



The Monthly

Volume IX, Issue 7

March 2010

From the Headmaster's Chair

By John Moncure, Ph.D.

In study after longitudinal study, children in Montessori schools excel in every academic discipline. Not surprisingly, the greatest difference between the scores of Montessori children and their traditionally-educated classmates and neighbors is in social awareness. As parents and faculty members we emphasize the "Grace and Courtesy" skills of cooperation, collaboration, sharing, taking turns, and so on. We firmly believe civility is important for our children to become successful, happy as well-adjusted adults, and the time to start practicing it comes at a very young age.

Addressing this note, as I am, to Montessori parents, I'm probably preaching to the choir. But some parents have children still too young to have confronted the issue of video games, television violence and other influences, and so my words may have some benefit to them in the "forewarned is forearmed" category. Besides, I want to go on the record with my thoughts on the subject.

Studies are far from unanimous on the subject. A

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Board Approves 2010-2011

Budget

New Enrollment Packets on the Way

By MSC Staff Writer

At the February meeting of the Board of Directors the school budget for 2010-2011 was approved. The new budget envisions a student body of 88 children, about the same as the current enrollment. By careful allocation of resources MSC will be able to cover all expense items including the Campus Fund, a reserve for unexpected expenses.

All enrolled students except for those graduating to the middle schools have a space reserved for them until April 20th. Some classes have no space available for next year until children moving out of town or leaving MSC create additional space. While Dr. Moncure does not anticipate adding the third Primary Class next fall, he admits the possibility exists that demand may outstrip current space. "We have an abundance of talent in current and former employees, and I have made the appropriate arrangements in case re-opening Primary B becomes feasible.

Since the snow-blanketed Mardi Gras did not make the kind of income as in past years, only a smaller amount was available from other fundraising events to ensure scholarships would be available again next year.

The school will be simplifying alternatives in the re-enrollment process as well. First, instead of calculating a percentage for parents who choose the monthly payment option, the Fee Schedule Worksheet lists monthly, semiannual, and annual options as a full amount. The school has also added \$200 per year to most annual tuition rates, but it has brought back a \$200 Early Commitment Credit for parents who re-enroll their children by April 20th,

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Office Notes

By Karen Porter

In the next few days you will receive your child's re-enrollment packet for the 2010/2011 school year. Please read all the information carefully as several changes were made for the coming year. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact the office. Mid March we will send home the Rainbow Care signup sheets for Spring Break. Rainbow Care is available Monday, April 5th through Friday April 9th. Please remember to sign up early as spaces are limited. Just a reminder that March 1st was the last payment for students on the Monthly Tuition Payment Plan for the 2009/2010 school year. Best news yet: no monthly payments are due in April or May ☺

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thus cancelling out the increase. Dr. Moncure points out that parents who, "re-enroll their child at the same level by 20 April, with the same payment plan, will pay the same amount as this year." The only exception is a small actual increase (\$200) at the Toddler level, and a small decrease at the Primary level (\$100) to reflect the difference in cost to support those programs.

Thus, effectively, in recognition of the effect of the economic situation, the school has not raised tuition since 2007.

The school has also simplified after school program options. It has added a "morning only" Extended Day plan for \$300 per year, designed to meet the needs of parents who head to work early but are able to pick children up by the dismissal time. Although hourly rates for Extended Day are not listed on the worksheet the school will continue to offer flexible hourly care for \$4.00 per hour.

Other aspects of the re-enrollment process remain as they were last year.

Progress Reports

By Alice Clark

Cameron Jenkins, in a paragraph describing her appreciation of appreciation, wrote, [Without appreciation] "people would be bored because they would not appreciate anything enough to do it." Analyzing and appreciating our own efforts empowers us to learn from experience and influence

"Progress Reports," continued at next column

Calendar of Events

Spring Pictures

- March 3rd – Carolina Sports Photography will be taking pictures of each class and individual pictures of students who missed fall picture days.

Parent Conferences

- March 5th – look for individual schedules from your child's teacher, Rainbow Day

Field Trip

- March 15th – Lower Elementary trip to the Koger Center to see "Charlotte's Web", starting at 9:45AM

Board Meeting

- March 15th – 6:30PM in Primary B classroom

Spring Break

- April 5th through 9th – Rainbow Care will be available. Spaces are limited so be sure to sign up early!

Field Trip

- April 16th – Lower Elementary trip to the International Festival at the Fairgrounds, departing 9AM

"Progress Reports," continued from previous column

our lives. This month, I want to share with you some of the insights of our Upper Elementary students. Last November, each student developed three goals, one in an area of character development, one in an area of learning skills, and one in an area of academics. The process included writing how practicing this chosen goal would help the student and what he planned to do to practice it.

