

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



# BLUEBIRD BULLETIN

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If you've pledged but forgot to turn in your donation, please  
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## Parent-Infant Class to Start May 4



MIR will host a 4-week Parent-Infant Class for children from six weeks to 17 months and their parents. The goal of the class is to assist with the child's development through small-group interaction. Parents will learn how to observe, support, and encourage the child's natural development.

Special materials and furniture provided for the class will aid the infant with movement, hand/eye coordination, and the development of the senses. The teacher acts as the link between the prepared environment and the children, helping

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## Bridging the "Achievement Gap" Naturally

by MAURA JOYCE, HEAD OF SCHOOL

*"We seek to sow life in the child rather than theories, to help him in his growth, mental and emotional, as well as physical. ."*—Maria Montessori

A new book *The Global Achievement Gap*, by Tony Wagner, co-director of the Change Leadership Group at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, looks at the U.S. education system in the 21st century. Wagner discusses why American students are falling behind their international peers, and what can be done to begin to reverse this trend. In his book he defines the global achievement gap as the gap between what we are teaching and testing in our schools, even in the ones that are most highly-regarded, versus the skills all students will need in the 21st century. These are not just the skills to get from one grade level to the next, but rather Wagner identifies what he calls the seven survival skills for careers, college, and citizenship. The seven are:

- Critical thinking and problem solving

- Collaboration and leading by influence
- Agility and adaptability
- Initiative and entrepreneurship
- Effective oral and written communication
- Accessing and analyzing information
- Curiosity and imagination

This list might not surprise you if you think about the skills you use everyday in your work, your family, and your community. I have identified some of these skills in previous Parent Ed presentations, when the topic of discussion was the most important skills we want our children to get from their Montessori education.

MIR students have lots of opportunity to practice these skills, thanks to the de-

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

### Generous Families Provide 26 Birthday Bags 4 Kids

Thank you to all the families who participated in our community toy drive. PTM President Vanessa Leslie was able to deliver 26 birthday bags to Birthday Bags 4 Kids for under-privileged children in and around the Redlands community. Julie Farquhar from the organization asked that we pass on her gratitude to the MIR community, saying "Thank you so much to everyone at MIR and our delivery girls, Sienna and Violet. Your efforts will give a lot of kids Happy Birthdays!"

### Teacher Appreciation Week is May 2-6

MIR teachers work hard all year to give your child the best education they can. We encourage you to say "thank you" during Teacher Appreciation Week. Consider using this week as an opportunity to discuss with your children what it means to appreciate someone, to show gratitude and thanks. PTM and the Board of Trustees presented teaching staff with a special something to say "thank you" on May 3.

### Low on Wrapping Paper? Need a Unique Gift?

Innisbrook is available anytime online at [innisbrook.com](http://innisbrook.com), enter our school ID#102074. You can order through out the year and continue to support PTM all year. Orders will be

### Upcoming Events and Meetings

**May 3:** Teacher Appreciation Day

**May 9–20:** PTM Board Elections

**May 26:** PTM Room Rep appreciation dinner, 7 PM

### Thank You, Carnival Volunteers!

Thanks to all parents who helped out at the Spring Carnival. We couldn't have

## Order Your Spring Pictures Today

Spring Pictures are here! Don't miss out on getting a lovely updated portrait of your child. Spring picture orders are now being managed online. Here's how to order your child's spring pictures in four easy steps:

1. Go to [sparrowstudios.zenfolio.com/clients.html](http://sparrowstudios.zenfolio.com/clients.html) and enter your child's first name and last initial (no space); for example, "sarahk" or "johns".
2. Scroll through images and pick your favorites. Click on any image to zoom in for a better look.
3. Select your preferred package from the list on the right side of the screen and add it to your cart.
4. Follow the order process.

If you have any problems or questions during the order process, call the friendly folks at Sparrow Studios directly at 909-882-3922.



### Cast Your Vote for PTM Officers for 2011-2012

Nominations for PTM Vice President and Secretary are in and soon it will be your turn to vote. Look for biographies and an e-mail with voting instructions. Please be sure to cast your vote! Elections will take place

### Join The Grove School for Shakespeare Festival and Renaissance Faire

Join The Grove School for a Shakespeare Festival and Renaissance Faire experience! The Festival opens with a performance of Romeo and Juliet on Friday, May 13 at 7 PM and closes with the Faire the next day.

