

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



BLUEBIRD BULLETIN

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What's Inside...

Report from the Board.3
Living the Montessori Journey

Curriculum Matters.3
Good Things Come in 3s: Why the Experience of the Third Year is Irreplaceable

MIR Spring Gala4
Photos of treasures for the live auction
Thank you to our sponsors

Parent/Teacher Conferences to be Held This Month. . . . 8

Early Registration Begins in March. 8
Current families receive a discount if they re-enroll by 3/31

PTM News and Notes.2
Thank you for your support of PTM!
PTM Supports Gala with New Item
PTM Events



GET READY FOR A LITTLE MAKE BELIEVE AND A LOT OF FUN!

We hope to see you this Saturday for the 14th Annual Spring Gala & Auction! This is a great date night featuring fine food, drink, dancing, and live and silent auctions. See pages 4-5 for photos of the live auction items and visit the office to see them in person. The classes have once again prepared amazing and beautiful works of art!

The Gala is no princess ball—be prepared for a raucous good time. Dress up (semi-formal) or in the spirit of the evening—your favorite children’s tale.

(Continued on page 5)



The Elementary Child and the “Second Plane”

by MAURA JOYCE, HEAD OF SCHOOL

“My vision of the future is no longer of people taking exams and proceeding from secondary school to University but of passing from one stage of independence to a higher, by means of their own activity and effort of will.”—Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori referred to the child from 6 to 12 years old as the child of the “second plane” of development. “Second” to the infancy period (birth to 6 years) and just before adolescence (12 to 18 years); this is the period she called childhood. As I meet this month with parents whose children are ready to move up to Elementary, I try to share with them the many characteristics of this age.

Like other educational theorists, Montessori described growth and development in stages, or a series of metamorphoses that happen on the path to adulthood. Montessori saw each stage as akin to the process of “a caterpillar turning into a butterfly,”—an image that makes sense and one we can relate to. However, one has to keep in mind that as there are several stages of development, there are

also several cycles of this change. That is to say, as we watch our children grow into beautiful butterflies, we have to be careful not to identify this as a point of arrival. For in order to begin the next stage of growth, they necessarily have to become caterpillars again.

The transition from Primary to Elementary is one of these points in the growth of the child and the first signs are *physical*. That 5-year-old face and body takes a turn from butterfly perfection to not-so-perfect caterpillar—teeth fall out, legs get longer, hair gets more coarse. No longer the delicate creature, they are more durable in their play. Where before they would show you even the tiniest of scratches, the Elementary child may fall,

(Continued on page 7)



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

Thank you for your support!

The PTM Board thanks all parents for your support. We could not support all of the activities we do without you. Here are some of the things PTM sponsors: Staff Appreciation Breakfast, Gala Tickets for Teachers, Lunch for August Staff In-Service, Fall Carnival, Spring Carnival, Back to School Night and more! All our families help to make MIR a fun and productive community.

PTM Supports Spring Gala with New Auction Item

PTM is thrilled to present our auction item for the Spring Gala & Auction this Saturday: Cheryl Thomas will personalize a multi-level photographic journey of your child's day at MIR. This customized black and white, sepia, or colored photography collection will be yours to enjoy as a family heirloom for years to come. This auction item is open to everyone. We hope to see you all at the Gala!

Bluebird Day is Wednesday, March 16

Show your school pride and wear your Bluebird t-shirts. PTM is currently seeking a new vendor for the printing of our Bluebird shirts. We will let you know when one is chosen.

Next PTM Meeting

Just a reminder that no PTM meeting will be held March (due to conflict with Parent/Child night). The next meeting is Thursday, April 7 at 6 PM.

Make Dinner Easy on Parent & Child Night

Margaretann, Nicole, Emily, and Teesie's 6th year students will host a spaghetti dinner during Parent & Child Night from 5 to 7:30 PM on the north campus (Margaretann's classroom). Dinner costs \$5 and will include spaghetti, salad, bread, and a drink. Funds will go toward the sixth grade trip to Washington, D.C. All MIR families are invited to dine with us!

MIR News and Notes

Journey & Discovery
rescheduled to Saturday
March 12, 8 AM to 2 PM

Due to last weekend's winter storms, MIR and The Grove School needed to reschedule *Journey & Discovery*. RSVP for the new time at montessoriiinredlands.org/journey or call the office: 909-793-6989.

Mermaids, Shriyaa Narayanan ,
age 5, Kara/Dorama's class



Parent & Child Night: *Follow Your Child*

At MIR, you often hear the phrase "follow the child." The concept is simple: Maria Montessori observed that children will show you when they are ready to take on a new challenge. If you *follow the child* rather than insist on a predetermined timeline, they will take on these new challenges enthusiastically and industriously.

