



BLUEBIRD BULLETIN

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EXPERIENCE MONTESSORI FOR YOURSELF

Montessori in Redlands and The Grove School invite you to *Journey & Discovery*, a semiannual event that lets you get hands-on with the Montessori curriculum.

At *Journey & Discovery* you'll see the full spectrum of Montessori from toddlers to teenagers. **Journey** through the entire curriculum from 18 months to 18 years, then **discover** the curriculum for ages 18 months to 6th grade or 1st grade through 12th grade (your choice). This discovery lets you get hands-on with the materials and work with the teachers.

For most of us, Montessori is vastly different from

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PROCESS VS. PRODUCT

by MAURA JOYCE, HEAD OF SCHOOL

“The role of education is to interest the child profoundly in an external activity to which he will give all of his potential.”—Maria Montessori

Last month, my husband, son, and I traveled to Massachusetts for a family wedding. Because my husband was very involved in the wedding festivities, we all had to miss several days of work and school. My son is in his last year of Upper Elementary and his teachers gave him a list of work to do while he was away. Neither my husband or I saw this list, in fact, before we arrived in Boston, we thought that perhaps his teachers did not have any expectations for him to work while he was out of town, as they did not say anything to us.

During the time we were away, our son spent a part of each day doing work. He borrowed my laptop to do research, he

stared at the maps in the back of the in-flight magazine, making a list, he spent time quietly writing in a notebook he brought with him. As the trip progressed, he let us know what he was doing. Memorizing the countries of Europe and their capitals, writing a biographical report on a professional soccer player he admires, reading a novel and answering some writing prompts, practicing math problems that he wrote for himself. He was given a list of suggested work—geography, report, math practice, but he chose the particulars – European capitals, biography, long multiplication and division.

What struck us on this trip was this: left

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A LITTLE BIRD TOLD ME...PTM NEWS AND NOTES

By HEATHER FLORIDIA, PTM TREASURER

As PTM Treasurer, I want to thank everyone who contributes volunteer time and effort to our many events at MIR. Your contributions not only help make our events successful, but they often help us bring in a profit. The money that we make from these “**fun**raisers” (as opposed to **fund**raisers) gets reinvested back into PTM and goes directly back into our school. This year PTM helped purchase 11 new MacBook Airs for teachers to use in their classrooms. On behalf of everyone on the PTM Executive Committee, I thank you for your commitment to MIR and wish you a safe, healthy, and happy Thanksgiving Holiday Break.

EVENTS

Halloween Carnival

Thank you to everyone who volunteered at the Halloween Carnival! Your donations and the contribution of your time helped make this annual event a howling success! As always, we had a large turnout and the event was enjoyed by the entire MIR community. Thank you again to everyone who participated.

PTM Family Skate Night

We had our highest turnout ever of 136 people at our PTM Family Skate Night at Cal Skate last month, *and* we managed to make a small profit of \$268! This event has become so popular that we added two more! Our next Family Skate Night will be January 31, 2014; mark your calendars for a rolling good time.

Camp Montessori

September’s Camp Montessori was another successful, fun-filled event. Children, parents, and teachers enjoyed singing songs, barbecuing, playing games, and camping out under the stars. Plus, this event brought in a total of \$1,396.91. Thank you to everyone who chaperoned, as well as to those who donated food and beverage items.

FUNDRAISING

Innisbrook Campaign

Thank you to all who placed Innisbrook orders. PTM collected a total of \$4,302; we will be able to keep approximately 45% of the profit from sales. This money goes back into MIR to support campus improvements and PTM-sponsored events such as carnivals and parent education. Please note that although our prize campaign has ended, you can still place Innisbrook orders any time during the school year and your purchase will continue to support our school. Place orders online at innisbrook.com (use school code 102074). Orders placed online will be delivered directly to your home. Thank you to everyone in the MIR community who participated in this fundraiser!

