

Inspiring a Healthy Spirit, a Strong Character, and a Clear Intellect



# BLUEBIRD BULLETIN

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**JOURNEY & DISCOVERY**  
"Follow the child."  
Saturday, Nov. 6  
Time: 8 AM-2 PM  
RSVP BY NOV. 5



## Opportunities to Learn How the Montessori Method is Working for Your Child

by MAURA JOYCE, HEAD OF SCHOOL

*"I don't need to teach anything to children: it is they who, placed in a favorable environment, teach me."—Maria Montessori*

For most parents, Montessori is vastly different from our own educational experience. So naturally, we have many questions. For some the questions are simple: "What is a metal inset? What do they do with a checkerboard?" For others the questions are more profound: "Where should my child go to school? Should they continue in Montessori as they reach the next step in their education?"

MIR and The Grove School invite you to join us for the semi-annual *Journey & Discovery* to help you answer these questions.

*(Continued on page 6)*

For those of us in the audience Thursday, October 21 for Dr. Steven Hughes's presentation, the case for Montessori education was clearly "open and shut." His short course on brain development, studies cited, and his personal experience all pointed to Montessori education as *the* choice for optimal learning and personal growth. But *you* have already made this choice, at least for now, right? You chose Montessori for your child, and you chose this school. But how do you know if the development that is supposed to be happening, is happening? How is this method working for *your* child?

November brings opportunities for you to learn more about how your child is doing at school. First and foremost, Parent-Teacher conferences at the end of the month provide an opportunity for you to sit down with the teachers to discuss your

child and how they are interacting in the class and progressing in their development. But if you really want to *experience, know, and understand* what your children are doing, make an appointment much earlier in the month.

Saturday, November 6, 8 AM to 2 PM, MIR and The Grove School host *Journey & Discovery*. This experience is unbeatable in gaining an understanding of the Montessori curriculum from Toddlers (18 months) through high school (18 years). As a participant, you will get to know your child's world by working with the materials, discovering the learning process in a Montessori classroom, and seeing the progression of materials and skill development.

The best part of this experience, though, is taking the time to relish the

*(Continued on page 6)*



## A little bird told me...PTM News and Notes

### Enjoy the Halloween Carnival Tonight!

The PTM hosts the Halloween Carnival tonight from 5 PM to 8 PM. Bring the entire family for a fun night of games, rides, and festivities and be sure to wear your costume for the costume parade! Admission is free. Dinner is available for \$5 per person and includes hot dog, chili, a baked potato, and a drink. Thank you to everyone who volunteered to make this event a success!

### Thank you for your support during the Innisbrook Giftwrap Drive

Thanks to your efforts, the Innisbrook drive raised \$5677.75. PTM receives 50% of the profits, money that gets reinvested in MIR to support events such as the Carnival as well as campus improvements. Remember, you can continue to order from Innisbrook any time during the school year to purchase wonderful items and support MIR. Shop online at [www.innisbrook.com](http://www.innisbrook.com). Our school code is 102074. Orders placed online will be shipped directly to your home. Thank you to all families who participated in this drive!

### Canned food drive planned for December

PTM will again be organizing a food drive for Redlands Family Services this holiday season. The food drive will run from December 6 to 17. To participate, bring non-perishable food to your child's classroom or the office during that time.

### MIR News

*Debit or Credit?* MIR can now take debit cards in addition to credit cards. This is new and the fees are much lower—1% as opposed to the 3% we must charge for credit cards.

### *Our New Running Track*

Many thanks to Dan Hudson (Sunny's dad) for his work on our new track and Elementary playground remodel. Dan gave MIR a generously discounted bid for the work, which was paid for by proceeds from the 2010 Gala. Dan put a curb around the sandbox, put in new sand, added climbing boulders to the play area, and installed the new running track around



**Bluebird, by Evan Hill (Jean and Maryhelen's class)**

the soccer field. Thanks, Dan, for your hard work and commitment to MIR!

*Dr. Steven Hughes video available for loan* If you missed last Thursday's fabulous presentation by Dr. Steven Hughes, MIR has a few copies of a professionally videotaped presentation he did at Bergamo Montessori School in Sacramento. It is the same talk and same slide presentation as he did at MIR (minus his charming real-life presence).

