What is the Most Important Thing that Children Get from Montessori?

The Montessori approach is often described as an "education for life." When we try to define what children take away from their years in Montessori, we need to expand our vision to include more than just the basic academic skills.

Montessori schools work to develop culturally literate children and nurture their fragile sparks of curiosity, creativity, and intelligence. They have a very different set of priorities from traditional schools, and a very low regard for mindless memorization and superficial learning.

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that there was more to life than simply the pursuit of wealth and power. To her, finding one's place in the world, work that is meaningful and fulfilling, and developing the inner peace and depth of soul that allows us to love are the most important goals in life.

Helen Keller, inspired by Montessori, wrote:

"I believe that every child has hidden away somewhere in his being noble capacities which may be quickened and developed if we go about it in the right way, but we shall never properly develop the higher nature of our little ones while we continue to fill their minds with the so-called basics. Mathematics will never make them loving, nor will accurate knowledge of the size and shape of the world help them to appreciate its beauties. Let us lead them during the first years to find their greatest pleasure in nature. Let them run in the fields, learn about animals, and observe real things. Children will educate themselves under the right conditions. They require guidance and sympathy far more than instruction."

Montessori schools give children the sense of belonging to a family and help them learn how to live with other human beings.

Montessori schools are different, but it isn't just because of the materials that are used in the classrooms. Look beyond the pink towers and golden beads, and you'll discover that the classroom is a place where children really want to be - because it feels a lot like home.