On Parent & Child Night, we invite you to follow your child as they guide you through the work they do each day, giving you lessons, answering questions, or showing off a favorite activity. Teachers will be on hand to answer questions or help as necessary.

Parent & Child Night will be held Thursday, March 10, from 5 PM to 7 PM. If you have more than one child attending MIR, the schedule gives time to rotate classrooms and work with each child one-on-one.

While you may have ideas of work you want to see, your child will have his or her own agenda. We encourage you to let them lead you. *Follow the child.*



TWEET: twitter.com/mirmatters

Report from the Board

by LEELA MADHAVARAU, PRESIDENT

Living the Montessori Journey

Re-enrollment packets went out last week and the Board looks forward to answering any questions that you may have at the Board Open Forum on Monday, March 7 at 6:30 PM in the Yoga Room.

As I prepare to sign the check to register my children each year, I pause to consider why Montessori education, and Montessori in Redlands in particular, is worth it to me. At a recent meeting, I commented that MIR allows my children to retain that sense of curiosity that is inherent in us all. All too frequently, curiosity is bred out of us because it is difficult for the adults in the world to keep answering questions. This year as I write the check, I am thinking about my oldest son, currently a senior at The Grove School. In one of his essays for a university application, he wrote:

Curiosity is a prized asset in my family. With this particular sense also nurtured by Montessori education from the age of 4 until the present, I have always asked questions. Many were the child's "why" but I also wanted to know "where" and "how". I always got answers – atlases or historical tomes were hauled out and the subject explored fully (sometimes too thoroughly for a child's limited attention span). Being exposed to this attitude at home and school is a great privilege and one that I would like to use to expand Americans' knowledge of the wider world.

With so much of the globe traversed by my own family, my appreciation and interest in geography has been greatly increased. Geography is a subject that is receiving less and less attention in schools in California, with many students unable to draw a world map or locate foreign countries on already-drawn maps. With global lines more settled than ever in the past, and the rise of globalization, a simple understanding of the world seems to me to be crucial knowledge for all of the world's population. I am working on this topic of geographic illiteracy for my senior project. One practical piece of data gathering was to have the first year university students in my mother's seminar draw maps of the world without recourse to a map. They felt this

(Continued on page 7)



Curriculum Matters

By PETER DAVIDSON,
ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

"The word education must not be understood in the sense of teaching but of assisting the psychological development of the child."

—*Maria Montessori*

Good Things Come in 3s: Why the Experience of the Third Year is Irreplaceable

By now it must be second nature to you all that Montessori Primary classrooms are multi-age environments that follow a 3-year cycle. It is intuitively obvious how students in the first year of this cycle benefit from the arrangement. The 3-year-olds have the benefit of many, many role models for behavior in addition to the adults in the environment. They are surrounded by opportunities to observe and absorb the more advanced work that will some day be their privilege to explore, laying the foundation for it without even realizing they are doing so. And when they stumble, or forget a classroom procedure or encounter an obstacle they cannot overcome, there are dozens of older helping hands to assist and guide them along the way.

What is perhaps not so intuitively obvious is how they will benefit when they in turn are third-year students, but I would contend that in fact the benefits are even greater then.

It is in the third year that all of the academic preparation of the first two years comes to fruition. The work they did with the numbers 1 through 10, the teens and tens, and then the categories of the decimal system through 9,999 only come to a full expression in the third year as they count by 3s or 7s or 10s in the cube chains of numbers, or carry out the processes of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with advanced math materials, or begin to memorize math facts.

All of the steps of indirect preparation of the hand and the mind (see "The Discovery of Writing," *Bluebird Bulletin* 11/10) come together in the work of the moveable alphabet as they build phonetic words with cut-out letters. This opens the world of reading, writing, and grammar to the third-year child. As they learn phonograms (2-letter combinations) and non-phonetic "sight" words they apply these new skills by labeling the names, parts, and qualities of all

(Continued on page 6)

GALA GEMS TO ENJOY



THESE ARE SOME OF THE BEAUTIFUL TREASURES AWAITING YOU IN THE LIVE AUCTION AT THE SPRING GALA.

SARA'S CLASS: HANGING SUCCULENT GARDEN

EMILY & TEESIE'S CLASS: FAMILY GAME NIGHT



KELLY'S CLASS: OCEAN SCENE MOSAIC TRIPTYCH ART PIECE



NICOLE & MARGARETANN'S LOWER EL CLASS: SUNPRINT PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO COLLAGE



MARIA'S CLASS: NATURE-THEMED TOY CHEST & LAMP



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



NIKKI'S CLASS:
BRING MON-TESSORI HOME!
BOOKCASES
AND MATERI-ALS

SPRING GALA (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

Are you eager to win your child's classroom item, but you're not sure you'll survive the bidding? Give yourself an extra chance by purchasing a **Golden Egg Ticket**. The lucky winner will get the classroom item of their choice, no bidding required. Most items sell for \$700-\$3,000, so this is a great deal. **Golden Egg Tickets** are available in the office for \$100.