Last week, each student wrote his progress report describing what he had accomplished. He also included what he felt he has improved in most during this year and what he did to bring this about. As people learn to identify what they have done to produce results, they are empowered as competent people who can influence what happens to them. It gives them the tools to solve problems proactively and reduces reliance on a "victim mentality" prevalent in those who feel entitled to achieve results without effective strategies and effort. As I read the insights these students have written, once again I realize how fortunate I am to share this experience with them. In accordance with their wishes, I have not included any names or identifying information for this was not written for an audience.

I feel that I have improved in

- Establishing friendships with peers be-

"Progress Reports," continued on page 3

Exciting Topics Discussed

By Karen Tolliver

From month to month a wide variety of topics serve as our focus in the Primary Class. Continents, famous artist, music, and animals are just a few topics discussed. Even though some would say the children are too young to understand some of the topics discussed, it is hard to prove that when you see and hear the knowledge the children gain during the month. During the month of February Primary C discussed interesting facts about Africa, the sounds of rhythm instruments and painter Vincent Van Gogh.

The children learned about many different animals that live in Africa. It was interesting for them to discover that the tallest, fastest and largest land animal lives in Africa. They enjoyed learning a few Swahili words like *rafiki* (friend) and *jambo* (hello). After listening to songs from East Africa the children were able to pick out a few Swahili words. They also practiced walking on a balance beam while imitating the women of Africa who carry their water pots on their heads and baskets in their hands. This was a good challenge for some of the children but a fun experience as well.

Talking about rhythm instruments was a great addition to the lessons learned relating to Africa. The children were able to learn the sounds of different rhythm instruments and soon were able to identify the instruments without looking at them. With practiced self control and respect for other instrument players, the children were able to play rhythmic patterns together using six different rhythm instruments.



Rendition of "Starry Night" by Amelia

"Topics," continued at next column

"Topics," continued from previous column

Vincent van Gogh was our featured artist for the month of February. We started with a short review of his life. No matter how long or short the discussion is about Vincent van Gogh, the children usually talk mostly about his ear and the famous painting "Starry Night". The children were impressed by his painting style. Some of the children painted their own version of "Starry Night" with big strokes of curves and spirals.

Now that the month of February has come to an end, we will try to move on to the month of March which holds more fun and interesting facts. We would like to thank our parents for assisting us on our last field trip to see the ballet of the "Lion King". Without the help of our wonderful parents the fun and interesting facts would be limited.

"Progress Reports," continued from page 2

- cause I have been trying harder.
- Showing perseverance in solving problems because I keep trying. I do not give up; I keep going until the task is finished no matter how many errors I have. I also try to do more thinking.
- Seeing mistakes as a part of learning because now I stay calm, fix my errors, and get help when I need it.
- All of my math areas because I take my time and solve the problem. It seems the answer just pops in my head.
- Respecting peers and adults because I have been thinking about what they do for me, and that helps me build up my respect.
- Listening attentively because when I listen, I feel as though I have really done this before, but really I have never even done it.
- Doing research because I have been doing it more.
- My concentration because I have started to sit down and work. This has helped my overall work and my relationships with peers.
- Operations because I practiced, and now it's fun.
- Expressing my ideas orally with confidence

"Progress Reports," continued on page 4

because I have practiced with myself and others.

- My listening skills because I remember to listen more closely in circle. Now I can do my work on my first try.
- My math because I have tried hard, and now I barely ever get my problems wrong.
- My math because I worked hard on my multiplication facts and never gave up.
- Seeking help when I need it because I have learned to ask questions.
- Making an effort to show honesty because I have practiced courage to not lie to family or friends.
- Showing perseverance in solving problems because I pitch in ideas and try to focus on the problem.
- My ability to express my ideas orally because I have started to observe people who can express ideas well.
- Reading comprehension because I started reading every night for thirty minutes. Now I read better books on a higher level, and I understand them.
- Listening and taking notes because I have tried very hard to practice this.
- Reading fluency because I am reading a lot more.
- Seeing making mistakes as a part of learning because now I fix my mistakes without a frown on my face.
- Extensive outside reading because I decided to read every day to make myself a better reader.
- Spanish because I listen and attend every class.
- Reading comprehension because now I take more time with my reading.
- Grammar because I started out making loads of mistakes. Now I have learned from my mistakes, and I understand editing.
- Following directions without repetition because I listen carefully without being told more than once.
- Being enthusiastic about learning because I look on the bright side, and then I enjoy it.