Box Tops for Education

Saving Box Tops is one of the easiest ways to help raise money for MIR! Box Tops are located on many of the items you use every day (see boxtops4education.com for a complete listing). Each Box Top earns our school 10 cents. You can drop off your Box Tops in the office or in the containers provided in each classroom. If you have any questions regarding Box Tops, please contact Annie Rumary at annie@onpessprinting.com.

COMMUNITY

Bluebird Shirts

Purchase a Bluebird t-shirt and show your school spirit on Bluebird Assembly Days (or any day!) We are in the process of ordering more sizes (including adult), so check with the office to determine if the size you need is available. T-shirts are currently \$10. Take a picture of your child in his or her Bluebird shirt anywhere in the world (or even at home) and submit it to Lisa Kensok by email (lisa.kensok@montessoriinredlands.org) for publication in the *Bluebird Bulletin*. The next Bluebird Assembly is Friday, November 22, so get your Bluebird t-shirt soon!

Next PTM Meeting

The next PTM meeting will be on November 19 at 6 PM, followed by the November Parent Education Night. All parents are welcome to attend the meeting.

PTM TO LAUNCH FOOD DRIVE FOR JOSEPH’S STOREHOUSE

PTM will again be organizing a food drive for Joseph’s Storehouse, a charitable organization in Redlands that helps feed and clothe the needy, this holiday season. The food drive will run December 2-13. Please bring non-perishable food items to the office or to your child’s classroom during that time. Parent volunteers and children from Upper Elementary will deliver the items to Joseph’s Storehouse at the conclusion of the food drive.

Report from the Board

by MICHELE VERCOSKI, MEMBER

50 SHADES OF BOARD COMMITTEES

Now that I've grabbed your attention—have you ever wondered what exactly the MIR Board of Trustees does? Have you ever thought to yourself, "I would like to be more involved, but I do not want to get in over my head?" If you've ever considered getting more involved in the behind-the-scenes work for the school, then read on: maybe serving on a board committee is just the way for you to contribute a special talent to the school while learning more about how the school board functions.

Governing our school is the mandate of the Board. Board members work on behalf of all MIR families, with fellow board members, and with other members of the community. Families and community members are a vital part of our school. Many people are not aware that most board committees (with the exception of the executive committee) welcome parents and community members outside of MIR. Diversity is the spice of life, and different perspectives and talents brought to the table can only help to create a richer environment for our children.

The bulk of the board's work is done through its committees. MIR's Board committees are highly functioning and specialized. Most of the Board's work and decisions happen within the individual committees, subject to the Board's oversight and approval. These committees work in two ways. Sometimes they implement the goals of the Board and at other times they make recommendations to the Board about what work should be done.

The Executive Committee and the Finance Committee are by-law mandated, permanent committees. Other than those two, the Board is free to create other committees as necessary for MIR's immediate or long term needs and goals. In addition to the Executive and Finance Committees, the MIR Board has created these working committees:

Marketing	Long Range Planning
Facilities	Nominating Development

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Curriculum Matters

By PETER DAVIDSON,
ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS, COME GREAT THINGS....

"Growth comes from activity, not from intellectual understanding."—Maria Montessori

In September I was observing in a Primary class and happened to be present as the teacher gave a lesson to a three-year-old girl on cleaning a chalkboard. They were both wearing aprons; both carried a bucket, sponge, towel and underlay to a table; and then both brought a small, and very dusty, student-size chalkboard to the table. The little girl watched with rapt attention as the teacher dipped the sponge in the bucket of water, squeezed it out and then began to wipe. As she wiped from left to right across the surface of the chalkboard, it changed from chalky white to a dark, shiny green before the child's eyes.

Once the teacher finished washing and had dried the chalkboard, she turned it over and revealed that the other side was equally chalky. Of course the little girl could hardly wait to get her hands on the sponge and have a turn. She carefully rinsed the sponge, wiped it down, and was rewarded with the sight of clean and shiny chalkboard. Then she dried it and returned it to the shelf for use in writing numbers or letters.