CURRICULUM MATTERS (*cont.*)

(Continued from page 3)

the classroom materials they've used in the prior two years—the names of plants, animals, countries, plane, and solid geometric shapes; the parts of the leaf, flower, fish, amphibian, reptile, bird, and mammal; and the qualities of the sensorial materials (size, color, texture, taste, and tone) including the comparatives and superlatives. It is also in this third year that they begin to develop reading comprehension and lay the groundwork for creative expression through work with the parts of speech, exploring the functions of the article, adjective, noun, verb, adverb, conjunction, and preposition.

Third year students still do practical life exercises, not just for the process as when they were 3 or 4, but now for the good of the group, taking pride in the health of the plants and animals, the beauty and cleanliness of their classroom environment. Having worked with music on a sensorial level in their first two years by matching and then grading the diatonic and chromatic scales, the third year student can now begin to recognize note values and their position on the musical scale, taking the first steps toward reading and writing in the musical language.

Although children would eventually work the decimal system, the parts of speech, and even perhaps musical notation *at some point* in a traditional curriculum, it probably



A few MIR 3rd year Primary students just before moving up to 1st grade.

wouldn't be for several years. But they are ready for it *now*. What a waste to make them wait for years for a time when they are no longer interested and when the context of two year's of careful preparation is lost. It's as if they had spent two years preparing a sumptuous feast and then are asked to wait for a few years before they dine.

But all of these academic gains pale in significance to the personality development that comes together in the third year. Third year students even *carry themselves differently*,

with the sense of self-esteem and self-assurance that comes with being the leaders of the class. When they were 3 and 4, they counted on the 5 year-olds to show the way and to help overcome obstacles. Now the 3 and 4 year-olds look to them! Even the teacher relies on them to set the standard and to help the younger ones out of respect for their competence and accomplishment. They not

only have the opportunity to develop empathy for the younger, newer, and less capable students, but to act on that empathy in a positive and responsible way.

This feeling of self-confidence, self-worth, and responsibility is perhaps the greatest benefit and accomplishment of the third year and is a nearly irreplaceable experience. This explains why a teacher looks so stricken when one of her students leaves too soon, for she knows better than anyone what a remarkable experience they will be missing.

"The Nutcracker," Nundhaa Sivabalan, age 5, Jean/MH class



Thomas Dixon, age 2½,
Sara's class



BOARD REPORT (*cont.*)

(Continued from page 3)

was a great punishment because they found it next to impossible to accomplish. Next, I hope to work with [MIR] because I have noticed that pushpin continent work means that my younger siblings can draw better maps than my mother's university students. I believe that an early focus on geography helps to answer questions about the world and allows us to know where places mentioned on the news are actually located.

Those words above confirm for me the strength of Montessori education. I know that I am sending my son off to university (either University of British Columbia or University of Toronto) still curious about the world, still hungry for knowledge and wanting to put that information to practical use creating change. It was worth every penny we spent on his time at Okemos Montessori Radmoor School in Michigan and Montessori in Redlands.

Living the Montessori Journey is not necessarily the easiest path. It is not the model of education with which many of us grew up (as my son discovered—you do have to explain it on

university application forms)—but I am firmly convinced that these children can truly change the world because they understand that the world is composed of interconnecting parts. As is so often the case, Maria Montessori expresses this most succinctly:

The secret of good teaching is to regard the child's intelligence as a fertile field in which seeds may be sown, to grow under the heat of flaming imagination. Our aim is not only to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize, but so to touch his imagination as to enthrone him to his innermost core. We do not want complacent pupils, but eager ones. We seek to sow life in the child rather than theories, to help him in his growth, mental and emotional as well as physical, and for that we must offer grand and lofty ideas to the human mind.

As always, I welcome your questions or comments, be they on Board matters or living life as a Montessori parent of four (ages 17, 14, 10 and 10). I am best reached at

leela_madhavarau@redlands.edu.

Leela MadhavaRau

President, Board of Trustees

(909) 748-8285 (work)

ELEM. CHILD (*cont.*)

(Continued from page 1)

get up, and start running again without noticing they are bleeding.

There are two other major changes for this child. *Intellectually* they are interested in the reasons for things. This child no longer just wants to know “what is it?” but wants to know “why” and “how” and the way it fits altogether. They are imaginative explorers who want to know what is beyond the concrete here and now, and imagination and reason allow them to travel back to the past and on into the future. They want to research and conduct experiments and seek knowledge that is beyond the limits of the classroom.

