

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



BLUEBIRD BULLETIN

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Many more events—April is a busy month!



Spring Carnival

Join the fun on April 30!

The MIR Spring Carnival will be held Saturday, April 30, 11 AM–3 PM. It will be a fun-filled day including a bounce house, inflatable obstacle course, food, classroom game booths, prizes, and more. The Carnival will also include a Scholastic Book Fair; the Montessori Gallery featuring parent, student, and staff art; and a Montessori Marketplace with merchandise from local entrepreneurs.

Admission is \$5 per child age 3 and older or \$10 per family. Admission covers all games and activities. There will be burgers (including veggie burgers), chips, and soda available for purchase at the food booth.

Parent volunteers are needed. Please sign up in your child's classroom to support the class for just a half hour during the Carnival.



Pushing Out the Walls of the Classroom

by MAURA JOYCE, HEAD OF SCHOOL

“When the child goes out, it is the world itself that offers itself to him. Let us take the child out to show him real things instead of making objects which represent ideas and closing them up in cupboards.”—Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori dedicated her life to designing classrooms that would meet the needs of the children who worked within them. She was particular about details, fastidious about its arrangement, exact about materials, and ensured that it was complete in its design.

No matter how perfect her classrooms became, she was wise enough to know that she needed to keep one “wall” of the classroom “open.” Montessori created a place for children to have many, many experiences, but she knew that all her work inside the classroom was simply a preparation for a bigger classroom. Montessori's main purpose of education was to prepare the children for the time and culture that they live in. Therefore

she recognized that the classroom was not limited to the four walls and materials inside it. The children need experiences beyond that...they need to get out into the real world.

At MIR, one of the ways we open up the classroom is through field trips. We organize these trips for children beginning with our youngest students. At first these trips are simple: getting shoes on, walking in a line, getting on a bus, going to a park, having lunch, returning home. As the child gets older, they embark on different ones: performances, museums, botanical gardens. These give the children experiences beyond the classroom, providing them more chances to learn to sit quietly, applaud appropriately, and enjoy real speci-

(Continued on page 7)



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

Spring Gala is a Success Thanks to Parents and Staff

Thanks to all the parents and staff who made the Spring Gala such a success!! We are happy to report that the PTM-sponsored item was such a hit that *three* were sold to multiple generous families for a total of \$2,700. Thank you to the families who purchased the collages. We hope you all get years of enjoyment from them! Special thanks goes to Cheryl Thomas for making the collages.

PTM to Hold Art Cards Drive April 4–15

PTM is calling all artists, parents, staff, and students to submit art, calligraphy, or photographs to be printed on greeting cards. We have partnered with Fundraiser Greetings, a professional printing and publishing company, to create high quality, full size greeting cards using your art. The cards include inside greeting and envelope imprint and upgrade options. Check parent folders for more details or come by the office to see samples. A generous 50% of the proceeds will benefit our MIR community.

Support the Birthday Bags 4 Kids Community Service Event April 4–15

Birthday Bags 4 Kids is an organization that strives to provide toy-filled birthday gift bags to disadvantaged children. They distribute 50–60 birthday bags each month and have a wait list of service agencies that would like their help. If every family at MIR provided just one gift bag, we would exceed their monthly goal! To donate, fill a birthday bag (including tissue paper) with age-appropriate gifts for 3 to 12 years old. Some suggested items include:

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Coloring books and crayons | Balls and kites | Puzzles and small stuffed animals |
| Books and games | Craft supplies | Slinkys and novelty toys |
| Stickers and bubbles | Small purses and hair accessories | Disposable cameras |
| Backpacks and school supplies | Sports-related items | |

Please donate new items only; no used items please.

If you would like to donate some of your time to Birthday Bags 4 Kids please call Julie Farquhar at 909-583-7910 or show up to help on a Wednesday from 9–2 PM or Saturday from 10–3 PM at 1200 Arizona Street, Unit B5, Redlands, CA 92373. They are off Alabama behind U-Haul and Denny's, in the second row of businesses. Thank you for your community support!



