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## **Debra Dance Schmid Named New Head of School**

FISHERSVILLE, VA — Stanton Montessori School (SMS) is proud to announce that Debra Dance Schmid has been named the new Head of School.

Schmid, a resident of Staunton, is currently a member of the administrative team at SMS. She will be replacing Kelley Flanders, who is transitioning at the end of this school year to become Head of School at Rochester Montessori in Minnesota.

Ms. Schmid holds over 20 years educational experience as a classroom teacher and administrator. She earned a BS from UVA's McIntire School of Commerce and Pre-Primary certification from the Virginia Center for Montessori Teacher Education. She previously worked as the Lower School Services Administrator and Director of Auxiliary Programs at Stuart Hall School.

From teaching children and adults in Richmond for a decade to working on education administration teams for another decade in the Staunton area, she is delighted to come full circle by stepping into the role of Head of School for Stanton Montessori. She is open to exploring new ways to creatively express herself and share her gifts with children of all ages.

Amber Benson, Treasurer of SMS and member of the Admin Search Committee commented, "We are delighted to have found such a wonderful fit as our next Head of School and are excited to follow her lead toward the next 40 years at SMS."

Kelley Flanders' vast knowledge and experience in management, fundraising, and marketing has been an asset in leading SMS during the past 12 years of growth in the school. When asked about her transition, Ms. Flanders stated, "Stewardship. It is about caring, compassion, respect, and a sense of responsibility. It is about those values that we hold to be core at SMS, and when I look around at this community of adults and their commitment to the children and the responsibilities they take up each day, I am in awe. While I know that the time is right for me

to step away and take on new challenges and adventures, I am confident that SMS will continue to thrive and flourish under Debra's leadership.”

Ms. Schmid will begin her new role as Head of School in May 2021.

### **About Staunton Montessori School**

Staunton Montessori School, founded in 1980, provides primary, elementary, and adolescent Montessori education for our community. Our teachers are AMI-trained. Operating as a non-profit entity with oversight by a Board of Trustees, the school is also licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services.

Staunton Montessori School respects the mind, imagination, and spirit of each student. Grounded in the philosophy of Maria Montessori, we create an environment where children are empowered to fulfill their academic, personal and social potential.

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