### PTM Family Skate Night is a Success!

Seventy-one people enjoyed a fun night at Cal Skate. A great time was had by all, and we enjoyed having the whole rink just for MIR. Our next family skate night will be held at the end of the year on June 6, 2011.

### Next PTM Meeting

Our next meeting will be held Wednesday, December 1 at 6 PM before the next Parent Education Night. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Come find out what is happening in our school and meet your PTM room representatives.

### Box Tops for Education

The first deadline of the year for submitting Box Tops just passed, but don't worry—we collect Box Tops all year. Keep bringing your clipped Box Top coupons to your classrooms or the office for collection. Thanks for your efforts!

### Bluebird Items on Sale

Need a new sweatshirt or long sleeved shirt for the cooler weather? Buy them online at [erschoolwear.com](http://erschoolwear.com) (select Montessori in Redlands from the drop-down menu). Share your Bluebird photos with us as well!



## Report from the Board

by KAREN OLIVER, BOARD MEMBER

### The Board Honors and Thanks Long-time MIR Staff

The Board is responsible for thinking about the long-term health of MIR. Most of the time, this means a focus on budget and facilities but we realized some time ago that we would be remiss **if we didn't also honor the wonderful staff and faculty** who have made MIR and our children a part of their lives. To accomplish this in a small but ongoing way, the Board established a Committee whose sole purpose is to honor and recognize staff for the outstanding job they do at MIR. The "Hospitality and Recognition" Committee provides the staff with holiday and seasonal gifts, food and/or treats on in-service days and Teacher Appreciation Day, as well as recognizing staff members for outstanding service.

In October, the Hospitality and Recognition began what they hope will be an annual tradition—the MIR Staff Recognition Party. Board member Trevor Norton kindly offered his home for this occasion. Twenty-five staff members were in attendance, along with seven MIR board members.

In addition to dinner and a raffle of fall-themed items, gifts were presented to 11 staff members having 15 or more years of MIR service. They are: Sara Garcia (15); Dorama Montoya (15); Liana McCall (17); Kim Montague (17); Ellen Camarillo (18); Jean Bonner-Drinkwine (18); Maryhelen Campa (18); Nikki Farooq (20); Jacq Chandler (21); Christine Povero (25); and Aedín Artigue (30).

We sincerely thank these staff for their dedication to the school and its students. We thank all the staff for their continuing work—they truly create the strong foundation on which MIR can build and grow.

As always, if you have questions on other Board matters, you are more than welcome to contact Leela MadhavaRau, our Board President.

[leela\\_madhavarau@redlands.edu](mailto:leela_madhavarau@redlands.edu)

(909) 748-8285 (work)



## Curriculum Matters

By PETER DAVIDSON,  
ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

*"Education is not something which the teacher does. It is a natural process which develops spontaneously."—Maria Montessori*

### The Discovery of Writing

Learning a new skill, especially one as comprehensive as writing, can be overwhelming as many of us remember from our own childhoods. An effective strategy is to break down the larger skill into its smaller components, which can each be more easily mastered as steps along the way.

Montessori uses this strategy in all areas of development, but none more effectively than in the acquisition of writing. A Montessori child is given myriad opportunities to gradually develop and exercise each of the smaller component skills, preparing for the day when he or she is ready to put it all together and "discover" how to write. Dr. Montessori divided these skills into two categories: preparation of the hand, and preparation of the mind.

From the earliest days in the Toddler or Primary classroom, each child is presented with activities that prepare the abilities of the hand both directly and indirectly. At the same time a child scrubs a table in a circular motion progressing from left to right and from the far side to the near, he is preparing his hand and arm for writing, which also proceeds from left to right and top to bottom. You may have noticed that most of the sensorial materials have knobs. When a child works with them, she is not only developing a discrimination of shape and dimension, but also

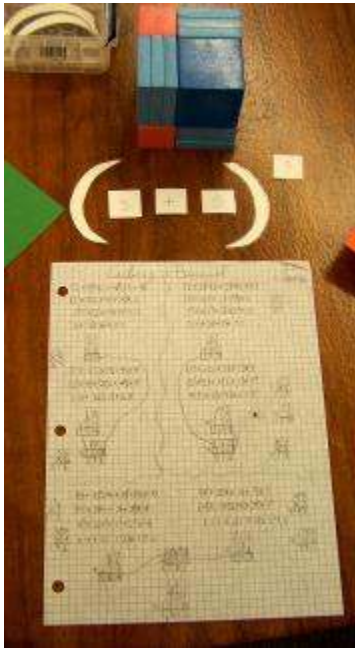
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# “Good at Doing Things” Parent Education Night Student Gallery

