



Progressive Education in Action for over 75 Years

In 1934, Alice Mendham Powell founded Green Acres, a school based on the ground-breaking ideas of John Dewey and other educational reformers of the time. She believed that children are naturally curious about their world and that they learn best in an informal, flexible environment. Working with a group of parents and teachers, she created a school setting that balanced children’s social, emotional, physical, and creative development in an atmosphere of intellectual rigor. They created an environment with a low student-teacher ratio and an ethnically, racially, and economically diverse student body. Their primary goal was to help children to “learn to think and be creative in their thinking.”

Over seventy-five years later, we celebrate more than our longevity. We celebrate a philosophy which guides our school today through:

- **A child development orientation** - Curriculum on all levels is structured to facilitate the ways that students learn best at each age and stage from PK – Grade 8.
- **Integrated curriculum** - Meaningful connections are established among diverse subject areas, i.e. themes studied in Social Studies are often linked to Science, the Arts, Athletics, and Technology.
- **Focus on the whole child** –We care about how children grow in all areas, not only academically, but also socially, emotionally, physically, and creatively.
- **Active, hands-on learning** - Students are actively involved in their own learning. Rather than passively receiving information from a teacher, they gain knowledge and strong skills by exploring, solving problems, and sharing ideas with others. In an academically challenging environment, students become critical thinkers and understand how knowledge and skills are useful in their lives.

- **Environmental Stewardship** – Students learn both in the classroom and outside, whether on our campus or on trips away from campus
- **Cultivation of a lifelong love of learning** - Students engage in a rich variety of inviting and challenging materials, experiences, and ideas, and observe intellectually engaged teachers and parents, to develop a love of knowledge that lasts them through school and their lives.
- **Respect and Caring** - A knowledgeable and caring staff relates to students as respected, valued, and unique individuals. Children are seen as contributing individuals, not as blank slates. They are encouraged to know and accept themselves and others and to become increasingly confident members of the community.
- **Cooperative learning** - Students are guided to recognize and value the strengths and needs of others. They learn to develop the skills necessary for working effectively with others (in one-on-one and in group situations) and for contributing productively to the groups of which they are a part.
- **Social responsibility** - Students are involved regularly in projects stressing service learning and the protection of our natural environment, both at Green Acres and beyond.
- **Inclusivity and Diversity** – Green Acres from its inception was the first racially integrated school in Montgomery County. Teachers and students work collaboratively to create a safe learning environment that fosters a sense of self and belonging where trust and mutual respect are valued. The social curriculum strongly emphasizes inclusion, give-and-take, cooperation, and conflict resolution, thereby nurturing a sense of community.
- **Partnership in learning** - School staff and parents work together to meet the needs of students and to enrich the school community