Bluebird Lands in Hawaii

Amanda Wong (Liana/Kim's class) spent Spring Break in Hawaii for a family wedding. She proudly shows off her MIR t-shirt at Laniakea, Oahu, also known as "Turtle Beach," while a resident turtle basks in the sunshine.

Submit your child's photo in their MIR or Bluebird t-shirt to lisa.kensok@montessoriinredlands.org.

Know a PTM Rep who goes the extra mile? Nominate them for the PTM Board

Each year the PTM holds open nominations for positions on its board that are being vacated. This year, PTM is accepting nominations for Vice President and Secretary from April 18 to 29. Nominate yourself or nominate that super-capable PTM rep you've always envied!

The PTM works to:

- 1) Increase parent involvement in the school;
- 2) educate parents about Montessori theory and practice;
- 3) encourage communication among school staff, the Board of Trustees, and parents; and
- 4) nurture a sense of community at MIR.

To learn more about the PTM and what these positions involve, attend the PTM meeting on Thursday, April 7 at 6 PM. Joining PTM is a great way to get more involved in your child's school!

In honor of Earth Day on April 22, we experimented by printing most of this issue of the *Bluebird Bulletin* using the Sprang Eco Sans typeface, which requires 25% less ink to print. Tell us what you think: lisa.kensok@montessoriinredlands.org.



Report from the Board

by PAM FORD, MEMBER

Green School Initiative Progress

One of the most stylish words in English these days is “green.” It’s no longer just a color (yellow + blue) but an attitude about our human responsibility to our world’s natural resources. MIR’s Long Range Planning Committee kicked off intentional investigations into the ways in which MIR could “Live the Montessori Journey” so that our long term impact on the earth would be reduced.

Community meetings, student projects, and a campus-mapping project contributed invaluable information about MIR’s use of energy and water, MIR’s use of non-renewable resources, and MIR’s contribution to the landfill with solid waste. “Doing less bad and doing more good” is not the most poetic phrase to describe the goals set, but it is the best brief description of MIR’s Green School Initiative (GSI) objectives. Summarized, the result of the preliminary investigations is that MIR will initially focus its GSI efforts on water, transportation, energy, and waste. Why these?

Water. Surrounded by groves, the school definitely feels green. However, we are keenly aware that the Inland Empire we love is a very arid environment. Our groves require water. Each of us has seen water in the ditches servicing the trees. And the grapefruits are not the only thirsty organisms at MIR. The questions we want to answer are “How much water do our groves need? How much water do our gardens and landscaping require? How much water do we need to operate the school itself? And how can we learn to prevent the waste of water in this environment?” We have a benchmark of water usage records from 2008 so we can measure an increase or decrease in our water efficiency over the years ahead.

Transportation. If you are a parent, you likely make two trips to and from MIR each day. If you are an employee, you likely make one round-trip.

(Continued on page 5)



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

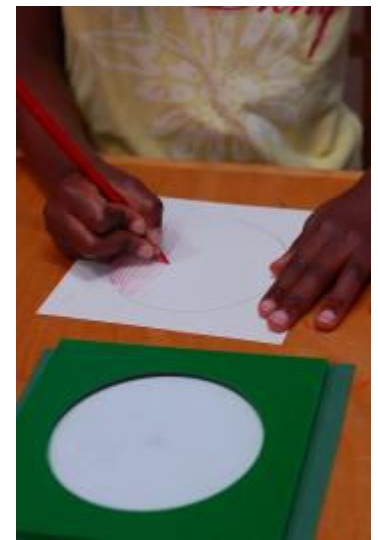
Skipping Stones

On a recent Saturday, I attended the *Journey & Discovery* parent event. During the “discovery” portion, I noticed one parent who was drawn irresistibly to the fraction insets in Jean and Maryhelen’s classroom.

The fraction insets consist of 10 green frames, each with a red circular inset 10 cm in diameter. The first inset is a complete circle with a knob for lifting and removing it from the frame. The other insets are divided into 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10 equal parts each.

