

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



# BLUEBIRD BULLETIN

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## What's Inside...

**PTM News and Notes** .....2  
Welcome back  
Don't forget your BoxTops  
Upcoming events

**Report from the Board** .....3  
Our Busy Board Committees: Bringing together the whole MIR community  
**Curriculum Matters** .....3  
Creativity  
**Creativity at Montessori** .....4

A display of students' beautiful Holiday Sing program covers  
**Thank you for Bridging the Gap: Annual Fund Wrap-Up** . 5  
**University of Redlands, MIR, and The Grove School Present Sir Ken Robinson** ..... 8  
Sir Ken Robinson to speak at U of R February 2

## Parent Education Night Fostering Creativity in the Montessori Environment

Creativity is not just the ability to excel in the arts—it involves originality and imagination and has become more and more critical to success in the world today. Creative thinking and problem solving is necessary for progress in any field of work or study.

At Montessori in Redlands, “creativity” is not an “extra” relegated to an art class or after school dance program. Nurturing the



## Nurturing the Creative Mind

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*

Creativity is a complex word to define. The dictionary tells us it is “the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc.” It also involves originality, progressiveness, and imagination.

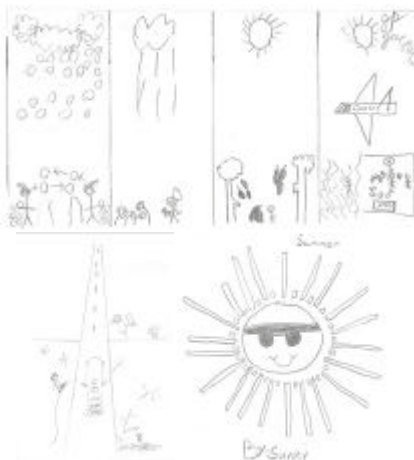
Many of us still think about the arts when we think about creativity or creative people. But increasingly we see that creativity becomes more and more critical in the progress of the world we live in. As technology takes over the way we communicate and do business, original ideas and new strategies are key. As the world economy falters and people strive to re-define themselves and the way they earn money, creative solutions are a means for survival.

Maria Montessori spoke about creativity from a foundational standpoint. She observed that every child from birth has creative energies that are used to create the personality, and become the human person

they are destined to be. She, like many others, saw how easy it was for the child to develop and grow, when the child was allowed to follow their inner rhythm. She also saw how easy it was for the environment to stop that growth or squash that creativity.

My guess is that if Maria Montessori defined creativity, she would say it was the person’s ability to create new ideas through the process of opening oneself up to the possibilities in life. I glean this from the following quote of hers:

*“We cannot know the consequences of suppressing a child's spontaneity when he is just beginning to be active. We may even suffocate life itself. That humanity, which is revealed in all its intellectual splendor during the sweet and tender age of childhood, should be respected with a kind of religious veneration. It is like the sun which appears at dawn or a flower just beginning to*



(Continued on page 2)

(Continued on page 6)



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

### Welcome Back!

Welcome back parents, staff, and students of Montessori in Redlands! We hope your holidays were full of happiness and wonderful memories were created. Thank you to all who donated to the PTM food drive for Joseph's Storehouse in Redlands. The MIR community was extremely supportive in our efforts to provide food for needy families in our greater community! Thanks for all your support. We wish you peace and joy in 2011.

### Don't Forget your BoxTops

Bring in your BoxTops for Education coupons from General Mills cereals, Betty Crocker, Pillsbury, and lots of other products—even Huggies, Kleenex, Cottonelle, Ziploc, Saran Wrap, and Viva. PTM submits the coupons twice yearly to raise funds for the school. **Save yourself some money, too**—join the BoxTops website and get grocery coupons for BoxTops products. Visit [boxtops4education.com](http://boxtops4education.com).

### This Bluebird is a True Classic

**Some fashions never go out of style.** Bluebird Amanda Wong (Liana's class) features her classic Bluebird style in Athens and Santorini, Greece, on a family vacation. The colors stand out beautifully against the famous whitewashed homes of Santorini!



