

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



BLUEBIRD BULLETIN

DECEMBER 2011 VOLUME 38, ISSUE 4

© Montessori in Redlands, LIC# 360910803-4-5

What's Inside...

PTM News and Notes. 2
PTM holiday food drive starts Dec. 5
Sales of Bluebird items on hold
Get your gift wrap for the holidays

Report from the Board. 3
Showing appreciation for MIR staff

Curriculum Matters. 3
Easy as *Pi*

Sound, Music, and the Brain. 5

Journey & Discovery Photos. 6
Parents Go Back to School

Complete the Picture. 7
Bring in your MIR Annual Fund puzzle piece

End-of-Year School Calendar 8

Start the Season Right with a Rockin' Holiday Sing

MIR students of all ages will celebrate “A Rockin’ Holiday” at the Holiday Sing on Wednesday, December 14 at the University of Redlands Memorial Chapel.

Admission is free. Seating begins at 6:30 PM and the program begins at 7 PM. **School will close at 3:30 PM on December 14** to give students a chance to rest and prepare.

Holiday Sing is a truly special annual performance that always draws a capacity crowd. Please drop off your children at



A Rockin’ Holiday

by MAURA JOYCE, HEAD OF SCHOOL

*“What a tragedy it would be if we lived in a world where music was not taught to children.”—
General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, (Retired, U.S. Army)*

No matter which holiday your family celebrates this season, there is music to honor each one. It is fitting that the MIR tradition at this time of year is our annual Holiday Sing. Music in the Montessori setting is not an isolated subject, taught by a specialist. Rather, it permeates the children’s work on every level. Whether they play the bells, tone bars or recorder, clap rhythm charts, sing or listen, the children experience music as an integral part of their intellectual and spiritual life. Music is poetry, mathematics, history, art, language and more.

Music during the Holiday Season is inspiring to the children because of the messages the songs relay. The children’s reactions and insights into the holidays never cease to amaze me. They identify the messages of joy, peace and hope that are found in the music and believe that they

are projecting them to the world through their voices.

Children across the world are the hope of their parents, communities and of all of us, for they offer a new future. Their voices remind us of the bright future that they will offer all of humankind.

This year, our theme for the Holiday Sing is “A Rockin’ Holiday”. Staff and students have interpreted this in many ways, choosing holiday songs, songs that have an infectious beat, or good old fashion rock and roll songs. I am not sure of the specifics, but I know that there will be something for everyone!

Let’s join the children in celebrating the Holiday Season through music. I will see you there, rockin’ to the beat!

Learn more about “Sound, Music, and the Brain” on page 5.

(Continued on page 8)



PARENT-TO-PARENT

By Vanessa Leslie, PTM President

This year, the Holiday Sing concert will take place on December 14 at The University of Redlands Memorial Chapel beginning at 7 PM. All classes will be performing songs for the enjoyment of all in attendance. Family and friends are welcome. School closes at 3:30 PM.



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

Holiday Food Drive Starts December 5

PTM will hold its annual holiday food drive this month. This year our donations will benefit Joseph's Storehouse, a food and clothing bank in Redlands. Bring nonperishable food to your child's classroom or the office by December 16. If you would like to volunteer your time with Joseph's Storehouse, call them at 909-793-5677.

Sales of Montessori Bluebird Items on Hold

PTM regrets that we cannot sell Bluebird shirts at this time. The previous address for online orders should be disregarded as online sales of all Bluebird items have also ceased. We have had some issues with our distributor. We will advise when shirts are available. We apologize for any inconvenience.

The holidays are just around the corner...

It's not too late to order wrapping paper, gifts, and holiday supplies through Innisbrook. Shop online at innisbrook.com. Our school code is 102074. Orders will be shipped directly to your home. Funds help sponsor PTM events and activities.

Bluebirds Land at PTM's Fall Skate Night



Montessori in Redlands students enjoy a race at CalSkate at the recent Family Skate Night.

Submit photos of you or your child in their Bluebird and MIR t-shirts to lisa.kensok@montessoriinredlands.org.

Holiday Sing Dress Rehearsal Schedule—Don't be Late!