The Faire will take place on Saturday, May 14, 1–5 PM at the Farm campus. There will be tournaments, chivalry, archery demonstrations, Renaissance dance, a petting zoo, Renaissance photograph opportunities, Renaissance craft demonstrations, raffles AND delicious Farm-Fresh Food. The Faire will conclude with a performance of Romeo and Juliet at 5:30 PM.

For more information including ticket prices, visit [groveshakespearefestival.com](http://groveshakespearefestival.com).

## Report from the Board

by LEELA MADHAVARAU, PRESIDENT

### *Reflections on 6 years on the board and many more as a Montessori parent*

At the end of June, I will complete six years as a member of the MIR Board of Trustees. I have reached the end of my second term and cannot serve further without a year's break. I had come to MIR in the fall of 2002 from an AMI-affiliated Montessori school in Michigan and knew that the best way to learn about a new school community was to get involved. I joined the Board because I knew early on that this school would be my children's home away from home for many years and such a place deserved my input and energy.

Selfishly, I am taking my last column to reflect on Montessori education as well as my time on the Board. For those who read these columns, you will remember that last month I spoke of the joy of seeing my oldest son graduating from Grove, bringing to fruition the results of an education that predicated itself on retention of curiosity. He will begin his undergraduate education at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver in September. My 14 year old will enter 10th grade at Grove next year and my twin son and daughter will enter 6th grade at MIR. Along with finishing my second term on the Board, it is hard to believe that after the 2011-2012 school year, there will be no Carter-Rau's at MIR. I don't believe that this will end my association with the school—its presence in our lives, shaping the educational future for my children, will never be forgotten. At a time when creativity is being driven out of our schools, MIR plays an important role in preparing children for the future. I will give serious consideration to returning to the Board in a different role: community member rather than parent.

All too frequently, curiosity is bred out of us because it is difficult for the adults in the world to keep answering questions. One of my children said that he has millions of questions about everything in the world and MIR allows him to answer some of those questions, even when they are of interest only to him; for example, "why do mollusks only have one foot?" or some other esoteric thought. I

*(Continued on page 5)*



## Curriculum Matters

By PETER DAVIDSON,

### The Universality of the Child



*"The needs of humankind are universal. Our means of meeting them create the richness and diversity of the planet."*

—*Maria Montessori*

Recently I attended the Annual General Meeting of the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), which takes place every April in Amsterdam, the location of Maria Montessori's home and final resting place. AMI is the Montessori accrediting body for our school and was founded in 1929 by Dr. Maria Montessori herself, the only Montessori association that can make that claim. It maintains what are generally considered the highest standards for Montessori teacher training and the closest connection to the work of that great scientist, educator, and advocate for children.

What strikes me each year as I attend these meetings and hear reports from AMI Training Centers and Affiliate organizations from all over the world is how universal are the principles that Dr. Montessori discovered. These are principles of the true nature of childhood and the environment best suited for the hidden potentialities of children to be revealed. This is true whether we are speaking of a country in the east or the west, in the southern hemisphere or the

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to provide experiences within the environment. These experiences are designed to require enough effort from the child to be interesting and to allow the child to feel successful.

An integral part of the class is the “parent only” discussion group, which will deepen parents’ appreciation and understanding of their child’s stages of development. The discussion also covers nutrition, the child’s environment, and discipline.

The class will be taught by MIR infant and toddler trained teacher Liana McCall. Liana has taught at MIR in the Toddler Program for 15 years.



*Classes will be held Wednesdays May 4, 11, 18, and 25 from 4 to 5:15 PM.*

*The discussion group will meet Friday, May 27, 4–5 PM. The cost is \$50.*

## What Students Get from Spending the Summer at MIR

### TODDLERS

Toddlers never stop going about the business of exploring, learning, and absorbing new information from their environment. The MIR Summer Program lets them continue their Montessori program with their familiar, tailored environment while at the same time providing experiences especially suited to summer. In addition to the classroom program, students will participate in gardening, water play, and outdoor fun suited to their age. Toddlers also get to take what for many is their first “big kid” field trip to the San Bernardino County Museum, which has plenty of areas for even the smallest children to explore.



