



The Clariden School

Southlake, TX

www.claridenschool.org

2011-2012 School Year
Professional Opportunity
for

Head of School

The Clariden School, a coeducational, independent day school which has an enrollment of almost 200 students in pre-kindergarten through grade twelve, seeks a Head of School whose responsibilities will begin with the 2011-2012 school year. Located in Dallas/Fort Worth's fast growing residential community of Southlake, the school is accredited by the Texas Alliance of Accredited Private Schools (TAAPS) and the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI).

Mission Statement

The mission of The Clariden School is to help children to become respectful, compassionate, and contributing members of society by providing a strong academic, personal, and social learning environment.

History and Overview

Established in 1986, Clariden began as a pre-kindergarten through grade six AMI Montessori school. Its founder, Faye Williams, had been unsuccessful in finding a program with the quality and offerings she sought for her children. Taking matters into her own hands, she enrolled in AMI training, became AMI certified, and started her own school. The name "Clariden" was chosen to reflect the spirit of the school through its kinship with the word "clarify," meaning to light or illuminate one's path. The school was fortunate in 1993 to move to a renovated church building, which served the school well until its enrollment and programs expanded and additional facilities were required. In 2001, the school moved to its current location, a 23-acre campus in the Clariden Ranch development of Southlake. With this campus

expansion, space was available to honor the wishes of enthusiastic parents and students who wanted the option of Middle and High School programs at Clariden. Clariden entered another phase of its development in 2005 when it became a nonprofit, 501.C(3) organization, governed by an independent Board of Directors.

Today, in an environment characterized by excellence, Clariden provides its students an atmosphere in which each can develop into the unique individual he or she is meant to be. The Casa program is a half-day program for children three through five years old. Full-day programs begin with the Primary Division for children ages five and six. Lower Elementary includes ages six through nine, and Upper Elementary serves students ages nine through twelve. The Middle and Upper divisions provide a more traditional educational setting, where textbooks, schedules and an Upper School college preparatory program are in place for grades seven through twelve. Clariden remains true to its Montessori principles at all age levels and encourages students to be enthusiastic, active, life-long learners.



The Campus

Acreage for the new campus was the generous and anonymous gift of a Clariden family. Immediately upon receiving the gift, careful planning for facilities in a multi-phase master plan began. Central to campus development were an interest in innovation, a need for community, and adequate room to grow. Phase I, completed in 2003 at a cost of \$6 million, has provided the current facilities: a five-building complex with a Lower School, an Upper School building for grades seven through twelve, a Fine Arts building, a multipurpose gymnasium, and an administration building. The campus also includes a number of playing fields and outdoor recreation spaces.

In the school's original planning, the current classroom and administration buildings were designed specifically so that in later phases, they could accommodate increases in enrollment and be flexible in their usage. Once completed, the full master plan will provide additional classroom spaces, a separate high school building, and an auditorium. It will provide facilities to support a student body in excess of 500 students.

The Southlake Community

The Clariden campus is located in Southlake's newly developed residential community of Clariden Ranch. Surrounded by beautiful homes and across from a city park, the campus enjoys a setting that is tranquil and appealing. Southlake is an area of North Texas that boasts dynamic growth, easy accessibility to the urban amenities of the Metroplex, and a climate with winter lows averaging in the mid-30s and summer highs in the mid-to-high 90s. The area provides year-round outdoor living and recreational opportunities.



The city of Southlake, with its 22 square miles and population of 25,700, is consistently ranked one of the top places to live in the southwest. The median income is \$140,000, and the median home value is \$450,000. Southlake is well located; it is five miles west of D/FW International Airport, the third busiest airport in the world. Home to American Airlines, D/FW Airport generates more than \$11 billion annually for the North Texas economy and provides over 200,000 jobs. Other top area employers include Sabre Holdings and Verizon Wireless. Southlake has become a very attractive residential option for these and other professionals, including a number of the Metroplex's professional athletes.

School Philosophy and Program

Clariden's philosophy is grounded in the belief that all children are eager and capable learners and that a quality education recognizes their curiosity and desire to orient themselves to their world. By enlisting the students, with all their interests and skills, in their own education, not only do they learn more, but most importantly, they experience and grow to value the joy of learning.

Using the Montessori method as the foundation of its Lower School, Clariden emphasizes the learning of basic skills: reading, writing, mathematics, science, and cultural subjects. The program is developed to make children aware of the world around them and to enable them to function effectively within it. While Clariden incorporates numerous learning activities, at its core is the belief that students at all levels should take an active part in the learning process. Children are encouraged to challenge themselves, often taking on tasks far beyond traditional expectations. The mixed-age groups allow students to reach ahead and strengthen their confidence on the basis of individual achievement. They are aware that they are responsible for work at least comparable to their grade/age equivalent, and they constantly strive not only to achieve, but to surpass expectations.