**Hey, that should be my kid!** In each *Bluebird Bulletin*, we feature photos of parents, children, or staff wearing their Bluebird or Montessori t-shirts around the world or around the corner. Send your unique photos to Lisa Kensok at [lisa.kensok@montessoriinredlands.org](mailto:lisa.kensok@montessoriinredlands.org) or drop them off in the office.

### PARENT EDUCATION NIGHT *(Continued from page 1)*

creative mind is part of the foundation of a Montessori education.

At this Parent Education Night, MIR staff will show you how the Montessori environment allows creativity to emerge from the individual, uses the imagination in the learning process, and encourages original thought and work.

RSVP in the office, at 909-793-6989, or go to <http://goo.gl/sKbTN>. Child care is available by reservation for registered students ages 3 and older.

### Upcoming PTM Events

**PTM Meeting**—Thursday, January 13, at 6 PM. All parents are welcome to attend. This is a great opportunity to get involved in your children's school and meet other parents.

**Bluebird Day**—Friday, January 28. Wear your t-shirt and show your school pride!

### MIR News and Notes

*Please welcome our new staff*

We have three new faces at MIR starting this week. Please join us in welcoming them.

- Sabrina Diaz, new assistant to Sara
- Michelle Fiore, new assistant to Kara and Dorama
- Reynisha (Rainey) Day, our new full time substitute

All of our new staff come with a lot of experience and enthusiasm to match.

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## Report from the Board

by MAURA JOYCE, EX-OFFICIO MEMBER

### Our Busy Board Committees

Lest you think that the Board is made up of eight individuals who meet monthly and make decisions about the future of the school behind closed doors, I, as an ex-officio member of the Board, thought I would describe a few examples of how the work of the Board extends into the community and creates a network that involves parents, staff, and students.

With all of our committees and sub-committees, Board work is being done by 33 people—8 voting board members (4 current parents, 4 community members), 15 staff members, 8 current parents, and 2 alumni parents. (This does not include last Spring's subcommittee of about 29 students who collected data for the Long Range Planning Committee.) What do all these people do? A great example of the work they do *outside* committee meetings is the mobilization of the Facilities Committee as MIR dealt with the flooded classrooms in November.

Shortly after the flooding was discovered and emergency repair services were brought in, I made a call to the chair of the Facilities Committee, Board member Trevor Norton. He and Leon Garcia, Board Treasurer and member of the Facilities Committee, came into school to check out the damage and have a meeting with me. Items discussed: insurance coverage, mold testing, flooring options, timelines, teacher needs, strategies for student relocation, etc. Some decisions were made right there, others needed the input of teachers, and still others needed more input from other Committee members. Staff committee member Maryhelen Campa showed up to help out and while there, brought the perspective of the child into the mix—what choices do we have and which best serve the needs of the children?

PTM reps were called and asked to rally parents in helping to move classrooms so that the children could safely resume class on Monday. (PTM President Vanessa Leslie is a member of the Board, so there is a link between the Board and the parents.) After that, work began on the classrooms and more decisions needed to

*(Continued on page 7)*



## Curriculum Matters

By PETER DAVIDSON,  
ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

*“The child is much more spiritually elevated than is usually supposed. He often suffers, not from too much work, but from work that is unworthy of him.”—Maria Montessori*

### Creativity

On a recent morning, I gave an educational consultant a tour of a MIR. She was visiting local schools, familiarizing herself with their operations and introducing herself and her services. She specializes in creativity and in developing individualized programs for TAG (Talented and Gifted) students to supplement their learning experiences outside of school hours.

First, I settled her in to observe in a Primary classroom. When I returned 20 minutes later to escort her to an Elementary class, she asked, “Are those really two and a half to six-year-olds? It was so peaceful and productive!” I pointed out a few of the many activities in which children were engaged. “This boy is writing sentences with cut out letters. That little girl is ordering blocks and prisms using visual discrimination of dimension. The girl next to her is arranging flowers in a vase to beautify the classroom. The group of three on the rug is doing an addition problem with decimal system materials. You probably recognize many of the practical activities such as sewing a button, cleaning the window, and learning to buckle and tie. I hope you also noticed the many expression activities in use—the clay, easel painting, cutting, coloring and collage.”

