



What would you include in the house of your dreams?

## Description

In Writer's Workshop, New School Montessori 2nd graders began their project with great anticipation, as their teacher, Catherine Pray Bollmann began class by setting a wrapped present in the middle of their circle. "What's the present about?" "Is it somebody's birthday?" Catherine answered saying, "The present in front of us is a noun. It's an object. Let's describe this object with adjectives."

Students rattled off adjectives, peppering the room with sentences like "It's rectangular in shape." "It's wrapped in pretty paper!" "It's kind of heavy." Once opened and the contents revealed, students were overjoyed to see that an air popper and popcorn would indeed be part of their lesson. Catherine explained that good writing requires use of all of one's senses. Each student writer then wrote down words describing the sounds, tastes, smells and the look of the popcorn – and the way it felt as they touched it. All of this to awaken their senses and to keep those descriptive adjectives flowing.

Now that students were warmed up, the several-day project put before them was to describe what their dream house would look like. To imagine its rooms, floors and features both inside and out. They began by brainstorming, writing down 8 different aspects of this house that would reflect their personality. From there, students started their expository description of their house in their first draft. They were encouraged to go "back to the drawing board" as they revisited their draft descriptions, making their final changes. Once completed, students worked on a visual rendering of their house so that others could more fully see their vision of their dream house.

Pictured here, this student shows her house plans, complete with a 4th-floor water slide, backyard in-ground pool and a cave with a window into the pool. Above ground, the backyard has 4 pink trampolines. Ruth ends her expository writing project asking..."What would you include in the house of your dreams?"

This exercise will long be remembered as these students (throughout their lives) call upon all of their senses to make their vision and dreams known.



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