The Casa Program provides children ages three to five the environment and encouragement to help them help themselves through a variety of materials and learning skills. In addition to the important focus on language development, Casa involves the children in Practical Life, exercises specific to the world in which they live. In the Sensorial area the children develop their awareness of the world. Students also begin work in understanding numbers and quantity. They build not only their academic base but also their ability to think and reason.

The Primary Program works with, and is an extension of, the Casa Program. Through age six, children continue collecting facts in all areas of studies. The Primary student works with the phonetic alphabet, developing both reading ability and a love for and fascination with the written word. Work on the four mathematical operations, geography, and the biological sciences is accompanied by exploration of the arts.

The Elementary Program, for children ages six through twelve, presents a variety of subject areas in an integrated curriculum. Students learn to apply information and become increasingly aware of relationships and connections in the world around them. Among the subjects in their curriculum are oral and written communication, grammar, classic literature, fractions, decimals, algebraic expressions and the squaring and cubing polynomials, geography, history and current events, geology, biology, computers, and research skills. The elementary students gain a strong academic foundation, a respect for knowledge and the ability to ask intelligent questions, and an awareness of their role in community life.

The Middle School and High School offer students in grades seven through twelve a college-preparatory curriculum that focuses on the individual student's cognitive, physical and emotional development. Instruction uses creative approaches in the construction

and understanding of knowledge within the traditional subjects: English, mathematics, social studies, science, and foreign language. Additional areas of focus include time management, organizational skills, relationships, and personal and social issues as they relate to the larger historical and social perspective. Students are given the opportunity to explore and practice responsible citizenship and to become contributing members of the community by participating in community service. A recent addition to the program is an international travel experience, which further extends Clariden's commitment to a global outlook.

The academic year for Middle and Upper Schools is organized around a semester calendar. The eight-hour academic day consists of seven 50-minute periods and is followed by sports and clubs.

The Students

Of Clariden's close to 200 students, most are enrolled in pre-kindergarten through grade six; only 15% are in the Middle and High Schools. Students come from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds, a fact that is a valued and important element in the school's identity. Although Southlake is blessed with quite strong public and other private schools, Clariden stands out because of the strong community atmosphere and the outstanding faculty. Students are attracted by these extraordinary individuals: men and women who are devoted to their students and who pour their expertise and energy into Clariden's top priority of developing strong, independent learners. As one of the older students noted, "Teachers really care about you and your learning. At Clariden, you can be yourself. While there are standards and expectations, your individuality is respected and enjoyed. Classes are small, and learning is lots of fun. And we get into great colleges like Texas Christian University, North Texas, Texas Tech, and Baylor."





In spite of a deep appreciation for the Clariden experience, attrition is a continuing challenge, particularly after grade six. Students, parents, faculty, and Board members consistently express their interest in growing the school, especially in the upper grades, where more extensive academic and extracurricular offerings are important to attracting and retaining students.

The Faculty

The Clariden School has just over 30 full- and part-time faculty. All lead teachers at the Primary through Upper Elementary levels are required to be AMI trained. Each classroom has a lead teacher and assistant. Middle and High School teachers are recognized for their knowledge of subject matter and their commitment to working with students at those grade levels. Teachers in Middle and High School teach five periods a day with two periods devoted to planning and individual work with students.

The administrative team is led by David Deuel, the current Head of School. Appointed in 2006, David will continue as Head through the 2010-2011 school year. Additional members of the administration include the Business Manager/Development and Marketing Director, Lower and Upper School coordinators who also have teaching responsibilities, a Receptionist/Administrative Assistant, and a Director of Facilities. Not unlike most independent schools, Clariden faculty and administration wear many hats: teaching, sponsoring special activities, planning school events, and working with students in areas such as student government. The admissions process is another area of shared responsibility; both Head of School and teachers at the applicants' age levels take part in the interview and evaluation process.

Clariden faculty members are described by parents and students as "energetic, dedicated, hard working, creative, and unselfish." Teachers take a personal interest in each student and engage in frequent communication with parents. Their high level of accessibility to students is noteworthy.

The Parents

"Magical" is one of the words parents have used to describe The Clariden School. It is clear that parents appreciate:

- The teachers' regard for and relationship with each child as an individual
- The community's belief that the children can do or be anything
- Its ability to develop a sense of self-worth in the child in a way that unleashes his or her passion and ignites both the desire to learn and the love of learning
- The strong sense of community at the school

Clariden's parental enthusiasm and support is channeled to and through the Clariden Parent Organization (CPO) which meets monthly. In addition to volunteerism, a major CPO activity is the Annual Dinner Auction. Held in the fall, this year's event netted approximately \$130,000 and funded a new sound system for the gymnasium, resources for teacher education/professional development, financial aid, and items on classroom wish lists.