Dress rehearsals for the Holiday Sing performance will take place during the morning on **Wednesday, December 14**. Please be sure your child is at school on time. Children will be transported by bus to the University of Redlands.

All classes will rehearse at various times beginning at 9 AM. **It is very important that all children arrive at school on time to get on the bus. Elementary students leave by 8:45 AM.** Otherwise, your child could miss their opportunity to rehearse.

Parents of Thursday/Friday Toddler students are welcome to bring their child to the University. You will have to remain with your child through the rehearsal. Check with your child's teacher for exact times.

Bluebird Bulletin is published by Montessori in Redlands, 1890 Orange Ave., Redlands, CA 92373, License number 360910803-4-5. © 2011. Submit articles, pictures, or comments to lisa.kensok@montessoriinredlands.org or bring them to the MIR office.

Report from the Board

by PAMELA FORD, PRESIDENT

I have been doing some work today that will contribute to MIR's WASC Self Study Report. Interestingly, the college I work for has just been through the WASC self study and accreditation process (we passed with several commendations!) so I find it rather interesting to see the similarities and differences in the process for a publicly-funded community college and a privately-funded Montessori school for toddler through elementary-aged children.

I was making some notes that describe the Hospitality and Recognition Committee that is part of the Board of Directors. There isn't a committee like this at the college and, of course, when I describe it you will see why I wish there were one! What a great job description the members of this committee have: their charge is to find ways in which they can express our appreciation to the MIR staff.

The ultimate goal of this committee is to provide a direct connection between the Board of Directors and the staff at MIR. The Board is deeply appreciative of the efforts, energy, skills, patience, creativity, and loyal persistence displayed by all of our staff at MIR. The individuals who work for and with children here at MIR are well-educated, current in their necessary credentials, and demonstrate huge capacities for caring about and for children.

The Board would like to be able to say thank you every day to every staff member. Being human, board members may forget to do that even when they are at the school. So the Hospitality and Recognition Committee takes that responsibility. The ways in which the recognition is carried out may be as simple as a cute little thank you gift to as complex as a reception honoring a staff member's many years of service.

The committee has a lot of fun with its duty and the Board is truly happy to support all the great people who work at MIR!



Curriculum Matters

By PETER DAVIDSON,
ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

Easy as *Pi*

"Children show a great attachment to the abstract subjects when they arrive at them through manual activity. They proceed to fields of knowledge hitherto held inaccessible to them, such as grammar and mathematics."—Maria Montessori

I recently returned from a trip to the Middle East. U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is working through local organizations to improve education for Palestinian children. I had been invited to present leadership training to private school principals, first in the West Bank and most recently in Gaza.

Among the activities in which I engaged the 12 Gazan principals over the three days, I had asked them to brainstorm a list of the skills and characteristics that children in Gaza would need to be successful as adults in an ever-changing world and to be positive contributors to Palestinian society. They came up with a list similar to the 21st century education goals suggested by both educators and business leaders in the U.S.: critical thinking and problem solving, communication, creativity and innovation. But they also came up with some qualities not always included on the list in our country: self-confidence and sense of self-worth, and courage to meet challenges.

On the third day, I wanted to find a way to get beyond an intellectual understanding of a better way of educating chil-



(Continued on page 4)

CURRICULUM MATTERS (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

dren and coaching teachers, to a more experiential one. I wanted to open their minds to the possibility that perhaps their jobs were more about inspiring teachers than managing them. I hoped this would have the domino effect of opening the minds of their teachers to the possibility that their jobs were more about inspiring students than managing them as well. So I set out to give them a short but inspiring educational experience myself.

I asked this group of well-educated professionals (through a translator, of course) what they remembered from their own education about π . Someone responded, “3.14159.” “You’re right, that’s the value of π , but does anyone remember what π means?” At once they seemed to adopt the sheepish demeanor of students in a traditional math class, each of whom is saying to him or herself: “I should know this but am afraid to answer because I might get it wrong. I hope the teacher doesn’t call on me!” So, I supplied the answer: “It is the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter.”

