



MONTESSORI CHILDREN'S HOUSE OF PEORIA

October 2011 Newsletter

MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear Parent,

It's so lovely outside, yet it's hard to believe it's already autumn. Kate and I are celebrating our tenth wedding anniversary this month, so this time always reminds us of our first days as newlyweds. I always imagine this season is equally nostalgic for others and that's why so many people name fall as their favorite season of the year. Or maybe it's because their children are hard at work at school after a long summer?

I've been thinking quite a bit lately about the purpose of education, and of a Montessori education, in particular. We're constantly hearing politicians and experts in the education field debate the purpose and meaning of education for children, but it seems to me very unfortunate that none of them ever consider what Maria Montessori insisted was its purpose – to benefit the development of humanity through children. Inscribed in Italian on a commemorative tablet at her family's grave in Rome are these words: *"Maria Montessori: Famous scientist and pedagogue who dedicated her entire life to the spiritual renewal and to the progress of humanity through the child."*

We are benefiting the *progress of humanity* in educating our children. That sounds a good deal more fulfilling and important than simply preparing them for high school or worse, for standardized tests, doesn't it? More specifically, education should be intended to enrich children in a spirit of peace. What else can better benefit the future of humanity than that? Ron Miller, in his introduction to *Educating for a Culture of Peace*, writes, "Education must serve a purpose beyond economic productivity or personal triumph in the competitive marketplace: Our young people must learn how to create a culture of peace in the world."

In my mind, it is a beautiful thing indeed to consider that what we are doing as teachers and parents is benefiting humanity through children. Each child that is in our care is a remarkable individual who has the capacity for intelligence and success. As Dr. Montessori said: "In the child lies the fate of the future..."

Have a wonderful autumn...

*We enjoyed the opportunity to meet new parents and socialize at the **Family Potluck** last month. It was a great time! The weather was perfect. The food was delicious, everyone had fun, and we're already looking forward to the next potluck in the Spring...*

Giving Tree

We will soon be presenting a "Giving Tree" ripe with opportunities to donate much-needed materials to our school and its classrooms. There will be "fruit" representing items our teachers and staff would like but that are just beyond the school's budget right now. Please be on the lookout for the tree and see if you might be able to help!

Upcoming Events:

- Elementary to Sommer Park – 10/5, all day
- Primary to Forest Park Nature Center – 10/7, 9:00
- Columbus Day (**No School**) – 10/10
- Upper EI to Camp Wokanda for naturalist program – 10/11, all day
- All-school Hot Lunch – 10/21, 11:30
- Halloween Carnival – 10/28, 1:00-2:30 p.m.

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Cold Weather Attire

As the weather begins to get cooler, please consider that every class will be going outside as much as possible throughout the colder months. **Children will only stay inside when it is either raining or severely cold.** With that in mind, all students must have the proper outdoor attire each day. Jackets and scarves are all we need now, of course, but **as it gets colder, each child will be required to have snow boots, as well as other typical winter clothing.** Snow pants/suits are strongly encouraged, as well. Also, be sure to remember to label each article of clothing with your child's name.

Illness Policy

Also, as we approach flu season, please remember our illness policy. Keep your child home to rest if he/she has a bad cold or a fever. This is in the interest of good health for all. Also, be sure to remember that 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.* In other words, **the child should be fever-free for 24 hours without fever reducers.**

The first All-school Hot Lunch will be held on Friday, the 21st of this month. This is intended only for students who normally stay for lunch, and it is optional, as usual. *If you plan to have your child partake this year, please make sure you have paid the fee of \$30 by that date.* This covers the whole year. *We could use volunteers for the Hot Lunch committee.* Please speak to Mona in the Office if you are interested in helping.

The separate **Elementary Hot Lunches** will begin toward the end of this month. We definitely intend to continue this terrific program in which the children prepare bi-weekly meals for the rest of the class, but we have decided to wait to get this started due to all sorts of things happening downstairs right now. We will provide you with more information later.

Safety and Security

We'd like to urge everyone to be careful in the parking lot. We have occasionally had instances of theft from unlocked cars. Please be sure to lock your car when you leave it, and never leave an unattended child in the car! Also, if any personal property is found, please bring it to the school Office for safekeeping.

"Teachers should be present with children and reveal their spiritual natures to them."

-Maria Montessori

Our Elementary kitchen is in desperate need of a newer refrigerator! If you or anyone you know has a gently used fridge they would be willing to donate (or sell at a low price) please let us know!

Thank you

Video Club and Drama Class for Elementary students will begin later this month. Check the calendar for dates. Signup sheets and notes with more details will be out soon...