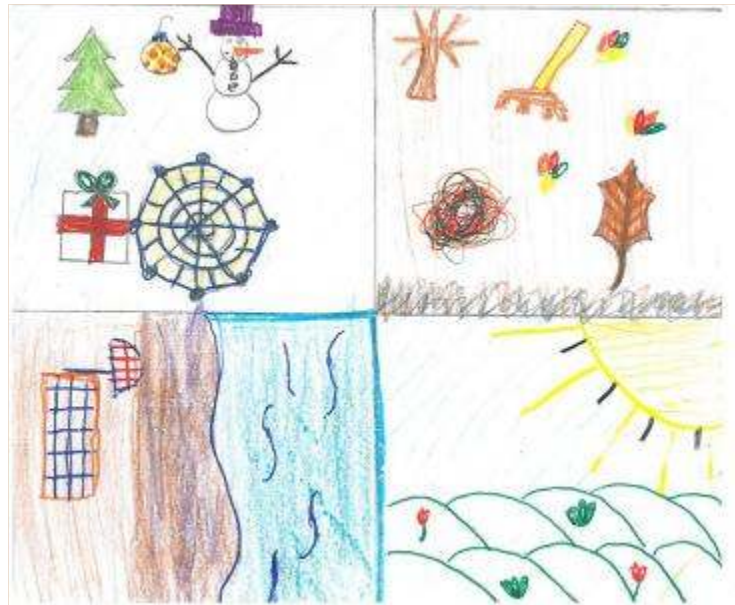
After her 20 minutes observing in an Elementary classroom were over, I showed her the work journal of the 10-year-old seated closest to the observation chair. “This is where she records all of her activities throughout the day. You can see that today she arrived at 8:35 and resumed work on her Egypt report; at 10:00 she had snack; at 10:30 she was invited to join a small group lesson on decimal multiplication, and she has been doing follow-up problems ever since.” The consultant then followed me to my office for a conversation.

She began by asking the questions typical of a first-time Montessori observer, then began to wonder out loud how her services would be useful in such a setting. “Let’s talk

*(Continued on page 7)*

# Creativity at Montessori: Holiday Sing Program Covers

We received so many wonderful submissions for the Holiday Sing Program cover and could not use them all. We wanted to feature them here to show the diversity and creativity of all the submissions. Children were asked to create covers that represented the four seasons.

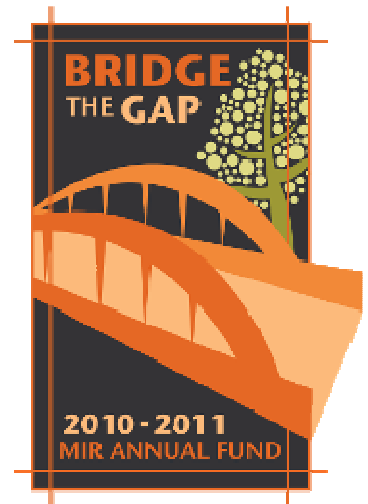


# Thank You for *Bridging the Gap*

Your donations and pledges to the MIR Annual Fund have helped us bridge the gap between tuition and the costs of running the school. It is your generosity that makes a difference between a good school and a *great* school.

As we close out the classroom incentive program for the MIR Annual Fund, we do so once again amazed and grateful at the spirit of giving in the MIR community. This spirit is shown not only in your willingness to pledge monetary support, but also in your willingness to volunteer time and energy to the school in so many ways. Thank you again for your continued support.

Annual Fund Progress as of January 7, 2011



The classroom incentive program closes Sunday, January 9. Any amount counts toward your child's class participation goal. Although the classroom incentive program is closing, you may still pledge or donate at any time.