Upper Elementary math work



Lower Elementary biology work

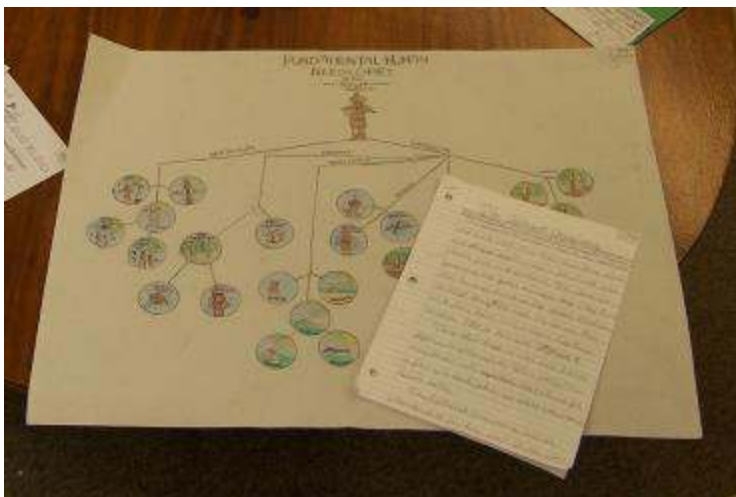
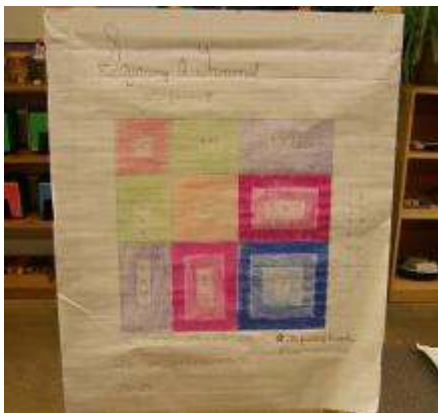


Primary geography, science, and geometry work

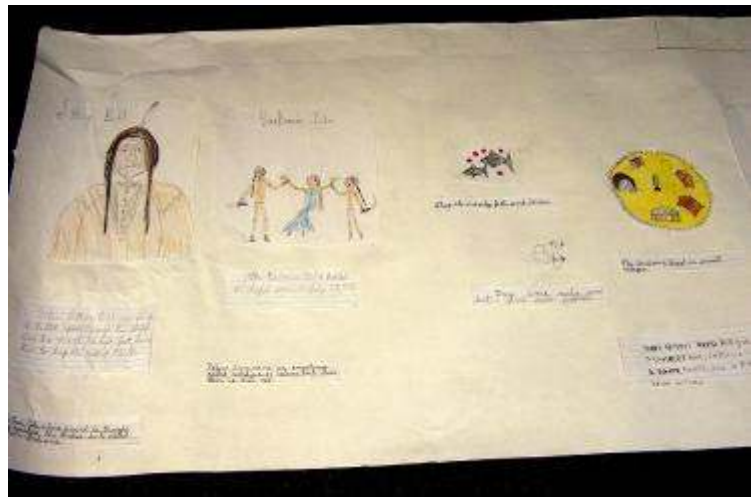


Primary geography work

Lower Elementary math work



Upper Elementary social studies work



Lower Elementary history work

# Help MIR Bridge the Gap: Give to the Annual Fund

School is much more than a building or a campus—it is a significant part of your family's life; an environment that will help shape your child into the adult he or she will be.

When you give to the MIR Annual Fund, you help make the difference between a good environment and a great one for your child. The school needs your support to provide a strong educational foundation for all students. Tuition and fees cover 87% of school expenses. The Annual Fund bridges the gap that remains.