I invited them to gather around me. On the table I had a sheet of plain white paper, a pencil, a ruler, and a circle. The circle was actually a stiff paper coaster I had found under my coffee cup at breakfast. I proceeded to draw a straight line almost the length of the piece of paper with the pencil and ruler. Next, I made a mark at one point of the circle’s circumference. Holding the circle vertically, I matched that mark with the beginning of the line on the piece of paper, and carefully rolled the circle along the line. I asked the principals to let me know when the mark had made one revolution and returned to touch the paper, which they did. I made a mark at that point on the line also. “Do you agree with me that the distance between the beginning of the line, our starting point, and this mark, measures the circumference of this circle?” They agreed that it did.

Now I laid the circle flat down on the paper, its edge even with the beginning mark, and made a second mark to denote the width of the circle, its diameter. I moved the cir-

cle along the line to this new mark and again marked the diameter. Then, a third time. This only left a tiny bit of the circumference line. “So, we just found that we could measure the diameter of our circle along the circumference line—How many times? 1, 2, 3, and a little bit. We have just proved π , haven’t we?”

I invited each of the principals to take their own piece of paper, ruler, pencil, and coaster, and prove π for themselves. They raced back to their tables and did so. Then I asked, “How do you feel?” “Excited,” said one. “I feel like I have just accomplished something!” offered another. “I’ll never forget π now!” said a third. “Can we do it again?” asked another.

I suggested to the principals that what they had just

experienced was a small example of the kind of education that would lead their students to fulfill the skills and characteristics we had brainstormed the day before. I further suggested that they take this activity back to school with them and share it with their teachers at the next staff meeting. It’s not their jobs necessarily to discover all of



the better ways to teach Geometry, or English, or Botany. But perhaps it is their job to inspire and empower their teachers by this example to discover better methods of teaching for themselves.

Any of you who have come to *Journey & Discovery* at MIR might recognize this lesson on π . I watched one of our elementary teachers give this lesson to a group of parents on a Saturday morning just a month ago. I remember the look of excitement and discovery on the faces of those parents. “Oh, so that’s what π means! It makes so much sense. It’s so simple and elegant. Why didn’t I learn this way?”

Well, we can’t take you back to your childhood and redo your education. But, isn’t it nice to know that your children are receiving these kinds of experiences every day and in all areas of the MIR classrooms? When done in this way, school is not only more enjoyable but empowering and inspiring, and the learning stays with you for the rest of your lives. And it’s easy as π .

Sound, Music, and the Brain (reprint from January 2008)

By DORAMA MONTOYA, PRIMARY TEACHER

Sound is a vibratory energy that touches us and influences our moods and feelings like nothing else. The power of sound is subtle but often we are not aware of it. Yet, from the moment we are born, sound surrounds us every moment. In fact, our auditory system has already been busy developing while in the womb. The sounds of our mother's voice and the internal noises of her body and ours are carried to us through the vibration of her bone structure, or bone conduction. After birth, our ears will have to adjust to the new environment where most sounds will be conducted to us through air. Parents instinctively hold their babies close to their own bodies while

talking and singing to their child. This allows a body-to-body transmission of sound that resembles the prenatal way to perceiving the mother's voice; it is also a way to ease their transition to the world.

The health of the developing brain depends of many factors. Loving environment, nutrition, and mental stimulation are all very important to child development.

We know now that sound stimulates the brain; but music is organized sound. As such, music plays an essential role in the growth of the young child's brain. Studies have shown that music has a calming effect on the unborn child's heart. Recent findings have also demonstrated that prenatal learning is possible; therefore, exposure to music before birth may enhance child development, and in some cases, alleviate or minimize developmental delays. However, this is not a new concept; from the beginning of times, sound, music and the arts have played an important role in the development of human beings. Ancient cultures knew about this power and learned to use it to their advantage. Although music is an intrinsic part of ceremonies, celebrations, initiations, harvests, and feasts throughout the world, as a culture we are just beginning to re-discover its power and learning to use it to our own benefit.