But she wasn't done. She noticed other chalkboards in need of washing! She repeated the process, washing both

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CURRICULUM MATTERS (*cont.*)

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sides of three more chalkboards, working and concentrating in total for some 35 minutes. Then she rinsed and squeezed the sponge one more time before returning it to the tray, emptying the bucket into the sink and drying it out, hanging the towel up to dry and replacing the towel with a dry one, then returning all of the items to their place on the shelf. She folded her apron, placed it by the tray on the shelf, and with a satisfied smile toddled off to have her snack.

After observing, I knew what I would talk about at Coffee, Tea and M.E. the following Friday: Practical Life! I borrowed the set-up for washing a chalkboard from one of the Primary classrooms, and gave the parents a demonstration of its use. I asked one of the parents to count the steps involved, and he noted 21. The parents agreed, that's a lot of steps for a 3-year-old to execute in sequence! But they still wondered, what is the point of all this?

The point is three-fold. First, it's hard to get out of sequence in practical life activities and it is immediately apparent if you do—you can't dry the chalkboard before you wipe it, can you? This is one reason we give so many practical life activities to the Toddler and Primary children—so they can learn to pay attention to and carry out an elaborate sequence of steps successfully. For later math and language work, the sequence of steps can be even more elaborate, but not at all obvious. It's an important skill to have already developed before one does multiplication with the bead frame or long division with the racks and tubes.

Second, because of the obvious change in the surface of the chalkboard itself as the child is wiping it, a practical life activity like this calls forth the intense focus that the little girl exhibited, perhaps for the first time. It is often in the exercises of practical life that the child's attention is captured, and in which the abilities to focus, concentrate, and repeat are first developed.

The satisfied smile on the little girl's face as she completed her self-appointed task was an indication of the third benefit of practical life activities: they contribute marvelously to a child's sense of responsibility and accomplishment, thus building self-confidence and self-esteem.

So far I had only talked about practical life in Toddlers

and Primary, but what about the Elementary children? It's in Elementary that the children really take on the day-to-day responsibilities for the care of the classroom environment, develop and care for vegetable gardens, and provide practical service to the younger classes in the school. It is Elementary children who put out the nap mats daily in the Toddler classes. It is Elementary children who purchase and distribute the crickets, grain, mealworms, and food pellets that feed the fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals that live in the cages, terrariums, and aquariums of the younger classes. It is Elementary children who order and distribute the pizza that all of the children can choose every Wednesday.

Elementary students also take responsibility for the planning and execution of any number of trips for small group research at zoos, museums, libraries, and commercial enterprises in the local area, activities we call "going outs." This important aspect of practical life in Elementary culminates in the planning and execution of a trip to Washington D.C. in their final year. And what is more practical than the various fundraisers—breakfast burritos, spaghetti dinners, and garage sales—that pay for that trip?

According to Dr. Adele Diamond, Professor of Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience at University of British Columbia, all of these skills—the disci-

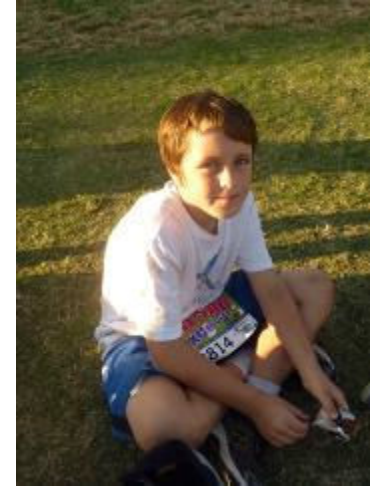
pline to stay focused, seeing tasks through to completion, concentrating, planning and practical problem-solving—are referred to as "executive functions." It is no wonder that in a study comparing children chosen by lottery to enter a Montessori public school to those also in the lottery but not chosen, the Montessori children showed significantly better executive function skills at the end of sixth grade.

To quote again from Dr. Diamond, "executive functions are more important for school readiness than IQ, continue to predict math and reading competence throughout all school years, and remain critical for success throughout life including career and marriage, and for positive mental and physical health." Wow! Career and marriage? Positive mental and physical health? From the humble beginnings of washing a chalkboard come some *really* great things!