The fraction work in the primary classroom begins with sensorial exploration. Children can also use the insets in colorful design work, as they do the geometric shapes of the metal insets. They can even trace the insets onto colored paper and cut them out for use in a collage.

It is only after much exploration of the fractions as shapes that we move on to defining, naming and writing them. “When we break a unit into pieces of the same size we call those fractions. When we divide the whole unit into two parts, we call each part a half. This is the family name. We write the family name ‘half’ as a 2 under a line. The number under the line, that tells us which family we are talking about, is called the denominator.” In this way we proceed, slowly and with much repetition, to teach the names of the fractions, three at a time.



(Continued on page 6)

STUDENTS OF ALL AGES DISCOVER, CREATE, AND EXPLORE IN THE MIR SUMMER PROGRAM

Session I: June 20–July 1 ☀ Session II: July 5–July 15 ☀ Session III: July 18–July 29 ☀ Session IV: August 1–12



Tired of hearing “I’m bored” in the summer? Enroll your child in the **Elementary Summer Program**.

The Elementary Summer Program offers classes to suit a whole range of interests, from woodworking and creating your own board games to science and circus/tumbling. The program gives your child an opportunity to discover new skills and talents, explore interests more deeply, and create works of art and science in several classes. Most of all, kids will have fun!

Early-bird Enrollment is Open Now

Early-bird enrollment is open to MIR families March 17–April 15. Your child may enroll for morning sessions, afternoon sessions, or all day. Morning sessions will run from 8:30 AM to 11:30 AM. Afternoon sessions will run from 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM.

New families may enroll starting April 18. Enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis. The final deadline for all families is May 31.



- ☀ The Elementary summer program is open to any student age 6 to 12 who has completed first grade.
- ☀ Students may enroll for morning sessions, afternoon sessions, or all day.
- ☀ Childcare is available.

Toddler and Primary Summer Program students have plenty of opportunities for fun and exploration.



The Toddler and Primary Summer Program provides continuity in your child’s education and consistency in their environment while providing plenty of summer fun and exploration.

Toddlers will supplement their Montessori environment with special summer activities including gardening, crafts, and water play. An outing to the San Bernardino County Museum will enhance their fun.

Primary students will incorporate the Montessori philosophy and materials with summer activities such as cooking, gardening, and sporting activities as well as in-depth studies of subjects such as dinosaurs and art. All-day Primary students have the opportunity to take swimming lessons. A minimum of one field trip per session will complete students’ summer exploration

Early-bird Enrollment is Open Now

The Summer Program is open to continuing students and to new students registered for the 2011–2012 school year. Early-bird enrollment is open to existing families March 17–April 15. New families registered for the 2011–2012 school year may enroll starting April 18. Enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis. The final deadline for all families is May 31.

- ☀ The summer program is open to continuing students and to new students registered for the 2011–2012 school year.
- ☀ Childcare is available 7:15–9:00 AM and 5–6 PM except for two-day students.

BOARD REPORT *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 3)

There are days in which those numbers go up. One estimate is that commuting to and from MIR resulted in the consumption of 345 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CDE) in 2008. This is 119 tons CDE more than the combined natural gas and electricity consumption of the school in the same year. Transportation is one area that can be controlled by many of us who participate in the MIR community. We can carpool. We can make carpooling easier (families might keep an extra car seat in the trunk for safely transporting an additional child; families could sign up to let others know of their willingness to share rides; employees on the same schedule can carpool; board members can carpool to board meetings). Many families like to bicycle to school but are uncertain about the safety of letting one or two of their children head off alone. This is where the idea of a bike bus comes into play. A bike bus is a large group of riders riding to the same place at the same time for safety in numbers. Once organized, an MIR bike bus would allow children to ride together in a large group with a happily volunteering parent to ride along on the way to school. Welcome aboard!

Waste. Ah, we throw stuff away. Well, of course we do because what else would we do with the greasy potato chip bag or the used diaper? But MIR has worked hard to reduce solid waste by re-using and recycling materials, by using the Laptop Lunch pro-

gram, and by encouraging less wasteful behaviors. The question is, should we stop thinking about waste? Are we done with this issue? The answer is “no.” MIR is a learning environment. There are those who are extremely conscientious about what they discard, yet new students, new families, and new employees will always be part of this community. The importance of understanding how to “do less bad” by careful use of resources will always matter to the Montessori Journey.

