



# MONTESSORI CHILDREN'S HOUSE OF PEORIA

## August 2011 Newsletter

### **Upcoming Events:**

- Open House for new Primary students – Aug. 29, 9:30-11:00
- First Day of School – Aug. 31 (Short Schedule)
- Regular Schedule begins – Sept. 1 (8:30-11:30/3:00)

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### MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear Parents,

What an exciting time for our school! As I write this, my wife Kate and I are making the final preparations for our move back to Peoria from Chicago, and we're both very excited about all that is going to be happening with MCHP over the next few years. Personally, I look forward to facing the challenges of the new role as Head of School, as our founders Pat and Robin have retired. We will all miss them dearly.

Many of you are aware that our School has surely faced its share of challenges. When I started as an Elementary teacher in the fall of 2000, we suffered through the devastating fire at First Presbyterian that destroyed many of our materials and forced us to make an emergency move to Trinity Lutheran. In 2005, the year Kate and I returned from a year hiatus teaching in Paris, the school was forced to move again from the new First Pres back to our current location (and original home). Through each of these events – each one seeming like it could be the end of the school – our parent and staff family has rallied together and performed miracles. The School, now 34 years old, has, in short, just about seen it all. But our school community has *always* succeeded in helping it thrive.

Currently, we face a situation in which our enrollment has dropped to the lowest it has been in years. This is a challenge that Montessori schools, and private schools in general, all over the country have been facing. We have faith, though, that with the group of committed families and staff that we are truly blessed to have with us, we will be able to make it through this new rough patch we are facing.

I'd like to extend a thank you to all of you who realize the importance of a great education for your children – the kind of education that is *scientifically* proven to follow the natural development of each child and to encourage their academic, physical, social and emotional growth – all in a spirit of peace and world citizenship. Thank you for doing what you need to do to stay with the school during hard times and to keep your children here with us.

I look forward to this year with tremendous optimism for the future of our school. Anytime you have anything at all to discuss, my door will always be open. I'd love to chat and get to know all of you a little better. Until then...

John Meredith Cox



## First Day of School

The first day of school for everyone is **Wednesday, August 31**. We will observe a shortened schedule on that day. Below is the schedule for that day:

**Primary** (3-6) students: 8:30 - 10:30 AM

**Elementary** students:

**First-graders only:** 8:30-10:30 AM

All returning students: 12:30-2:00 PM

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**Regular schedule** begins the next day...

**Thursday, Sept. 1 –**

Morning 8:30 - 11:30 AM

Full-Day 8:30 - 3:00 PM

## Open House

Our year begins with an Open House for new Primary (3-6) students on Monday, August 29, from 9:30 to 11:00AM. This is the time for new children to meet their teachers and see their new school. We look forward to this as a positive experience for your child, so that s/he will feel more comfortable on the first day of school along with the returning children. If this is your first year with our School community, please plan to join us any time that morning.

## Health Records

Parents should submit their child's health requirement forms by September 12. The State of Illinois requires all *new* students to have a physical exam with proof of immunizations.

A list of required medical forms can be found in the updated Parent Handbook, which will be distributed on the first week of school, and on our website at [peoriamontessori.org/parents](http://peoriamontessori.org/parents).

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*"The child has within  
him the man he will  
become."*

*-Maria Montessori*

## Our Newsletters

Each month, we send out a newsletter that requires your attention. It is through our monthly newsletters that we provide much-needed information about events that are occurring, as well as what students have been doing, and various other items about our school community. It is our primary communication link to parents, so please be sure to peruse each month's issue. If you do not receive one, please let us know. We also offer an electronic version, which guarantees delivery! To be on our mailing list, go to [www.peoriamontessori.org/parents](http://www.peoriamontessori.org/parents) and enter your email address in the field on the right.



## Important Information and Reminders

Extended-day children will need to bring their **lunch** to school. Inform your child's teacher if your child has any food restrictions, including vegetarianism, religious dietary restrictions, and certainly, food allergies. We need to know this by Thursday, September 1. Also, *please label your child's lunchbox, thermos, and drinking cup with a permanent marker.* We want to emphasize well-balanced, healthy lunches. We see direct evidence of inattention after low-nutrition lunches. Soda for lunch is not permitted, and we ask that Primary children do not bring taco or pizza Lunchables. Nourishing lunches that are easy for your child to manage should be our mutual goal.

It is requested that if your child is not completely reliable in his/her toilet training, a change of clothing should be brought to school. Please include socks and mark a bag containing the clothes with your child's name. At school, adult vocabulary will be used to refer to toilet habits. Children will be reminded to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Part of the Montessori philosophy is that a child should manage his own clothes. Please keep this in mind when choosing the clothing your child will wear. Also, *any clothing such as jackets and sweaters that might be removed and lost needs to be marked with the child's name.* At no time should any child bring gum, toys, or makeup to school. Items from nature are welcomed.

During the school year, it is important for you to let us know if your child is ill or will not be attending for some other reason. If your child has a temperature, it is imperative that you have him/her remain at home for a twenty-four hour period after the fever has subsided. Parents will be called to pick up a child if one returns to school too soon. This is to show consideration for the other children in the classroom. The school prefers not to dispense medicine.

### Picking Up / Dropping Off

It is important that no child enters the classroom earlier than five minutes before the start of class. The time prior to their arrival is used by the teachers for preparation. Unless your child attends before-care, please wait in the parking lot with your child until it is time for him/her to enter.