The pioneering work of Dr. Alfred Tomatis, an ENT doctor, psychologist and educator in Paris, France, brought about a revolution in sonic science over the last fifty years. Dr. Tomatis' extensive research, led him to discover that sound, but most importantly, the frequency of sound can affect our nerv-

ous system. He observed that high frequencies had the power to arouse, stimulate, and energize, while the lower frequencies of sound had a devitalizing effect instead. His discoveries had invited further exploration and greater advance in the areas of neurodevelopment, and psychoacoustics. Sound therapy and music-based brain stimulation are becoming very popular, as they are a way to counteract the ravaging effects of sound pollution. Listening to carefully modified classical music helps 'mold' or 'organize' the brain function at its core. Music by composers such as Mozart, Haydn, and Vivaldi to say a few, are helping improve concentration, sensory processing, motivation, and other challenges in countless children and adults everywhere.

For children, learning becomes easier and more fun when done to the tune of a well-known song.

Sound and music are nutrient for the nervous system. Although classical music is preferred as therapy, lullabies, nursery rhymes, hip-hop, rock, jazz, folk and rap music are also important. We need music to relax us when we are tired, to motivate us when working on a project, or to make us cheerful when we celebrate. The same measure applies to our children's listening. Children are naturally attracted to mu-

sic, because learning becomes easier and fun when done to the tune of a well-known song. Their musical preferences will change as they grow; although we may not agree with some of their choices, we can help them have the best listening experience through life.

A consensus among experts is that you should begin to communicate and connect with your children even before they are born. Listen to the music you like, but include listening to classical music in your daily routine. Protect your child from loud noises; listening to very loud music is damaging to the ears. Sing, dance and play games with your child. Learning nursery rhymes will help later with spelling and math tables' memorization, and dancing and moving to the music will help with fine and gross motor coordination. As soon as your child is old enough, encourage him/her to learn to play an instrument of his/her choice; the active learning of music stimulates a different memory system in the brain than passive or verbal learning.

(Continued on page 6)

SOUND, MUSIC, AND THE BRAIN *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 5)

There is a lot more information to this subject found in various books, and websites; but the bottom line is to learn to enjoy music to the fullest. Let it ring through your life and allow it to bring out the best in you and your child's mind, body, and spirit.

For more information, read or visit:

- *The Power of Sound*, by Joshua Leeds
- *When Listening Comes Alive*, by Paul Madaule
- *The Mozart Effect for Children*, by Don Campbell
- advancedbrain.com
- thelisteningprogram.com

Parents Go Back to School during *Journey & Discovery*



Elementary teacher Nicole Federow gives parents a lesson on the time zone chart.



A parent gets a lesson in the Pythagorean Theorem from Elementary teacher Kelly Read, above. Below is the same work as completed by Lower Elementary student Anthony Hage.



Elementary teacher Teesie Emge gives a parent a math lesson using the binomial cubes, above. Below, one of her students has laid out the cube of a trinomial using the cubing materials.



From the MIR Development Office

Complete the Picture: Bring in your puzzle piece with your Annual Fund pledge

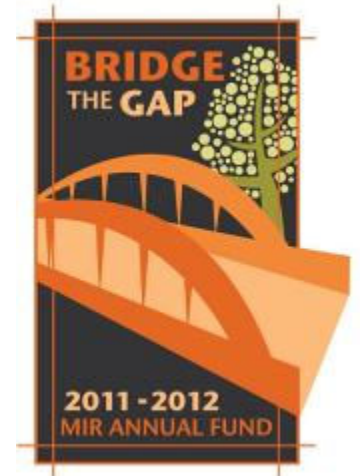
Our goal for each classroom is to reach 100% participation. To make it fun and show the progress for each class, the MIR Annual Fund committee has created a series of puzzles. As pledges or donations are returned, pieces are added to the class puzzle until it is complete.

If you have already pledged or donated, return your puzzle piece to the MIR office and we'll fill in your gap on each class in which you have a child. If you have not yet pledged, bring in your puzzle piece with your completed pledge form, and we'll fill in your gap at that time. You may also pledge online at montessoriiinredlands.org/bridgethegap.