[montessoriinredlands.org/bridgethegap](http://montessoriinredlands.org/bridgethegap)

## Free Disaster Training to be Offered to MIR and The Grove School Communities

Certified Emergency Response Training (CERT) will be offered free to members of the Montessori in Redlands and The Grove School communities ages 18 and older. The 8-hour workshop will be held at the Grove High School building on four Saturdays in 2011: January 15 and 29, and February 5 and 12, from 3 PM to 5 PM.

The workshop, facilitated by Redlands Fire Department emergency response trainers, is open to all Montessori in Redlands and Grove School parents, staff, and adult family members. Beyond standard First Aid and CPR training, CERT gives a more advance level course of preparation for anyone in the community to boost their level of self-sufficiency after a major disaster. The course covers disaster preparedness; disaster medical including setting up triage; fire suppression; and light search and rescue. Prior first aid training is not required.

CERT is being coordinated for us through Fault Line earthquake survival consulting, owned by MIR and Grove parent Pamela Henry. If you are already CERT-trained, please contact her at [callfaultline@gmail.com](mailto:callfaultline@gmail.com) as she is coordinating a joint plan between Grove and Montessori.

**Please RSVP to Ellen in the MIR office by Thursday, January 13 if you are interested in attending. There is a minimum of 15 participants required to conduct the class.**

## NURTURING THE CREATIVE MIND... (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

*bloom. Education cannot be effective unless it helps a child to open up himself to life.*"

Maria Montessori dedicated her life to creating learning environments that allow children to explore, discover, and create. Montessori fosters creativity in three parts: building the foundation of sensorial experiences, engaging the imagination in the learning process, and design and creation of work product. Part 1 happens from birth to around age 6 (at MIR, in the Toddler and Primary programs). By giving the children as many concrete, real experiences with the world around them as possible, and allowing them to work with their environment independently, they build a foundation of experiences with objects, qualities, quantity, nature, etc. By working with real objects, plants, and animals, and by learning the

Francesco recently brought home a piece of work that for me was the epitome of Montessori "work." He had read the Egyptian myth about Osiris and Isis. Fascinated with the story, he produced a scroll with register tape paper and two pencils, illustrating the storyline of the myth in cartoons. He used modern language and pencil drawings, complete with narration above each panel and dialogue bubbles for character comments and thoughts. His teacher did not ask him to do this; he was inspired to do so. I do not know what her goal was, but I assume she wanted the students to know the story—and he *really* knows the story. More importantly, he was able to create something original that had meaning while using his language and artistic abilities.

Montessori looks at creativity more broadly, not just in fostering the arts, which we do by integrating music, art, and



language for all of them and the qualities they experience—tall, green, broad, hot, etc., the children have a bank of knowledge with which to work.

Part 2 happens in the Elementary program with the children from age 6 to 12. Here the imagination is their most important learning tool. Impressionistic charts, time-lines, pictures, and stories all give the child the opportunity to learn about the places and things that are not directly in the classroom: "A rainforest with its tall trees that have broad leaves giving off water because it is hot, creating a steamy atmosphere of deep forest green." With the strong foundation of experiences in Part 1, they easily conjure a picture of what a rainforest is in their mind.

Part 3 is putting it all together to create work—work that shows the breadth and depth of their knowledge and brings out their creative self. I marvel at the work the Elementary children produce after years in a Montessori environment that encourages creativity. At the risk of "bragging" about my own child,

performance into the curriculum, but in bringing out the innovation that is inherent in each child. Interested in learning more about this process? Join MIR staff for our Parent Education Night on Thursday, January 13 at 7 PM as we present *Fostering Creativity in the Montessori Environment*.

Interested in this process beyond the Montessori classroom? Come see Sir Ken Robinson, internationally recognized for his written work and research about creativity and innovation. Sir Ken will speak at the University of Redlands Chapel on February 2 at 7 pm. See page 8 for details. Sir Ken has seen the extraordinary capabilities of children. His studies have led him all over the world to look at education systems and how they cultivate (or don't) human creativity. Sir Ken contends that children should be given as much opportunity as possible to explore and discover, work with their hands, and move. Does this sound familiar? Sir Ken also applauds the work of Maria Montessori and her innovation in seeing beyond the established educational format and recognizing the creative potential in children.