The GSI includes several recommendations. These recommendations frame many of the decisions made ultimately by the Board of Trustees about equipment, landscaping, and maintenance. These recommendations also influence directions that can be taken by PTM if interested in supporting activities like the Bike Bus. These recommendations also direct decisions in classrooms of all ages for curriculum around science, art, and social studies.

So, there you have it. When someone asks about your school and its commitment to being green, you can speak as proudly as Kermit the Frog who says “It’s not easy being green...it’s beautiful and it’s what I want to be.”

If you have questions or comments regarding the GSI, you may contact:

Leela MadhavaRau

President, Board of Trustees

leela_madhavarau@redlands.edu

(909) 748-8285 (work)

Redlands Bicycle Classic Riders Encourage Students to Pursue a Healthy Lifestyle



Professional riders Kristin McGrath, Alison Starnes, Alisha Welsh, and Coryn Rivera, sponsored by Peanut Butter and Co., visited MIR on Wednesday, March 30 with the goal of inspiring Elementary and older Primary students to pursue a healthy lifestyle, starting with getting on their bikes.

The riders showed students components of a racing bicycle, discussed various fundamentals of bicycle safety, and personally invited the students to the race. Many of the students and their families took them up on the invitation. The Redlands Bicycle Classic took place Friday, April 1–Sunday April 3.

CURRICULUM MATTERS (*cont.*)

(Continued from page 3)

Once the child can name and write all of the fractions through tenths, we move on to the key exercise with fractions in primary—substitution. We would remove one of the halves from its frame, and experiment with what combination of other fractions would fit the space. We would find that no combinations of thirds will work, but that two fourths exactly fit the space as a half, as do three sixths, four eighths and five tenths. The child is then free to experiment with the other fraction insets and discover for himself which combinations of fraction pieces are equivalent and which are not.



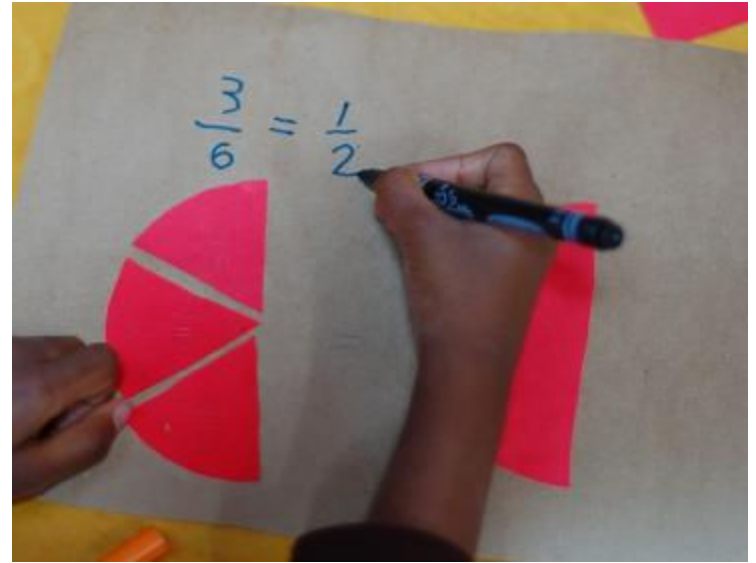
If the child wishes, he could write and record his discoveries as $1/3 = 2/6 = 3/9$, for instance. Again he could also trace the fraction insets onto paper and cut them out, this time making a poster of the equivalencies he has discovered.

It is only after a great deal of this exploration and discovery, when we judge that the child has internalized a basic understanding of the equivalent relationships of fractions based upon extended experience, that we would take him on to other fraction work. Whenever we move a child on to the mathematical operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with fractions, we can be sure that this new understanding will be built upon a firm foundation of experience, exploration, and discovery with his own two hands.