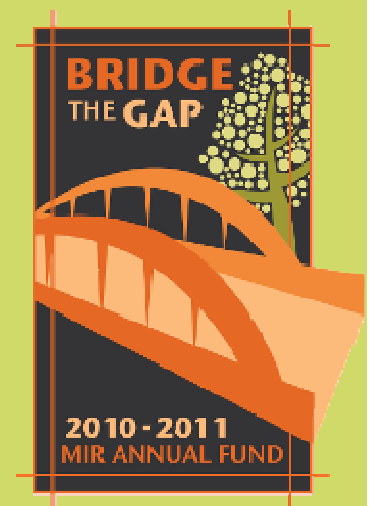
Not only does MIR benefit, but your child benefits directly this year from your gift. As classes reach the participation milestones noted in the form of donations or pledges before December 31, 2010, they will receive:

- ❶ 50%—Gift certificate for the outdoors: Home Depot, Lowe's, Living Desert Nursery
- ❷ 75%—Gift Certificate for the arts: Barnes & Noble, Claremont Folk Music Center, Aaron Brothers
- ❸ 100%—Class field trip or catered picnic

If we reach both of our fundraising goals—100% participation in all classes and \$50,000—the whole school will celebrate with a special musical performance and all-school picnic.

**Pledge online at [montessoriinredlands.org/bridgethegap](http://montessoriinredlands.org/bridgethegap) or turn in your pledge form in to the office.**

**"Education should no longer be mostly imparting of knowledge, but must take a new path, seeking the release of human potentialities."**—*Maria Montessori*



**Please consider making a monthly donation.** By doing so, you provide crucial ongoing support to our mission to provide every child with an individualized education that helps them be the person they were meant to be.

## “Good at Doing Things” Parent Education Night Enlightens, Entertains, and Inspires

Thank you for joining us on Thursday, October 21 at 7 p.m. for an enlightening and entertaining Parent Education Night and reception.

More than 150 parents, staff, and others were in attendance to hear Dr. Steven Hughes, pediatric neuropsychologist and assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology at the University of Minnesota Medical School, talk about how Maria Montessori's approach to education parallels what we now know about brain development and fosters some of the most important development that occurs in the brain. The speech was at times entertaining, at times moving, and at times sobering as he gave both personal testimony and scientific evidence of the effectiveness of the Montessori method of education.

Dr. Hughes was careful to emphasize throughout the talk that one of the most important ways to ensure that children's brains develop appropriately and healthily is

to provide them with experiences in the environment that allows children to explore and learn for themselves. He also emphasized the importance of the hands in providing input to the brains. Given these facts, why, he asked, would you design a learning environment that involves children sitting quietly for hours on end listening to lectures?

Dr. Hughes' talk was followed by a lovely reception and gallery of student work. Rain forced the reception indoors to Emily and Teesie's classroom, but the beautifully transformed surroundings made it a special experience.

If you missed Dr. Hughes's talk or wish to hear it again, a similar talk is available online at [goodatdoingthings.com](http://goodatdoingthings.com). MIR also has a few copies of a professionally videotaped presentation he did at Bergamo Montessori School in Sacramento. It is the same talk and same slide presentation as he did at MIR.



## Join MIR to Inaugurate New Track

*You're never too old for a Turkey Trot*

We are excited to announce that our track is ready to use! Thanks to the generous donations from last year's gala, MIR was able to upgrade our existing playground and build a new track for our students. This work was done by Dan Hudson (dad to Elementary student Sunny Hudson) of Palm Canyon Contractors, at a generous discount to MIR.

To inaugurate our field, on Monday, November 1, we will kick off a track and field P.E. unit with a "Turkey Trot." Elementary students will have the opportunity to run for 30 minutes, and Primary students will run for 15 minutes. The object is to see how many feathers they can earn in the time allotted. One feather is equivalent to one lap and one mile is just over 8 laps. You are invited to participate with your children.

- The Turkey Trot will begin promptly at 8:40 AM, starting with Upper Elementary students
- Lower Elementary will run at 9:10 AM
- Primary will run at 9:40 AM

*Please plan on sending your child to school in appropriate footwear and with a water bottle.*



## OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN... (cont.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

day. When will you get the chance to put yourself in your child's shoes, see the world from their perspective, and reflect on your own schooling? For most of us, school was a very different experience than what our children are doing and the reports that we get from them can seem very strange. *Journey & Discovery* is your opportunity to jump in with both feet. Join us!