## CURRICULUM MATTERS *(cont.)*

*(Continued from page 3)*

about creativity,” I suggested. “I think you’ll find that everything you observed this morning was essentially creative in the truest sense of the word.”

“First, let’s consider the Primary class. You noticed that the expression activities all respect the child’s innate creativity. These were not “art projects” with an adult-determined outcome. We teach children a variety of media but limit the lesson to technique, leaving the child free to explore. In each case any product created was a unique expression of that child. We are even careful that our comments are non-judgmental. We might recognize the kinds of brush strokes, the use of space or color, but would stop there. You won’t find children in these classrooms producing artwork to please the adult, but rather to satisfy their own creative urges.

What you might not have recognized was the creativity involved in the child building with the blocks and prisms. She was using two materials simultaneously: the pink tower, which varies regularly in all three dimensions, and the brown stair, which varies in only two. While she has been shown on separate occasions one of the many ways to build each of these materials, the rest of the variations are left for her to discover on her own. On this occasion, she has noticed the correspondence of the two materials in their two-dimensional aspect, and has chosen to build them side-

by-side, first as towers and then as stairs. But, no one showed her how to do this, nor even suggested it. She discovered it entirely on her own, using her creativity.

The entire environment was designed to allow for that most creative of all acts—the self-construction of each individual child according to his/her own pattern and pace. That essential creative act, which began at birth and continued throughout their early childhood as they learned to walk, speak, and care for themselves, continues here unabated in an environment full of the raw materials of self-construction and with the time and freedom to do this important work.

Now let’s consider the Elementary child. In my experience, what TAG programs attempt to do is to pull the talented and gifted children out of class to have the experience of devising their own projects and progressing at their own pace, if only for a few hours a week. As you saw, Montessori children get to do these things with every minute of every day! So, essentially what we have here is a “Talented and Gifted Program” all of the time, and one in which every child is considered talented and gifted, not just an elite few.”

When the consultant left, it was with little hope that we would be in need of her services. But, I like to think that maybe she found the experience inspiring, and that perhaps the Montessori children had broadened her own understanding about creativity.

## BOARD REPORT *(cont.)*

be made. As work continued, a few new challenges and more members got involved—parent Michael Burke lent his expertise, as did parent Glen Copeland.

As Facilities Tech and committee member Rick Campa oversaw the work getting done, it was a student who helped with the final touches. When determining the placement and height of the new faucet, 4-year-old Laura Andrade was brought in to test it. “Can you reach that, Laura?” She walked up to the sink, reached her hand out and turned around, “Yes.” Although not an official member of the Facilities Committee or the Board, she certainly was part of the team that day.

This was just one example of how the Board works with the entire MIR community—parents, staff, and students. If you are interested in learning more about the Board, or if you or someone you know would be interested in joining the Board, contact Karen Oliver, Nominating Committee.

For other questions about the Board or questions related to school governance, contact

Leela MadhavaRau

President, Board of Trustees

[leela\\_madhavarau@redlands.edu](mailto:leela_madhavarau@redlands.edu)

(909) 748-8285 (work)