"The satisfied smile on the little girl's face...was an indication of the third benefit of practical life activities: they contribute marvelously to a child's sense of responsibility and accomplishment, thus building self-confidence and self-esteem."

MIR SCRAPBOOK: BLUEBIRD RUNNING CLUB TAKES ON THE MT. SAC CROSS COUNTRY INVITATIONAL

Congratulations to the 28 student-athletes from MIR's Bluebird Running Club who participated in the Mt. SAC Cross Country Invitational. Students had a great experience at the race and met for pizza afterwards to celebrate their success on the course. Four of our students finished in the top 20 of their respective races.



Clockwise from top left: Delanie Walker, Jordan Cherniss, and Phoebe Cutler await their race. Lower elementary boys look on as they wait for their race to start. Ashmitha Keshavan, Aja Levesque, Aninditha Keshavan, and Morgan Stewart are all smiles.



Above: Francesco Argentina channels his inner Zen. Henry Yu wears his 4th place medal at the after-race pizza dinner.
Left: Spectators look on as upper elementary boys come to the finish line.

REPORT FROM THE BOARD (*cont.*)

(Continued from page 3)

Although it is perhaps not nearly as exciting as the title of this article suggests, serving on a committee can be very rewarding, intrinsically as well as extrinsically. Just as it takes a community to raise a child, it takes a community to raise and maintain a healthy school and ensure its viability for the future. Whether you have a special talent that you wish to share with the school, or you are simply looking to get more involved, we invite you to do so through service on a committee. The commitment typically requires attending the committee meetings (usually 7 per school year for a duration of one hour). You may be asked to do some work outside of the committee meetings as well.

If you are interested, please contact me at mmv@mccunewright.com. I would be more than happy to answer any of your questions or give you more information on serving on a board committee. I look forward to hearing from you!

PROCESS VS. PRODUCT (*cont.*)

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to his own devices—we did not prompt him to do anything—he was so motivated, interested, and focused on the task. He talked about his work with us, sharing what he discovered in his research and asking us to quiz him on the capitals. He was truly engaged in the learning process and we were impressed with his discoveries, including the very valuable discovery of contradictory information in a Wikipedia entry. (“You mean anyone can change it?!? Well that is not a very reliable source of information then. Where do you find *real* information?”)

If this sounds self-indulgent, please bear with me. The point of this story is not my pride in my son, but rather *his* pride in his work. He was genuinely happy with what he did, and his exuberance was infectious.

And then....we got home.

A week after he returned to school, I asked my son what the teachers thought of the work that he did while we were away. He gave me a blank stare and said, “I never gave it to them.” Wait...what? All that work, all that pride, and you did not hand it in? Why not? What was going on here?

Before you come to the conclusion that I did in that moment—that my son is seriously flawed in his understanding of what school is about, or that Montessori students do not care about their work -- keep reading. I had to reach down deep into my Montessori theory to remember that for children, it is during the process that all the learning takes place, and that the end product is not always a piece of paper, but rather the satisfaction in the effort itself. But I also dug deep into my own experience of

school, which was not Montessori. The things I remember were the engaging, active parts of school, not what a finished paper looked like. It was moments in a college history discussion or discovery in a high school lab, or working with my friends to memorize the state capitals in grade school. I have very few memories of a test or assignment that I turned in.

During my son’s time here, he has had lots of work product that he has cared about and wanted to display—his life-size model of Roald Dahl sits in his room, his clothesline of world flags hangs on his wall, and his portfolios of work from previous years, sit prominently on his shelf. He does have an awareness that the end product is also important. But as parents we must keep in mind that many times for *them* it is not about the product, it is more about the process of

learning, the engagement, the discovery, and the joy.

My son did turn the work in to his teachers, and he chose to add some of it to his portfolio—where he keeps his “best” work. (Also his teachers did ask about it, but he kept “forgetting” to bring it from home.) But for him the excitement and skills work and “end product” was happening in Boston, when he threw himself into the process of learning.