There are several ways to donate:

- ❶ *Donate now to maximize your tax benefit*—Your contribution may qualify for a tax deduction. Make a lump-sum donation before the end of the year to have it qualify for the 2010 tax year.
- ❷ *Pledge now, pay later*—The deadline for the classroom participation program is December 31, so make your pledge now. Donation payments are not due until the end of the school year.
- ❸ *Make a monthly donation*—If you are able, consider making a larger donation broken into monthly installments.

On behalf of the students of MIR, thank you for your support!



Please consider making a monthly donation. By doing so, you provide crucial continuing support to our mission to provide every child with an individualized education. **Your donation bridges the gap between a good school, and a great school.**



The staff of MIR are the first to join this year's 100 Club! Help your classroom join the club—make your pledge by December 31!

montessoriiinredlands.org/bridgethegap

BIRTHDAYS



students

Lance Smith	12/2
William Hattan	12/3
Jacob Paugh	12/5
Rohin Singh	12/7
Keerthana Toure	12/7
Rocco DeVito	12/8
Isabella Patel	12/8
Ella Sabo	12/9
Ada Bridgers	12/10
Dutch Rumary	12/16
Elaine Spencer	12/16
Abigail Tilton	12/16
Anthony Hage	12/17
Katelyn Krahn-Urrea	12/17
Gracelyn Macknet	12/18
Thomas Dixon	12/21
Matthew Bline	12/22
Ananya Anand	12/24
Mia Davies	12/24
Eyam Eldevik	12/28
Rachel Porter	12/28
Rocco Farre	12/30
Margo Male	12/30
Jaycee Hendrickson	12/31

staff

Lisa Oliver	12/5
Kristen Gonzales	12/9
Jill McDermott	12/10
Nicole Fedorow	12/12
Shelley McCarthy	12/12
Nikki Farooq	12/17
Kelly Read	12/20

HOLIDAY SING (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

University Hall at 6:30 PM and find your seat.

Cookies needed We need 12 dozen cookies from each class (all three Toddler classes count as one) for the reception following the event. Look for sign-up sheets in the classes. Please deliver cookies to the school by Monday, December 12. Thank you in advance for your help!

DVDs Order DVDs of the performance in the classroom or the office.

School Calendar for the Holiday

December brings many holidays and a more complicated school schedule. Please note below the dates of class field trips and year-end holiday feasts.

School will be closed starting December 19 and will re-open January 2. Childcare is available December 19–22 by reservation. **The reservation deadline is December 9. Stop by the office to sign up.** Childcare is not available Friday, December 23 through Friday, December 30.

Bluebird Assembly cancelled: Due to the busy end-of-year schedule, our classes are unable to make time to prepare for this month's Bluebird Assembly. The next assembly will be held on Friday, January 20.

Piano recital to be held next week: The winter piano recital for families of Yang Chen's music students will be held Thursday, December 8 at 12 PM in Kelly's classroom. Please contact Yang with any questions.

DECEMBER 2011

28	29 Sara's class field trip, 11:30 AM Dance class, 3:30 PM	30 PTM meeting, 6 PM Parent Ed. Night, 7 PM	1 Jean/MH, Sara, & Kara/Dorama fieldtrip to see the Nutcracker Lango classes Dance class, 3:30 PM	2
5 PTM food drive begins	6 Lango classes Dance class, 3:30 PM	7	8 Recital for music students, 12 PM Lango classes Dance class, 3:30 PM	9 Jean/MH field trip, 9:30 AM Holiday break childcare reservations due
12	13 Sara's holiday celebration, 11 AM Lango classes Dance class, 3:30 PM	14 School closes @ 3:30 PM  Holiday Sing, 7:00 PM	15 Lango classes Elem. Solstice sleepover	16 Emily/Teesie and Kelly's brunch, 10 AM Nikki's brunch and graduation, 10:15 AM 10:30 AM: Marie's brunch, Jean/MH's breakfast, Kara/Dorama's fingerfood potluck, Margaretann/Nicole's brunch PTM food drive ends School closes at NOON
19	20 	21	22	23 School closed for New Year's Eve. No childcare.
Winter holiday break. No school; childcare by reservation				
26 	27	28	29	30
Winter holiday break. No school; no childcare.				

 **TWEET:** twitter.com/mirmatters