMCS (as distinct from other Crossway Montessori Programs) students will be given preference. For the upcoming lottery, four-year-old seats will be drawn first, and any three-year-old or same-age sibling whose older sibling has already been drawn will be given preference. All children must submit separate applications.

6. How can I participate in the lottery?

CMCS will open with 70 students ages three (3) and (4). All eligible students who submit applications by **Thursday, March 1, 2012** will be entered into a random lottery. Applications

* The first three years are further subdivided into Infant and Toddler communities.

are currently available at Crossway Community, Inc, and on the web at www.crossway-community.org. Completed applications are due by **Thursday, March 1, 2012** and must be returned via mail, fax, or hand-delivery by 3:00 PM to CMCS, 3015 Upton Drive, Kensington, MD 20895.

7. What factors are considered in the lottery?

We anticipate opening approximately 28 seats for three-year-olds and 42 seats for four-year-olds. In addition to preference for younger (or same-age) siblings, CMCS gives preference to children of CMCS Staff and Founders' children. All other assignments are made by random lottery.

8. How can I learn more about CMCS? When are the Open Houses and information meetings for the program?

Visit the CMCS website for a more complete description of the Montessori program, the school's relationship to Crossway Community, as well as updates on the planning process currently underway. The Schedule of Information Sessions for this year is:

January 26, 2012 – at Crossway Community, at 5:30 PM

February 10 & 11, 2012 – at Westfield Mall, from noon to 4:00 PM

February 28, 2012 – at Crossway Community, at 5:30 PM

CMCS staff will be available at all events to answer questions about program features, the application process, and student eligibility.

9. When will I be notified of lottery results for the 2012-2013 school year?

Students who participate in the lottery process will receive notification by March 30, 2012. All applicants will be randomly assigned a number, which will serve as their lottery number. Invited students will have one (1) week to accept the seat and must attend a mandatory orientation session in early April, 2012. If a student is invited and declines, a seat will open up and a student will be drawn from the waiting list in the order of his or her assigned number. The waiting list will remain active through January, 2013, at which time all lists will be purged in preparation for the next year's lottery process.