By this point in my explanation, I noticed that my listener was becoming more and more agitated. Finally, she could contain herself no longer. “I need these tools in my classroom,” she said, “so that my students have an opportunity to *understand* fractions. Right now, I’m just skipping stones!”

I must have given her a puzzled look, for she went on to explain her metaphor. “No matter how carefully I try to explain fractions to my fifth graders, I can see by their blank looks that it just skips off their brains, with no real comprehension or understanding.”

I was awestruck by her sincerity and frustration, and also by the power of her metaphor. But more than anything I was grateful for the tools at my disposal



like the fraction insets, to help children pass from experience to understanding to abstraction. There’s no skipping stones at MIR!

Open Enrollment Begins Monday, April 11

Thank you to all families who registered early for the 2011–2012 school year. We are honored by your confidence in the Montessori education your child receives, as demonstrated by strong re-enrollment numbers!

Open enrollment for new families begins on April 11. Please note that due to high early registration numbers, we will have fewer openings for next year. If you would still like to register prior to April 11, stop by the office for information.

FAIRY TALE ENDING FOR SPRING GALA



Thank you to all who attended Ever After, the MIR 14th Annual Spring Gala & Auction. Many party-goers got into the spirit of the evening, wearing everything from princess ball gowns to Alice in Wonderland inspired costumes. A raucous good time was had by all.

After a sumptuous feast served by Farm Artisan Foods, auctioneer Martha Green led the live auction. Participants responded generously to the unique and beautiful treasures presented to them, helping MIR raise \$38,300. Total proceeds for the evening, including the live auction, silent auction, sponsorships, and financial aid paddle race, came to \$59,340. Funds will be used to support the school's programs, facilities, teaching staff, and financial aid program.

MIR would like to thank the Spring Gala team and volunteers for making this event possible:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| * Jillian Mueller, Chair | * Sandy Bachar |
| * Jill McDermott, Underwriting Chair | * Lisa Kensok |
| * Donna Barkley | * Shelley McCarthy |
| * Kathleen Leiss | * Marie Nelson |
| * Karen Oliver | * Lisa Oliver |
| * Rena Rice | * Cheryl Thomas |
| * Shawnda Zook | |

Thanks also goes to all the parents who generously donated time, goods, and services to make the Gala successful.

PUSHING OUT THE WALLS (*cont.*)

(Continued from page 1)

mens or works of art they have seen in books.

Our older students venture even further, enjoying three types of field trips in the Elementary program: class field trips, "goings out," and overnight trips. Elementary teachers will schedule some all-class field trips to give the students an idea of places where they can further their studies. These trips are a preparation for "going out" trips. A "going out" is organized by the students and is related to their work and interests. When I first began teaching, I was not quite sure of the "going out" concept myself, but quickly learned the difference at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., where I was teaching.

Six of my students had decided to study the history of transportation and organized a "going out" to the "Transportation Hall" at the museum. My students called to find the hours, looked up which metro route we would take, got permission from their parents, and brought money for the train. We got on the train with notebooks in hand and an agenda: Casey would be looking at boats, Matt would research trains, Max would visit horse drawn vehicles, and Sam would handle anything that flew. We came up from the metro to see the large museum building surrounded by many large yellow buses. We were not the only students vis-

iting on that day. Later on, as my students sat quietly on the floor, sketching canoes, writing about steam engines, and estimating the wing span of gliders, a large group of about 35 loud, talkative elementary students walked through the hall at lightening speed, pointing to a few things and following the teacher's cry of "Move along everyone, move along." A much different experience for these two groups of students—our students were using the museum as an extension of the classroom rather than a trip *away* from the classroom.

MIR students also go on overnight trips, which provide an invaluable opportunity to learn to be with a group, exercise their independence, cook and clean, pack their clothes, and experience life away from home and family for a few nights. These trips give the children an opportunity to challenge themselves and grow in ways they can't do in the four walls of a classroom, whether it be through camping (Santa Barbara), participating in a ropes course and other outdoor activities (Pali Mountain Institute), or studying the state (Sacramento) or U.S. governments (Washington, DC).

