



James Simons Montessori School

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Media Release

Talon Tuesdays and the Year of Flight: experiential learning for James Simons students

Charleston, SC - Experiential learning is a cornerstone of the work that takes place in Montessori schools. This year at James Simons Montessori School, the staff is partnering with the Avian Conservation Center (also known as [the Birds of Prey](#)).

The theme for the school this year is "The Year of Flight," which is anchored in the first graders' study of birds. The school's teacher-librarian Rosie Herold started the partnership with the Birds of Prey (BOP). She created the idea of Talon Tuesdays where on a monthly basis, classes would either receive a school visit from BOP or take an off-campus trip to their center in Awendaw on a Tuesday. Leading up to these visits, students engage in developmentally appropriate lessons and independent practice on birds. Taking bird walks, creating prosthetic body parts with a 3D printer, an egg drop engineering challenge that protects an egg, and engaging in research are just a few of the activities that have fueled the schools "Year of Flight."

"I am passionate about breaking down school walls to incorporate real world connections," said Herold. "Partnering with Birds of Prey has allowed children to make so many links from the curriculum to the interconnectedness of birds and humans in the natural world. My hope is that the students will find purpose at school, develop their voice, embrace new knowledge, discover talents, all the while becoming citizen scientists...and hopefully future ornithologists!"

James Simons students and staff are grateful for this opportunity that extends beyond classroom walls and helps all students soar during "the Year of Flight."

Having a school-wide focus that anchors to classroom learning has been a long-standing tradition at James Simons. Each year, the school's leadership team decides on a theme and mission. Last year, the theme was water equity which was based on the seventh grade anchor text *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park. Students at James Simons studied water equity and students and their families participated in Water Mission's Walk for Water, raising funding and awareness for those in need.

For more information, please contact Principal Elizabeth Dillenkoffer at 843-724-7763 or the school's publicity representative, Jennifer Savage, at jennifer_savage@charleston.k12.sc.us.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 50,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military.