Parents have a couple of opportunities to learn about that process this month. This Saturday’s *Journey and Discovery* will give you the chance to engage with the materials and work the same way your child does in the classroom.

Tuesday, November 19 at 7 PM, join the teachers as they present *Engagement in Work: Process vs. Product*. More information and childcare signups will be provided soon.

PREPARING FOR SCHOOL EMERGENCIES: WHAT PARENTS SHOULD DO

by PAMELA HENRY, SCHOOL SHAKEOUT COORDINATOR

Each large earthquake that occurs in the world is like a preview of coming attractions in California. When the 7.3-magnitude quake hit near Fukushima, Japan, on October 25, the epicenter could have just as easily been Redlands, California.

As a Montessori and Grove School parent and earthquake awareness educator, I hope the big quake happens during school hours. I know my children will be in good hands because of the joint disaster planning between the students, teachers, par-

ents and staff of both schools. I've had the privilege of overseeing our Great California ShakeOut practice for the past three years. This year, on October 17 at 10:17 a.m., when our children practiced "Drop, Cover and Hold On" for 60 seconds, they evacuated their classrooms, then MIR's Upper Elementary classes and Grove's middle school students continued the drill by evacuating to our designated off-campus emergency site.

One of the areas we practice is how to reunify children with their parents. We realized in practice that it would be helpful for you to know what to do in that scenario.

The first step begins with your own family action plan. There are a lot of resources to help you make a plan with your family and what to do "if". In our family, we know not to rush over to the school right away, because the school and emergency personnel are required to account for every child and assess any injuries. Our schools have these procedures down and are ready to care for our children until we arrive. Also, we as parents may be required to stay at our job to follow our own organization's emergency procedures. This needs to be part of our family plan. Again, the schools are capable of taking care of our chil-

dren for as long as necessary.

When reunification happens, it takes place at the MIR soccer field (not the main building). Once at the school, to ensure the safety of all children parents will be required to follow instructions from staff. We may even be asked to assist.

Please note that you may not be able to get through on the school phone lines in the event of an emergency, even if they are operating. That's because everyone may have evacuated the buildings. The school will contact you if possible and appropriate to the situation. Otherwise, it is up to us as parents to come to school.

If you are like many families at MIR, you may not be native to California and may not have grown up practicing earthquake drills. We highly recommend you do practice as a family and prepare your emergency plan. The City of Redlands is offering Community Emergency Response Team training in Redlands the last weekend in January, 2014. The weekend course is designed to help ordinary civilians know how to respond in emergencies and become life-saving citizens. For more information or to sign up, go to www.cityofredlands.org/node/937.—Pamela Henry, *Fault Line, family earthquake plans, callfaultline@gmail.com*

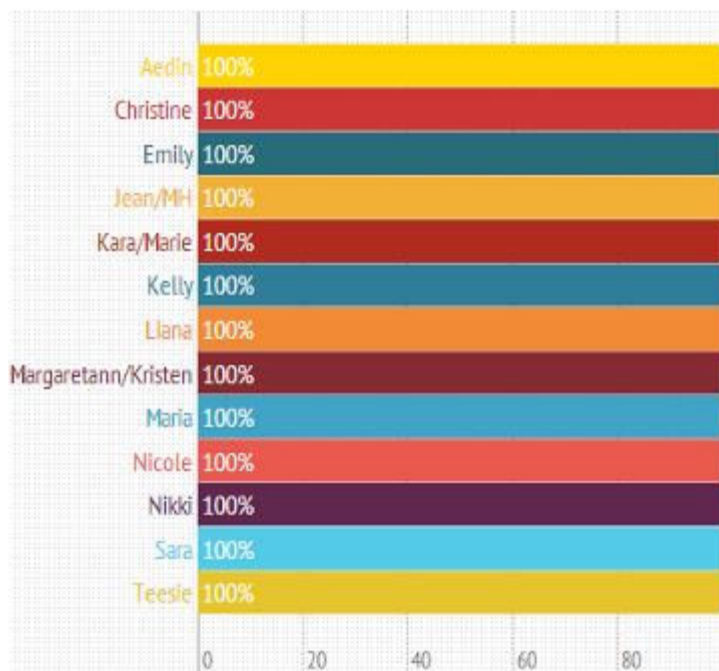
• THE MIR ANNUAL FUND •

WE GOT IT "DONE IN 31"

Thank you to the families, friends, staff and Board of Trustees of MIR who made this year's Annual Fund participation campaign a huge success. **Thank you for your generosity in "paying it forward" for current and future generations of students.** Your contribution will help us provide the best possible learning environment for your child now, and for students for decades to come.