UPPER ELEMENTARY NEWS

The students of Upper El were very busy in September! There was quite a bit of work being done and a great many projects begun. Kylie and Brogan have been constructing a model of an ancient Egyptian village, while CJ has been designing and constructing a bridge out of craft sticks. Dylan S. has been studying the history of engineering, Dylan B. has been studying the life of George Washington, and Dina has been studying the work of Charles Darwin. Of course, they are all busy working on all sorts of projects. It is a class full of joyful learners!

A fundraising committee has been set up in the class to plan the first fundraiser for their end of the year trip. They will surely let you know about it before long. Also, next week that class will go to Camp Wokanda for some very interesting programs with a naturalist there, including one on wilderness survival! It should be fun.

Changes to Parent Directory

Asim, Muhammed & Fariha
4103 W. Hollow Creek Dr.
Alishba (B)

Faculty Changes

It is important that we inform you of some impending changes with our classroom faculty. You may have heard that Dione Gresham, one of our Lower Elementary teachers, has been given an opportunity to return to a special education teaching position at Pekin Community High School. She has elected to take that position, as that is where her true teaching passion lies. We wish her the best.

Lise Higgins will be the fulltime lead teacher in Lower El beginning this week. Amy Schudel, who had been teaching in Lower El in the afternoons, will move to mornings. We are continuing to seek the best person to help Lise in the afternoons. Since Lise will no longer be in Upper El in the afternoons, we will be looking to fill the afternoon Upper El position. For now, John will fill in.

Because of growing enrollment in Primary, you can expect a few changes there in the next couple of weeks. We will most likely be adding a teacher to work with Theresa Buley in the KE class, and possibly finding her a helper for the mornings, as well.

We will continue to update everyone as decisions are made. While we hate to make so many faculty changes after school has started, the bright side is that they are a sign that enrollment is growing! Let's hope it continues, as we still have plenty of room in our Montessori family...

"There is a great sense of community within the Montessori classroom, where children of differing ages work together in an atmosphere of cooperation rather than competitiveness. There is respect for the environment and for the individuals within it, which comes through experience of freedom within the community."

-Maria Montessori

Everyone should have received a **Parent Directory** by now. If you did not receive your copy, you may pick one up in the Office. If you notice that any corrections or changes need to be made, please let us know and we will update everyone in the next newsletter. Also, everyone should have received a new **Parent Handbook**. If you don't have one, they are in the Office.



A few dates to keep in mind
for **November**:

Parent Conferences: Nov. 3
(evening) and Nov. 4

Picture Day – Nov. 3

Veteran's Day – Nov. 11
(No School)

Great Feast – Nov. 22

Thanksgiving Break – Nov.
23-25

Halloween Carnival

Our annual all-school Halloween Carnival will be on Friday, October 28th. This occurs from 1:00 to 2:30 in the gymnasium. There will be treats, games, painted faces, and more. Everyone is invited. We need lots of helpers that afternoon to make it a success. Any time that you can be here would be highly appreciated. We set up at 12:30 and the clean-up lasts until about 3:00. We need donations of apples and small pumpkins or gourds for painting, and also apple juice or cider. A tub for these will be provided outside the office door beginning on the 14th. We will post a sign-up sheet outside the office for you to indicate if you can help with the event. If you have an idea for a fun game or booth or craft activity, please indicate that on the sheet as well. The children do love the Carnival!



Shop at Target to Donate Money to the School

Did you know that you can donate money to the school simply by shopping at **Target**? If you have a Target Red Card (their brand credit card), you can link it to *Montessori School of Peoria* either online or at the customer service desk. Then, anytime you make a purchase, they donate 1% of the transaction to the school. Each year we receive a check representing the total donation. Last year we received \$131.13, which we used to purchase materials. This is certainly a nice donation, but we've noticed that other schools in the area receive *thousands* of dollars each year. Let's all see if we can help get more from Target this year!

UPPER ELEMENTARY WOODSHOP

The Upper Elementary would like to set up a woodshop in or near their classroom. We are getting help from Gina Stow (Dylan's mom) in setting this up. She already has a few basic tools, but not enough to stock a woodshop. So we're asking for donations! If you have anything from the following list that you'd be willing to donate, or if you find items in yard sales or otherwise, please inform the school, or call Gina Stow at 691-1356. Other tools suggestions and ideas for small projects are also welcome. Please talk to Mr. MC and/or Mr. Power Murphy for questions about the shop. Our goal is to have it open for business by January. Thank you!

Safety glasses

Stand-alone clamps

Nails, screws, hinges (in good condition)

Drill (manual-powered is great!)

Nuts & bolts (in good condition)

T-square

Level

Collapsible workbench with clamps (like Workmate from Black&Decker)

Wood glue

Vise

Hand saw

Measuring tape

Tool box(es)

Hand-held sanders

Wrench set