# BIRTHDAYS

## students

|                          |      |
|--------------------------|------|
| Natalie Hage             | 1/1  |
| Parker Abt               | 1/3  |
| Sabine Pengelly          | 1/3  |
| Nundhaa Sivabalan        | 1/3  |
| Debra Cheng              | 1/5  |
| Caroline Lambson         | 1/5  |
| Ivy Symmes               | 1/5  |
| Lily Symmes              | 1/5  |
| Daniel Larrance          | 1/7  |
| David Larrance           | 1/7  |
| Sydney Oliver            | 1/8  |
| Jalen Halsell            | 1/10 |
| Avneesh Bajaj            | 1/11 |
| Khloe Doss               | 1/13 |
| Matisse Schutten-Burgess | 1/13 |
| Kevan Mabudian           | 1/15 |
| Rebekah Murphy           | 1/15 |
| Ethan Riggins            | 1/16 |
| Sofia Singh              | 1/16 |
| Christopher Pham         | 1/17 |
| Asha Diekmann            | 1/18 |
| Christopher Albertson    | 1/20 |
| Karina Brenchley         | 1/23 |
| Lucas Youngman           | 1/23 |
| Jadyn Dumond             | 1/24 |
| Amanda Liu               | 1/24 |
| Janelle Galiza           | 1/25 |
| Amanda Wong              | 1/27 |
| Yuto Fujii               | 1/28 |
| Ryder Imbriani           | 1/29 |
| Anissa Kothapalli        | 1/29 |
| Emily Lowe               | 1/29 |
| Arnauld Martinez         | 1/29 |
| Anagha Nambisan          | 1/29 |
| Caitlyn Yoh              | 1/29 |
| Peregrine Caldwell       | 1/31 |
| Jeralyn Macknet          | 1/31 |

## staff

|              |      |
|--------------|------|
| Rainey Day   | 1/10 |
| Molly Bagan  | 1/12 |
| Sandy Bachar | 1/13 |
| Midge Leon   | 1/16 |
| Marie Nelsen | 1/22 |
| Lisa Kensok  | 1/25 |



**TWEET:** [twitter.com/mirmatters](https://twitter.com/mirmatters)

# UNIVERSITY OF REDLANDS, MIR, AND THE GROVE SCHOOL PRESENT SIR KEN ROBINSON




Join us to hear creativity expert Sir Ken Robinson, PhD, speak at the University of Redlands on Wednesday, February 2 at 7 PM. Probably best known for his TED talks, Sir Ken champions a radical rethink of our school systems to cultivate creativity and acknowledge multiple types of intelligence.

Sir Ken is an internationally recognized leader in the development of creativity, innovation, human potential, and the people side of organizations. He is also one of the world's leading speakers on these topics, with a profound impact on audiences everywhere. The video of his famous 2006 talk to the prestigious TED Conference has been downloaded more than 5 million times and has been seen by an estimated 200 million people in more 150 countries.

Sir Ken led the British government's 1998 advisory committee on creative and cultural education, a massive inquiry into the significance of creativity in the educational system and the economy, and was knighted in 2003 for his achievements. His latest book, *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything* (Penguin/Viking 2009), is a *New York Times* best seller and is being translated into 18 languages.

## JANUARY 2011

|                                                                           |                            |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>3</b><br>School resumes                                                | <b>4</b><br>Lango classes  | <b>5</b>                                                                                                                | <b>6</b><br>Lango classes                                                                                                                                                 | <b>7</b>                                                    |
| <b>10</b>                                                                 | <b>11</b><br>Lango classes | <b>12</b>                                                                                                               | <b>13</b><br>Lango classes<br>PTM Meeting, 6 PM<br>Parent Education Night, 7 PM                                                                                           | <b>14</b><br>Coffee, Tea, and M.E., 9:15                    |
| <b>17</b><br>Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday—no school; no childcare. | <b>18</b><br>Lango classes | <b>19</b>                                                                                                               | <b>20</b><br>Lango classes                                                                                                                                                | <b>21</b><br>Bluebird assembly, 9:15 AM                     |
| <b>24</b>                                                                 | <b>25</b><br>Lango classes | <b>26</b>                                                                                                               | <b>27</b><br>Sara's class to Western Science Center Museum<br>Nikki's class to Orange Empire Railway Museum<br>Emily/Teesie's class to CA Science Center<br>Lango classes | <b>28</b><br>Staff in-service day. No school; no childcare. |
| <b>31</b>                                                                 | <b>1</b><br>Lango classes  | <b>2</b><br>Sir Ken @ UofR 7 pm<br> | <b>3</b><br>Lango classes                                                                                                                                                 | <b>4</b>                                                    |