Artists are discovered in Primary A

By Mariyam Petiwala

Vincent Van Gogh was our featured artist this month. We learned that he was a painter made famous through his use of vivid colors and that he was a role model for modern art. We also discovered that a "still life" is a work of art where the artist chooses to depict an inanimate object in an unnatural setting. For example, flowers in a vase instead of in a landscape, or other objects on display. In our classroom, we started with a basket filled with plastic fruit including bananas, oranges, apples and pears.



Sydney Explores Vivid Colors

We discussed sketching with a pencil first and then painting, and drawing tips, such as a basket can start as two smiles, a large one on top, the small on the bottom and then connecting it for the sides of the

"Artists", continued on page 5

Changes to the 2009-2010 *Family Directory*:

Welcome to the Toddler Class:

Jurnee Jackson
Chipper Powell
Promise Reid

Welcome to the Primary C Class:

Martez Reid

Celebrate the transition from Toddler to Primary A of:

Ciara Salmond

Celebrate the transition from Toddler to Primary C of:

Hannah Potteiger
Trent Spilker

“Artists”, continued from page 4

basket. Finally, we observed the basket and noted that we could only see part of the banana as the basket hid the other half, that the pear was on its side, etc... Now we were ready... and budding artists emerged.



Taylor Displays her Van Gogh Style

After days of painting various fruit baskets, imaginations soared and we soon had still life paintings of potted plants, the bear shaped honey container, and even a picture hanging on our wall. We were truly amazed with the beautiful and creative paintings that have been painted this year, and would like to share a few of our still life paintings and models with you.

Montessori Education Week

The last week of February is celebrated around the world as Montessori Education Week. Although MSC was on Winter Break, the week was marked, with MSC participation, in a ceremony at the State Museum.



The Upper Elementary Choir of Brockman Elementary School (a public Montessori program in Richland County) sings an original composition containing the words of Dr. Montessori

“Education Week”, continued from previous column

The ceremony opened with remarks from Kathleen Trewella-Grant, president of the South Carolina Montessori Alliance (SCMA) and a performance by the Brockman Elementary School Upper Elementary class. Jody Swanigan, Principal of East Cooper River Montessori Charter School read the Governor’s Proclamation of Montessori Week in South Carolina.



Montessori students from around the state contribute to the charitable causes endorsed by SCMA

Following the presentation, students from around the state described their efforts to raise funds for Pennies for Peace, Wells of Love, the Haiti Project, and the Ronald McDonald House. Dr. Moncure brought several pounds of pop-tops from soda cans collected by MSC students.

Each year the SCMA Board selects several charities to support. Schools may choose to participate through the state organization if they wish. Dr. Moncure hopes to enlist volunteer support from several parents to oversee these efforts at MSC.

Meredith Hines Honored

by MM Staff Writer

Meredith Hines, Director of the Toddler Classroom, was honored at a ceremony in Sumter Monday evening as she joined Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society at Central Carolina Technical College in recognition of her academic achievement. As Dr. Tim Hardee, President of the college, wrote in the announcement, the honor recognizes her “dedication to scholarly success”.

Membership eligibility is based on the number of hours completed and a GPA of 3.25 or higher. It is,

“Hines,” continued on page 6

recent study in *Psychological Bulletin*, a journal of the American Psychological Association, shows that playing violent video games increases violent thinking, attitudes and behaviors among players. And it does nothing to promote positive social behaviors. But a commentary in the study recognizes inconsistencies in results. Likewise, a 2008 study on the effects of video games on young teenagers by the Harvard Medical School Center for Mental Health and Media, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, found that “the strong link between video game violence and real world violence, and the conclusion that video games lead to social isolation and poor interpersonal skills, are drawn from bad or irrelevant research, muddleheaded thinking and unfounded, simplistic news reports.”

So does this mean that *Grand Theft Auto* will not lead to anti-social behavior? Fortunately, the authors of the study stepped outside the rarified world of statistics and regression analysis and used (uncharacteristically) simple logic: “Video games are neither inherently good nor inherently bad,” the researchers wrote. “But people learn. And content matters.” Given the importance of social skills to the current and future success of our children, is it worth playing with the fire?

Boys, in particular, are drawn to violence. I speak from personal experience. And while violence on television (there were no video games in my youth) was much tamer than today, I managed to find ways to express my basic instincts, to the great regret of my dear mother who, in misinformed fru-

“Headmaster”, continued at next column



Become a Fan of MSC!