To drop off your child, enter the large parking lot on the west side of the building and form a line along the south side of the lot, to pull up to the end of the sidewalk. Children should be let off one at a time at the sidewalk. There will be a greeter there to meet each child and welcome him/her into school each day. When you park to pick up your child please park in a lined parking space, as the area along the perimeter of the lot is a fire lane and must be kept clear. Also, the church requests that Montessori parents use only the Montessori entrance, and that we avoid parking in the front (north parking lot) of the church, as it is for church use only.

*One way to foster self-reliance in your child is to encourage him/her to enter the building with the help of the greeter, who will be stationed at the end of the sidewalk.* It may take a little time for your child to be this independent. Until then, please park in a *designated spot* and accompany him/her to the classroom. Then, remain in the hallway while your child enters the classroom.

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*"A child is an eager observer and is particularly attracted by the actions of the adults and wants to imitate them. In this regard an adult can have a kind of mission. He can be an inspiration for the child's actions, a kind of open book wherein a child can learn how to direct his own movements. But an adult, if he is to afford proper guidance, must always be calm and act slowly so that the child who is watching him can clearly see his actions in all their particulars."*

-Dr. Montessori



## Important Information for New Parents

**Monthly tuition** payments are due in the first week of each month unless an alternate time has been set up with the school office. However, with automatic tuition deposit, you can select a later day. This is the method of payment we prefer. The September payment will be by check, while we assemble the papers needed to start the automatic deposit procedure. This procedure saves us all much time and effort. Also, we reserve the right to require automatic payment from anyone who is consistently late in paying by check. In the past we have had parents who have taken family trips and request that they be exempt from making their tuition payment during that time. Our policy requires that all parents fulfill their monthly tuition obligation. The first automatic tuition deposit will occur in October. Your auto-pay can be set for the first, the fifth, or the tenth of each month, for October through May.

As the year progresses, the classroom teachers will post sign-up sheets outside their doors asking for **donations of appropriate snacks**. A list of acceptable snacks will be posted and distributed, as well. It is important to us to provide only healthy, wholesome foods to the children throughout the day. In addition, we will be asking for donations of whole carrots (not baby carrots), apples, and bananas for the children to wash and prepare for eating. These provide the children with an opportunity for Practical Life work as well as a healthy snack. These donations are very much appreciated.

The school does not accept treats for **a child's birthday**. Children with allergies are sometimes adversely affected, and many parents do not wish their children to have sugar treats. Your child may donate a book to his/her classroom library as a birthday commemorative, inscribed with his/her name and the date. We would also welcome a short history of your child's life to share with the class on that day. This would be a great project for you to do with the special honoree.

Two days will be set aside in the Fall and in the Spring for **parent conferences**. However, a parent desiring a conference at any time will certainly be accommodated. A telephone conference can be arranged with your child's teacher for any day between 3:15 and 3:45. Impromptu conferences initiated when picking up your child are seldom satisfactory to either party. If you have a question or concern, the proper way to proceed is to call the Office or send a note to the teacher requesting a time to be set aside.

*"This is education, understood as a help to life; an education from birth, which feeds a peaceful revolution and unites all in a common aim, attracting them to a single centre. Mothers, fathers, politicians: all must combine in their respect and help for this delicate work of formation, which the little child carries on in the depth of a profound mystery, under the tutelage of an inner guide." -  
Dr. Montessori*

### *Please Update Us*

*If your child has discovered any allergies or has undergone any form of testing this summer, please inform the school right away. Also, let us know of any changes in your family which might affect your child. Of course, confidentiality will be observed.*

*Also, if your address or phone number has changed over the summer, please let us know.*



### **Before and After-Care**

Before-school and after-school care begins on Thursday, September 1. All parents who plan to use this service must register in advance. The September payment for this care should be made with September's tuition payment. It can then be included with your regular payment in the months to follow. Extra-care time is a service provided for parents who need it due to work schedules. If you do not register for it, we expect you to drop off and pick up your child at the proper time. Forms for this will be available on the first day of school.

We will give the Primary children time to get used to their regular teachers and classrooms before we begin their music and Spanish lessons. Elementary will continue with their French studies, and of course, art and music.

### **School Supplies:**

**Elementary** supply lists are enclosed with this newsletter. They are also available for download at [peoriamontessori.org/parents](http://peoriamontessori.org/parents).

**Primary (3-6)** children do not have a special list of supplies. We do ask, though, that each family send in a box of white tissues. We could also use donations of construction paper, in all colors.

Thank you so much!

### **Elementary Lockers**

Our beautiful Elementary lockers will be finished by the first day of school. It will be so nice to have an attractive place for each child to store his/her things! Unfortunately, though, we weren't able to collect enough funds last year to entirely cover the cost of materials and construction.

**So, we are asking all Elementary parents to make a one-time \$10 per child donation at the start of the year.** You can pay in cash at the Office, or you may simply add it on to September's tuition payment, with a note in the memo line. We appreciate your dedication to beautifying our School!

### **New Parents Coffee**

*This year we will be hosting a New Parents Coffee on Tuesday, September 27 at 8:45a.m. (This is instead of our usual evening meeting.) This is an informal opportunity for all parents who are new to our school community to meet together with the Head of School over coffee and pastries to discuss the Montessori philosophy in more depth. We will get a chance to talk about what goes on in the Montessori classroom, what you can expect from your child and your child's teachers over the coming years, and what you can do at home to help. See you there!*

### **Parent Nights**

We are looking forward to some interesting Parent Nights this year! We'll be sure to let you know as soon as the first one is scheduled. We do expect that all parents make an effort to attend Parent Meetings. It is important to us to build our school community and have parents who are committed to learning about our philosophy.