## JOURNEY & DISCOVERY (cont.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

This full-day seminar offers a thorough look at Montessori education from toddlers to teenagers. The day starts with a **journey** through classrooms spanning the entire Montessori curriculum from Toddlers to 18 years. Parents will then split into the group of their choice to fully **discover** the curriculum for Toddlers to 6th grade, or 1st grade through 12th grade. This second half will include hands-on learning and an opportunity to talk with teachers at all levels about what happens in the classroom each day.

*Journey & Discovery* will be held Saturday, November 6, 8 AM–2 PM. Lunch will be served. Please **RSVP by Friday, November 5** online, in the office, or call 909-793-6989. Space is limited. Learn more at [montessoriinredlands.org/journey](http://montessoriinredlands.org/journey).

## OOPS, WE GOOFED!

We accidentally left the following listing out of the MIR Business Directory in Connections.

Primerica Financial Services  
3190 Shelby St., Suite B  
Ontario, CA 91764  
909-980-8700  
[primerica.com](http://primerica.com)

CONTACT  
Steve Barkley, Division Leader  
909-553-1028  
[sbarkley@primerica.com](mailto:sbarkley@primerica.com)

DISCOUNTS OFFERED: Yes

Primerica offers quality products and services suited for today's consumer. I can prepare a no-cost, no-obligation Financial Needs Analysis (FNA) that provides a personal, confidential analysis of your current financial situation along with valuable options that can assist you in reaching your financial goals. It covers all major areas of home finance including retirement and educational savings strategies, debt management, income protection needs, and more. I welcome the opportunity to share some simple, invaluable financial concepts. Please call or e-mail to schedule an appointment.

## CURRICULUM MATTERS (*cont.*)

(Continued from page 3)

developing the strength and dexterity needed for a pencil grip. In the case of the cylinder blocks, the very thickness of the knobs closely resembles that of a pencil. In using two fingers to trace each inset of the geometric cabinet before replacing it in the tray, the child is practicing the conformation of his writing fingers to a two-dimensional shape.

A more direct preparation for the physical act of writing begins with the sandpaper letters. In essence, she is practicing writing the letter as she traces the textured shape. A final direct preparation comes in the form of the metal insets, where the child fills in a geometric shape, staying within boundaries and moving a color pencil up and down, up and down, and gradually moving from left to right.

At the same time that the hand is being prepared, parallel activities develop the mental aspects of writing. Writing is communication, after all, and to communicate one must not only recognize the sounds and symbols of the language, but also have words and ideas to communicate. Therefore, the indirect preparation of the mind begins with the extraordinary emphasis Montessori places upon vocabulary and conversation.

With colorful card material the children learn the correct nomenclature for everything from plants and animals, fruits and vegetables, tools and musical instruments, to modes of transportation, or things you would find in the kitchen or along the street. After experience in discriminating and organizing the sensorial materials, children learn the names of colors, plane and solid geometric shapes, as well as the language of qualities including the comparative and superlative forms. Selected prints and photographs, as well as

natural specimens, are rotated in and out of the classroom periodically to stimulate conversation, and teachers lead small groups of children in acting out verb commands, or in question games, exploring the “what, where, when, and how” of the world around them.

The teacher also lays the foundation for later word studies by playing games with homonyms, antonyms, and classified nouns. When they gather in small groups, they play sound games, learning to differentiate the phonetic sounds of English. Then, having become adept at distinguishing the beginning, middle and ending sounds of words, a more direct preparation of the mind starts with the introduction of the aforementioned sandpaper letters, associating each phonetic sound with its corresponding symbol. Once a child has mastered 12–15 of these symbols, the teacher will introduce the moveable alphabet, a box of cut out letters for the formation of words. At first, she may dictate three- and four-letter phonetic words for the child to compose, but soon the child will want to make his own ideas visible by making words with the moveable alphabet. One day she will ask for a chalkboard to record the words she has “written” with the moveable alphabet, and then finally she will progress to paper and pencil.

In this way the child gradually builds up all of the skills of writing without ever knowing he is doing so. On that magical day he will put it all together for himself, combining both the physical and mental preparations and discover that he is writing, as if for the first time in the history of the world. The entire process has taken years yet has been entirely natural, corresponding with the natural development of the child’s brain and body. How different from the prolonged drudgery with which most of us adults learned how to write, and not overwhelming at all.