While contributions to the Annual Fund bring in approximately \$20,000, the school has yet to develop a mature giving. For many families, Clariden is their first experience in an independent school, and they are unaware of the need for non-tuition revenues.

The Faculty-Parent Council is a new committee established at the school this year. It includes representation from all divisions and the Head of School. There is great enthusiasm for its work as it addresses ways to improve communications between various constituencies at the school and to further communication between Lower and Upper Schools.





Governance

The Clariden School is governed by an eight-member Board of Directors, composed primarily of Clariden parents. The Board presently has a set of six working committees that have been chartered to drive strategically important initiatives: Finance, Advancement, Education, Faculty-Parent, Governance, and Search. Since the school was granted nonprofit status in 2005, Board members have been busy with organizational issues, transitioning the school from a family-owned to an independent school, addressing by-laws, developing its structure and committee organization, implementing long-term financial plans, and formalizing a strategic vision for the school.

Finances

Like most independent schools, Clariden's tuition alone does not cover the financial costs of the school. The operating budget for the 2009-2010 school year is approximately \$2.4 million; of this, 75% is funded by tuition. Tuitions range from \$6,900 for the half-day Casa Program to \$10,700 for Middle and High Schools. Annual giving and major donations to the school bridge the gap between tuition and expenses. To date, Clariden donors have been extremely generous. The need, however, to pay off building debt and bring revenue and expenses into greater balance is one of the financial issues which Clariden is currently addressing. The school has no significant endowment.



Clariden Looks Toward its Future

Clariden has undergone significant changes during its 15-year history: from being a family-owned and run organization to receiving official 501.C(3) status as a nonprofit independent school; from an overflowing renovated church building to a spacious new complex with room to grow on its own 23-acre campus; from its original Montessori program for young children to a school offering pre-k through grade 12.

While many important steps have been taken in the last few years, much is yet to be done. The Clariden community understands the need to:

- Attract, hire, and retain outstanding faculty and staff and assure their understanding of the Montessori philosophy
- Heighten public awareness of the school, its programs and distinctiveness – create “a buzz” about Clariden in the community and region
- Increase enrollment and retention of students
- Define a college preparatory Upper School in a Montessori-based environment.
- Enhance a school-wide sense of community, particularly between Lower and Middle School divisions
- Plan for and manage change during this time of economic challenges and in a community ready for expansion and new programs

There is among all constituencies great enthusiasm for the school and excitement about its possibilities.

“One of the things I really like to do at Clariden is going down to Lower School and working with my ‘reading buddy.’ You can tell that he looks forward to my coming, which makes me feel good, and when I see him at other times, he give me a big smile and a wave. He’s neat.”

Upper School Student

Requirements for the New Head of School

Clariden seeks a new leader who will guide the community in developing its greater vision for the school. The Head of School must bring strong academic and educational leadership credentials. While Montessori training is not an absolute requirement, the person must be knowledgeable and supportive of the Montessori philosophy. If the individual is not AMI trained, he or she will be expected to use professional development opportunities to increase his or her knowledge of AMI.

In identifying the next Head of School, Clariden has defined the following essential qualities for its next leaders:

- The ability to further the school's mission and continue to develop its educational programs
- An ability to clarify and articulate the school's vision and strategize its implementation
- An understanding of successful admissions strategies, the leadership to implement them, and the personality to attract new families and faculty to Clariden
- Experience as a classroom teacher and as an administrator who understands and is committed to independent school education
- A passion for working with children
- Effectiveness as spokesperson and advocate for Clariden
- Strong communication skills and the ability to use them with all constituencies, from large-gift donors to three-year-olds
- Excellent people and interpersonal skills
- A collaborative leadership style and a "roll up your sleeves" approach to school needs
- A strong, charismatic personality to which others are drawn
- A demonstrated appreciation for diversity
- Financial astuteness and strong managerial skills
- Development and fundraising savvy

Application

Interested candidates are encouraged to contact The Education Group for further information about Clariden's Head of School position. Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience; the benefits package is generous. While a specific deadline for application has not been assigned, credentials will be evaluated and interviews scheduled as materials are received. In order to receive full consideration, interested candidates should submit materials by August 20, 2010.

Application materials should include a cover letter expressing interest in the position, a résumé, a brief description of leadership style and educational philosophy, and a list of references with both telephone and email contacts. An extensive reference and background check will be conducted. Candidate inquiries and credentials should be submitted electronically to:

Mary E. Kesler
or
Allison Lorimer

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*Candidates of all races, religions, ethnic origins
and gender are encouraged to apply.*

