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**A NEW PRESCHOOL OPENS IN HISTORIC BUILDING
IN MID-MARKET AREA; GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION JANUARY 31ST**

San Francisco, January 5th, 2015. Walk up Fell Street this week, from Van Ness to Market Street, and you may be surprised to hear sounds of children playing. A new preschool opened today at 50 Fell Street, in a historically protected building that stood empty for over a decade.

The school, LePort Montessori San Francisco Mid-Market, offers programs for infants, toddlers and preschool/ kindergarten. It is the second Bay Area school for LePort Schools, a group of private Montessori schools based in Irvine. LePort operates 13 schools throughout California, and opened a Montessori elementary school in Emeryville in September 2014.



LePort first began to explore opening a school in San Francisco in February 2013. “We were approached by a local couple who had a young son, and who couldn’t find a preschool they liked that didn’t have a long waitlist,” explained Heike Larson, Vice President for Parent Outreach for LePort. The couple, Keith and Pari Schacht, are both education entrepreneurs: he’s the founder of [Mystery Science, offering elementary science lesson plans](#), and her company [Nurturing Wisdom offers tutoring throughout San Francisco](#). They volunteered to organize a get-together of parents,



to gauge the interest in a new Montessori school in San Francisco. Within months, LePort had raised investment capital for the fledgling school *and* had received tuition prepayments for three years from 15 parents, dubbed “parent pioneers” eager to bring the LePort program to the city. With this backing, a lease was signed for the property at 50 Fell Street in Fall 2013, and renovations began in February 2014.

“It’s been amazing to see our parent community come together. We already have 140 children enrolled to start school this month: our infant, toddler and Spanish immersion programs were filled before we even



opened,” said Larson. “It’s obvious that there is a huge pent-up demand for high quality childcare and preschool options in San Francisco, and we’re excited to meet this need.” The school offers much that attracts families: It has a beautiful, natural outdoor play area, which is hard to come by in urban settings, as well as a large indoor gross motor area and garden room. The AMI-Montessori trained head teachers lead a true, authentic Montessori program with family-like, mixed-age classroom communities, and long,

uninterrupted periods for child-led activities. The classrooms are bright and spacious, equipped with a full set of scientifically-designed Montessori materials, and are lovingly decorated with unique furniture, plants and cultural items. Four classrooms are run entirely in Spanish, offering a full immersion experience where children learn to understand, speak, write and read in Spanish.

"It seemed a bit crazy to some people that we helped open a new preschool for our son rather than waitlisting at an existing one or moving out of the city," admits Pari Schacht, "but we love living in the city and after touring every other preschool here, it was clear San Francisco needed a new high quality Montessori school. It was magical to visit the finished school and see this run-down building with an overgrown yard transformed into a beautiful learning environment for my child."



The school is holding a grand opening celebration on Saturday, January 31st, from 10 am to 1 pm. Parents and children are invited to explore the classrooms, common areas and play ground. Staff will be on hand to discuss the enrollment process: the school is now accepting applications for Summer/Fall 2015 for infants, toddlers and preschool/kindergarten, as well as for a few spots for three- and four-year-old children to start in February or March. For more information on the event and on the Mid-Market school, visit www.leportschools.com/san-francisco, or email sanfrancisco@leportschools.com.

LePort Schools, founded in 2000, is a group of private schools offering Montessori and upper school programs for children from infant through 8th grade at 13 campuses in California. For more information about the company, visit www.leportschools.com; for media inquiries, email info@leportschools.com.