### PRIMARY

Primary-age students (2 1/2 to 6 years) seem like they never stop moving, and the summer program provides plenty of activities in addition to the Montessori program. The familiar Montessori program and environment provides the consistency the students need while being supplemented by activities such as cooking, gardening, sporting activities and in-depth studies of subjects such as dinosaurs and art. Field trips provide plenty of opportunities for exploration in the wider world as well as fun activities at which to expend all that energy. Full-day Primary students have the opportunity to take swimming lessons, making it easier on families who then don’t have to sign up for lessons separately.



### ELEMENTARY

Elementary students are ready for new ideas and new challenges, and the Elementary summer program offers several two-week classes to allow students to pursue interests in-depth. Students have the opportunity to discover new skills and talents, create works of art, and dive into scientific subjects more deeply. One field trip each session ensures time for fun and new experiences.

Classes are half-days, allowing students to sign up for half- or full-day programs. This flexibility allows you to put an end to “I’m bored” for the summer for children who otherwise stay at home and gives full-day students a unique Montessori experience they can’t get anywhere else. All classes are led by Montessori teachers and assistants.



### REGISTER BY MAY 31

To register your child for the MIR Summer Program, or for more information, visit [montessoriinredlands.org/summer](http://montessoriinredlands.org/summer). Registration is first-come, first-serve.

## BOARD REPORT *(cont.)*

*(Continued from page 3)*

work at a university so I spend a lot of time thinking about the characteristics that employers say they want to see in future employees. I am amazed at how thoroughly and completely a Montessori education addresses these concerns. I know the thought of your children being wage-earners may seem a long way off for many of you. Be assured that MIR is producing learners who will be engaged and thoughtful citizens, self-aware and self-reliant, inquisitive and self-motivated, able to prioritize, team players, cooperative leaders, problem-solvers, as well as individuals who will be flexible, with a sense of purpose, imagination, and a lifelong love of learning.

After a year on the Board, I was elected President, a position I have held for the past five years. This position has been one of negotiation, service, occasional frustration, and much education. I am pleased to have been a part, however small, of initiatives that ensure that MIR will thrive into the future, including the incredible feat of purchasing the school property through a bond process. Our Board now operates through a committee structure, allowing for in-depth discussion at this level while major decisions are dealt with at monthly Board meetings. Committees also allow for non-Board input on topics vital to the future of the school, including Long Range Planning, Marketing, and Facilities and Technology.

After many different attempts, we managed to pull together our strategic visioning document for the school. This is called "Living the Montessori Journey," a simple title that contains the essence of the path that we want MIR to take over the next five years. The school has three core values through which we live the Montessori Journey: the Whole Child, the Prepared Environment, and the Community. We have determined that each initiative we propose must be in congruence with at least one of these values, if not all three.

Living the Montessori Journey is not necessarily the easiest path—it is not the model of education with which many of us grew up—but I am firmly convinced that these children can

truly change the world because they understand that the world is composed of interconnecting parts. As is so often the case, Maria Montessori expresses this most succinctly:

"The secret of good teaching is to regard the child's intelligence as a fertile field in which seeds may be sown, to grow under the heat of flaming imagination. Our aim is not only to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his innermost core. We do not want complacent pupils, but eager ones. We seek to sow life in the child rather than theories, to help him in his growth, mental and emotional as well as physical, and for that we must offer grand and lofty ideas to the human mind."

In a 2007 column, I noted the famous quote about eradicating poverty—"Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish and he will eat for a lifetime"—in the context of a question put to my now-senior son about what he liked about Montessori. He replied, "We are not just handed books and answers, we're given resources and we do the work." Once again,

this is not the easiest path for education but one that rewards all concerned.