# BIRTHDAYS



## students

Collin Copeland	11/1
Skye Blee	11/2
Amelie Rosso	11/2
Dylan Keller	11/3
Sydney Rice	11/3
Jackson Barkley	11/4
Mina Khazaeni	11/5
Bodie Crowder	11/6
Anusha Keshavan	11/6
Sona Saravana	11/6
Allie Munoz	11/7
Lindsay Gullon	11/8
Victoria Mahmoudi	11/8
Kennedy Mohr	11/8
Marin Cummings	11/9
Neha Vijay	11/11
Sydney Grames	11/12
Ryan McNaughton	11/12
Dylan Blee	11/13
Kelsie Victor	11/13
Aiden Burke	11/14
Christopher Hage	11/16
Oliver Owen	11/16
Baden Pengelly	11/16
Micah Thomas	11/17
Kamron Mabudian	11/22
Aryah Seraj	11/23
Carly Copeland	11/24
Benjamin Mickelson	11/24
Ella Blauth	11/25
Olive Bridgers	11/30

## staff

Kara Holzinger 11/1

*Bluebird Bulletin* is published by Montessori in Redlands, 1890 Orange Ave., Redlands, CA 92373, License number 360910803-4-5. © 2010. Submit articles, pictures, or comments to [lisa.kensok@montessoriinredlands.org](mailto:lisa.kensok@montessoriinredlands.org) or bring them to the MIR office.

## GIS Day Activities at MIR

Wednesday, November 17 is GIS Day. If you plan to volunteer to present in a classroom, contact Lisa Kensok at [lisa.kensok@montessoriinredlands.org](mailto:lisa.kensok@montessoriinredlands.org). Learn more at [gisday.com](http://gisday.com).

## Lango to Offer Next Round of Language Classes

Lango will offer after-school French and Mandarin classes at MIR November 11 through February 3, 2011. Classes are offered separately from the MIR school day and require separate registration. They are held in the Yoga room.

Following is the schedule for classes, which are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week. Register online at [www.langokids.com/regions/redlands/](http://www.langokids.com/regions/redlands/) or call 909-528-3154.

- Primary French (ages 3–5): 3:15–4 PM
- Advanced French (ages 4–8): 4:10–4:55 PM
- Chinese (ages 3–9): 5:05–5:50 PM

Age ranges have been extended for Chinese and Advanced French.

There are a total of 20 classes. The cost is \$259 per child, plus \$40 yearly fee for materials (workbooks, CDs, flashcards). If you already bought books and will be in the same class level, you do not need to pay for them again.

## Schedule Your Parent-Teacher Conference(s)

Parent-Teacher conferences offer important one-on-one time with your child's teacher.

Conferences will be held November 22 and 23. These conferences are your time to learn about your child's progress and the work that they do each day. You will receive a progress report for your child and be able to discuss each academic and social/emotional area one-on-one with your child's teachers.

**Sign up in the office for a time slot. Alternate times are available if you are traveling. Please arrange with your child's teacher.**

## November 2010

<b>1</b> Turkey Trot  Childcare reservation due for Veteran's Day Elementary dance class	<b>2</b> Lango classes Positive Discipline class	<b>3</b> Elementary dance class	<b>4</b> Lango classes	<b>5/6</b> Nikki's in-house fieldtrip—County Museum Saturday—Journey & Discovery, 8 AM–2 PM
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> Lango classes Positive Discipline class	<b>10</b> Kara/Dorama's in-house fieldtrip "Creepy Crawlers" Elementary dance class	<b>11</b> Veteran's Day. No school; childcare by reservation.  Lango classes	<b>12</b> Staff in-service day. No school; no childcare.
<b>15</b> Childcare reservation deadline for Parent Conference days Elementary dance class	<b>16</b> Lango classes Last Positive Discipline class	<b>17</b>  Elementary dance class	<b>18</b> Retake and make-up Picture Day  Lango classes	<b>19</b> Bluebird assembly, 9:15 Coffee, Tea, and M.E., 9:30 AM Elementary Thanksgiving feast (students only) Maria's class feast (students only) Nikki's class feast (students only)
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Lango classes	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
Parent-Teacher Conferences. No school; childcare by reservation.		Thanksgiving holiday break. No school; no childcare. 		
<b>29</b> Elementary dance class	<b>30</b> Lango classes	<b>1</b> Elementary dance class PTM Meeting, 6 PM Parent Education Night, 7 PM	<b>2</b> Lango classes	<b>3</b>