If you have a Facebook account, just type “Montessori” in the search window and click “become a fan”. We will be posting announcements of major school events and photo albums after the event. While most of this the information is available in the *Monthly*, we hope the MSC Facebook page will be more timely.

stration at my martial leanings, called me “a Prussian” (I assume that was the worst thing she could say without resort to colorful Anglo-Saxon monosyllables). And, even though I might have been Prussian, I got over it (well, mostly).

We don’t allow toy guns in school, and we don’t “play guns” on the playground. But boys will pick up sticks and shoot it at their friends (who, by the way, delight in shooting back), and when we remind them that (a) sticks can be dangerous if picked up and (b) we don’t play guns at Montessori, they then use their fingers to shoot imaginary bullets at one another until we intervene again. It is, and shall always be, a constant effort to remind boys of this (girls, I suppose, can participate as well, but in my observations they surface in infinitesimally smaller numbers). And yet it will always also be one of the most important tasks we can perform. For what we ignore we endorse in absentia, and what we condemn but cannot extinguish we at least label as unacceptable.

It is my belief that violence in the media can be—but is not necessarily—harmful to children. I also believe it is the duty of every adult to recognize the natural instinct in our children but practice peaceful behavior ourselves and express strongly to them our distaste for violence, however imaginary it may be. In this way we model the behavior we wish to inculcate in our children, in our hope that they grow up to be the ambassadors of peace for which Montessori is celebrated.

“Hines”, continued from page 5

therefore, a special honor afforded to a small group of outstanding students.

She qualified for and was awarded a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship. This state program provides comprehensive scholarships for teachers employed at regulated child care facilities an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education. The scholarships are an effort to improve the quality of child care in South Carolina, available to teachers, who are working in state regulated child care facilities, including MSC.

At the conclusion of her scholarship Meredith will continue to complete her bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education.

Let Them DO IT!

By Brenda Coleman

The Montessori Environment is unique because it fosters independence and responsibility. We encourage students to do things for themselves and allow them to pursue the task to the end. By allowing the opportunity to explore the task, students learn how to organize, manage, and develop responsibility as well as a sense of belonging to a community. They practice skills day to day, first becoming a habit and finally evolving into life skills.

Parents can also foster independence and responsibility at home:

1) Establish 2 or 3 chores to be completed by the week. (Remember, a week has seven days). For example: your child could put up dishes after dinner, pick up items in family room, dust, vacuum and fold and sort laundry. The key to making tasks successful is allowing extra time to do the chores and remember to honor the effort.

2) Discuss your expectation of chores.

3) Both parent and child should establish when the chore should be completed based on schedules.

4) Establish consequences for not completing chores.

When you encourage your child to assist at home with chores, he is less likely to develop a sense of **helplessness**. A child who is not expected to help around the house—to participate in the family domestic business—is receiving a subliminal message that his parents lack trust, or confidence in his ability to participate. Such a message is not synchronous with the message at school, because we KNOW they can do it.



Child Find

By Office Staff

The office just received a facsimile from the ABC Special Needs Program about a program to assist families with pre-school-age children who may have developmental delays.

If you believe your child may have such a delay consult with his Classroom Director to discuss her observation. Then contact the school district office and relay your concerns.

The school district will provide forms for you to complete and then set up a date for a formal evaluation. The school can then provide results and recommendations.

If you have further questions, contact Karen at the MSC office.

Montessori NewsBits

This new column allows easy access to items of interest in the greater Montessori community.

[China's elite kindergartens](#)

Lexology (registration)

One such institution that offers a top of the line education to young students ages one and half to twelve years old, the International **Montessori** School of ...

[Budding artists descend on Holter](#)

Helena Independent Record

The event, which is in its 19th year, benefits the Holter Museum Docents and the Helena Public Schools

Montessori Parents. "It's a way to support our ...

[Double Treat To Raise Cultural Awareness](#)

Bru Direct

Bandar Seri Begawan - Joyful Kids **Montessori** School recently celebrated the 26th National Day and Chinese New Year. The school vicinity was adorned with ...

[Montessori students celebrate peace day](#)

Corpus Christi Caller Times

Corpus Christi **Montessori** School students Diego Macias (left) and Elisse Martinez blow bubbles on Friday to culminate the school's participation in National ...

...

[Fitzpatrick: Thank you to Hearthstone](#)

Milford Daily News

Hearthstone's **Montessori**-based approach to Alzheimer/Dementia care really works. It has been a year now, and mom is doing well. For anyone who is in need of ...