As Montessori intended, all the trips MIR students participate in give them real life experiences and the chance to apply all that stuff they learn in the classroom—a preparation for life!

BIRTHDAYS



students

| | |
|-------------------|------|
| Rhapsody Kawaii | 4/1 |
| Emma Phipatanakul | 4/3 |
| Ben Phipatanakul | 4/3 |
| Savannah Mueller | 4/5 |
| Sophia Sherzai | 4/7 |
| Jacqueline Smith | 4/7 |
| Anjali Carter-Rau | 4/9 |
| Naveen Carter-Rau | 4/9 |
| Aynsley Silliman | 4/9 |
| Gavin Zook | 4/9 |
| Carol Tadros | 4/10 |
| Ethan Wilkinson | 4/12 |
| Nilay Mehta | 4/13 |
| Piotr Andzel | 4/14 |
| Walker Mueller | 4/14 |
| Chidubem Ugochuku | 4/14 |
| Makaila McCarthy | 4/17 |
| William Clafflin | 4/18 |
| Audrey Kim | 4/19 |
| Kyrellos Ibrahim | 4/20 |
| Roland DeMoss | 4/21 |
| Aidan Hagglov | 4/25 |
| Munsa Dhillon | 4/26 |
| Alec (A.J.) Munoz | 4/27 |
| Natalie Ramsaran | 4/27 |

staff

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Margaretann Harrison | 4/9 |
| Lacy Loeffler | 4/22 |
| Christine Povero | 4/23 |
| Chantelle Brown | 4/25 |
| Carmen Levesque | 4/28 |
| Sara Garcia | 4/29 |

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Spring Picture Day is Thursday, April 7

Dress your child up (if he or she will allow) and be sure to send them to school with a smile on Thursday, April 7! Children are photographed individually.

This year we will use a new system in which the photos will be posted to a secure website and parents will be given a code to access and order the photos they want. Order(s) will be mailed to your home. Ordering photos benefits your child's education as well; MIR receives 12% of the money collected.

Pitch In and Have Fun during Spring Parent Work Day

MIR will hold its spring Parent Work Day on Saturday, April 23, 8:30–11:30 AM (the day after Earth Day). With your capable help, we can spruce up the school for the remainder of the school year. Tasks range from gardening to painting to mending and more. Check in Saturday morning to be assigned a task.

This is a great way to fulfill your volunteer hours, meet other parents, and have fun, too. Thank you for your help!

Showcase Your Art in the Montessori Gallery at the Spring Carnival

Parents, students, and staff are invited to showcase their art in The Gallery at Montessori at the MIR Spring Carnival on April 30. All types of art are welcomed, from fashion design to painting to photography and more.

To sign up, contact Sara Garcia at sara.garcia@montessoriinredlands.org. All submitters will be notified of your acceptance for participation by Friday, April 22. MIR also needs parent volunteers to help set up and coordinate the gallery. Please contact Sara if you can help.

APRIL 2011

| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 |
|---|--|----|--|---|
| | | | | Bluebird Assembly, 9:15 AM |
| 4 PTM Art Cards/ Birthday Bag drive begins | 5 Lango classes | 6 | 7 Lango classes Spring Picture Day  PTM Meeting, 6 PM | 8 Jean/MH class to Living Desert |
| 10/11 Run through Redlands Open enrollment begins for all families | 12 Nikki's class to Fox Performing Arts Ctr Lango classes | 13 | 14 Lango classes | 15 Coffee, Tea, and M.E., 9:15 Emily/Teesie to Living Desert PTM Art Cards/Birthday Bag drive ends Summer school early reg. ends for MIR families |
| 18 PTM Board Nominations open Summer school registration opens to all families | 19 Lango classes | 20 | 21 Lango classes | 22/23  Earth Day Parent Work Day MOVED TO JUNE 11 |
| 25 | 26 Lango classes (class added) | 27 | 28 Lango classes (new 6-week session starts) | 29/30 Bluebird Assembly, 9:15 PTM Board nominations close  Carnival 11–3 PM |