Elementary children are never found alone, as this is a time of extreme *social* interest. This is the age of groups, clubs, and cliques. This child wants to know how to be a friend, how to be a leader or follower, and the rules of society. They are very interested in social interactions and explore cooperation, fairness, and decision-making. The 6-12 child is very interested in what is correct behavior. The children want to know how to act in different situations and understand what is considered right and wrong in our society. In doing so, we see another “caterpillar” feature—this

social interest comes across as abrupt and impolite. Montessori called this period “the age of rudeness” because in their quest to understand social norms, they question everything!

Montessori Elementary environments are set up and conducted to cater to these characteristics. Children are given the opportunity for lots of physical movement and work. Unlike many of our school experiences, children are not made to sit for the majority of the day. Lessons cover a broad array of subjects and are open-ended to provide opportunities for research and experimentation, exploration, and discovery. Stories and impressionistic charts engage the imagination and the reasoning mind, and resources beyond the classroom (libraries, museums, botanical gardens) are made available to the child. Children are encouraged to work in small groups to help them develop their skills of collaboration and time management. Time is set aside for large group discussion about the community, rules, and problems, when they arise.

The stage is set for this plane, so that the children can begin to transform into a butterfly again. As in the previous plane, we stand ready to be amazed by their growth and development...getting ready for that beautiful creature to emerge, before the next step—you know, when they return to the caterpillar state, as an adolescent.

BIRTHDAYS



students

Taj Hoo	3/1
Abbey Umali	3/2
Felix Balbo	3/4
Catherine Mikhailova	3/4
Eric Chue	3/5
Camilla Garrity	3/5
Julien Ortega	3/6
Calder Ray-Fearon	3/6
Nathan Law	3/7
Sarah Najjar	3/8
Jeshurun James	3/9
Roland Dockham	3/10
Matthew Mikhailov	3/10
Chloe Pang	3/13
Madeline Tilton	3/13
Citlali Salas	3/15
Kaleigh Stanfield	3/15
Julia Martin	3/18
Jacob Wickstrom	3/19
Jayden Gill	3/20
Sunny Hudson	3/21
Simon Owen	3/22
Blake Rice	3/26
Everett Smart	3/28
Thomas Van Esch	3/29
Anja Eldevik	3/31

staff

Nicole Delgado	3/5
Sara-Frances Clemens	3/10
Peter Dow	3/13
Rick Campa	3/26
Jody Pighin	3/26

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Parent/Teacher Conferences

To Be Held This Month

Spring conferences for all ages and classes will be held Thursday and Friday, March 17 and 18.

Conferences give you the opportunity to discuss your child's progress privately with his or her teacher, without distractions. 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.

Visit the office to schedule your meeting time and childcare if needed. Alternate times are available if required.

Early Registration Begins in March

Re-enrollment for the 2011-2012 school year occurs this month for current families. Families who register their students by March 31 will receive a discount on the registration fees.

Early registration allows you to secure a space for your child. We have had a waiting pool for many of our programs this year and anticipate full classes again next year. Beginning April 11, we accept registration of new students. Delays in registration may result in the lack of an available space for your child.

Enrollment packets have been mailed to all families. Please read your enrollment packet carefully. There are changes to the tuition rates for next year. If you have questions about the changes, feel free to bring them to the Board of Trustees Open Forum to be held on Monday, March 7 at 6:30 PM.

Thank you for being part of the Montessori in Redlands community and allowing us the privilege to partner with you in educating your children!

MARCH 2011

28	1 Elem soccer clinic, 3:45-4:45 PM Lango classes Early registration for current families begins	2	3 Elem soccer clinic, 3:45-4:45 PM Lango classes	4/5 MIR SPRING GALA & AUCTION, 6 PM-12 AM
7 Childcare RSVP deadline for Parent Conference days/Spring Break Board Open Forum, 6:30 PM	8 Elem soccer clinic, 3:45-4:45 PM Lango classes	9 Emily/Teesie's class to Folk Music Center	10 Elem soccer clinic, 3:45-4:45 PM Lango classes Parent-Child Night, 5-7 PM	11/12 Coffee, Tea, and M.E., 9:15 AM JOURNEY & DISCOVERY, 8 AM-2 PM
14	15 Nikki's class to Getty Museum Last elem soccer clinic, 3:45-4:45 PM Lango classes	16 Bluebird assembly, 9:15 AM	17 Lango classes Parent/Teacher conferences. No school, childcare by reservation.	18
21	22	23	24	25
Spring Break. No school, childcare by reservation.				
28 Staff in-service day. No school; no childcare.	29	30 Sara's class to the Folk Music Center	31 Lango classes Early registration for current families ends	1