It was an experiment for us, moving this big push earlier in the year and away from the busy holiday season. We hope that makes the end of your year a little less hectic, even in a small way. And now we're happy to say—**THAT'S IT. WE'RE DONE.**

Classroom Results



Journey & Discovery (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

our own educational experience. While we can read about Montessori education, attend parent events, and observe our child's classroom, it's hard to truly understand what our children do each day.

This event will help you get to know your child's world. **There is no better way to understand Montessori education and whether it is right for your child for the long term.** Please join us!

When: Saturday, Nov. 2, 8 AM–2 PM.

Where: Start at MIR.

Lunch will be served.

RSVP: via SchoolCues.

Space is limited.

PARENT EDUCATION FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS 18 MOS. TO 3 YEARS

Parents of students ages 18 months-3 years (Toddlers and first-year Primary students) are invited to learn about early childhood development milestones and how to support your children's development at home. Childcare is available at no cost for enrolled Toddler and Primary students. Sign up through SchoolCues. *This event is limited to the parents of children in the age ranges noted.*

BREAKFAST BURRITOS RETURN NOVEMBER 15

The MIR 6th year Elementary students will be serving breakfast burritos and juice on Friday, November 15 for their next fundraiser for their Washington, D.C. trip. Burritos will include non-dairy options and will be served 7:30-9 AM. Thank you to everyone who has supported (and continues to support) us!

STUDENTS TO CELEBRATE GIS DAY

On Wednesday, November 20 parents and local community members will show MIR students how geographic information system (GIS) technology is being used for everything from keeping the electricity running to helping conservation efforts. For more information, visit gisday.com.

Volunteers are still needed to present to some of our classes. If you are interested, contact Pepa Massih at pmassih@esri.com for information.

SCHEDULE YOUR PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCE(S)

Parent/Teacher conferences offer you the chance to meet one-on-one with your child's teacher(s) to discuss their progress. Conferences will be held November 25 and 26. You will receive a progress report for your child and be able to discuss each academic and social/emotional area. **You must be registered in SchoolCues to sign up for an appointment.**

November 2013

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
28  Dance	29 Lango classes  Soccer	30  Dance	31 Lango classes Annual Fund "Done in 31" drive ends  Cricket 	1 Childcare reservations due for Veteran's Day 2 Journey & Discovery 3 6th year Farm lunch
4  Dance	5 Lango classes  Soccer	6 Beginnings (Parent Ed for 18 mos.-3 yrs.)  Dance	7 Lango classes Make up and retake pictures Women's yoga, 6:15 PM  Cricket	8 Staff in-service day. No school, no childcare.
11 Veteran's Day. No school, childcare by reservation.	12 Lango classes Equal Exchange gift sales start  Soccer	13 Nicole—La Brea Tar Pits  Dance	14 Lango classes Nikki—Jurupa Discovery Ctr. Teesie—Crystal Cove Park Women's yoga, 6:15 PM  Cricket	15 Payments due  Breakfast Burritos Coffee, Tea, and M.E., 8:45 AM
18  Dance	19 Lango classes Childcare reservations due for Conferences PTM Mtg, 6 PM Parent Ed Night, 7 PM	20 GISday  Dance	21 Lango classes	22 Jean/MH—LA Zoo Bluebird Assembly, 9:15 AM
25 Parent/Teacher conferences. No school, childcare by reservation.	26	27	28	29 
		School closed for the holidays. No school, no childcare.		