The many projects taken on by the Board during my tenure could never have happened without the community that is MIR: dedicated administrators, faculty, and staff working alongside parent and community volunteers. I want to close by thanking all of you



Twins Anjali and Naveen are the final Carter-Rau students at MIR.

for working to ensure that MIR exists to cultivate curiosity in children for decades to come. It is in keeping with the Great Law of the Iroquois Confederacy:

"We cannot simply think of our survival; each new generation is responsible to ensure the survival of the seventh generation. The prophecy given to us, tells us that what we do today will affect the seventh generation and because of this we must bear in mind our responsibility to them today and always."

As always, I am happy to answer questions on behalf of the Board of Trustees, at least until July 1, 2011, when Pam Ford will take on the role of President. I am best reached at [leela\\_madhavarau@redlands.edu](mailto:leela_madhavarau@redlands.edu).

Leela MadhavaRau  
President, Board of Trustees  
(909) 748-8285 (work)



## CURRICULUM MATTERS *(cont.)*

*(Continued from page 3)*

northern, in the third world or the developed world, among the wealthiest nations or the very poorest.

Three examples from the meeting come to mind. First was a report from Thailand, where the government sponsored AMI training for teachers for the first time in 2007. Since then, the government has been collecting data on the developmental progress of the children of those first Montessori classrooms as opposed to children in traditional programs. The Montessori children are so far outstripping the others that the government is investing in AMI training for 220 more teachers, with a view toward adopting AMI Montessori education as the standard model for early childhood education throughout the country.

Next, we heard from representatives of a project working with one of the most impoverished and disadvantaged communities of aboriginal people in Australia, those of the Islands of the Torres Straits between Australia and Tasmania. The Montessori pilot project began several years ago on a handful of the islands but has been so successful and so well-received that the islanders themselves have adopted AMI Montessori as their model

for early childhood education.

Third, we heard a report from the Corner of Hope, an AMI project within refugee camps in Kenya. This project is unique in that not only is each teacher trained in child development and Montessori pedagogy, but also supervised in the creation of her own set of Montessori materials with the wood and fabric and paint available locally. What impressed me most were the photographs documenting children of these camps using these handmade materials under primitive conditions on dirt floors, but with the same care and engagement as the children at MIR.

The lesson for all of us here is that the principles Dr. Montessori discovered 100 years ago are not only still relevant in 2011, but equally relevant in any part of the world in a variety of physical and cultural conditions. Isn't it powerful to know that our children are participating in a worldwide educational movement, sharing a universal experience and sense of brotherhood and sisterhood with children as far away as Thailand, Kenya, and the Torres Straits?



Montessori class on the Islands of the Torres Straits



Making Montessori materials for Corner of Hope



Children working at Corner of Hope

## ACHIEVEMENT GAP (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

sign of our environments and our program. Perhaps you can recognize these things in the stories and work your child brings home from class, or in the actions of the student community as a whole. Here are just a few examples of how we touch upon what Wagner has identified.

- The self-directed nature of the learning process and the ability to explore a subject in depth using carefully design materials covers many of the above. With each activity children are taking initiative, following what piques their interest intellectually, and problem solving. When engaged with the materials, often critical thinking skills are necessary for them to recognize the next step and eventually get to the answer.
- Our multi-aged classrooms and project-based learning depend on collaboration and give children the opportunity to practice being a leader or a member of the team. In this collaboration, children must lead through influence as they are not in a position of “authority” granted by a teacher. Additionally projects are often research-based, requiring that the children to access and analyze intelligently a variety of information sources.
- Montessori students have a lot more opportunity for communication. Lessons are interactive with students working together and discussing their work, breaking the traditional “teacher lectures, students listen” format of learning. Students have more social interaction built into their day and become effective communicators. Additionally they are expected to present work on a regular basis to the whole group. Our students begin expressing themselves through writing at an early age, starting with simple stories and essays in Primary and progressing to abundant long-form stories, reports, and creative and expository writing in Elementary. This gives them ample time to develop written communication skills.

Maria Montessori first worked with children in order to give them skills to adapt to their environment. In Rome in 1907, that was all the practical life skills—washing their hands, tying their shoes, using a fork. Today for our Toddlers, this is still the case, but for the older children this adaptability encompasses the basic academic skills needed for practical use—reading, writing, arithmetic, and the skills needed to be a member of the group – sharing responsibility, working together, conflict resolution.

What some believe America’s students need to bridge the

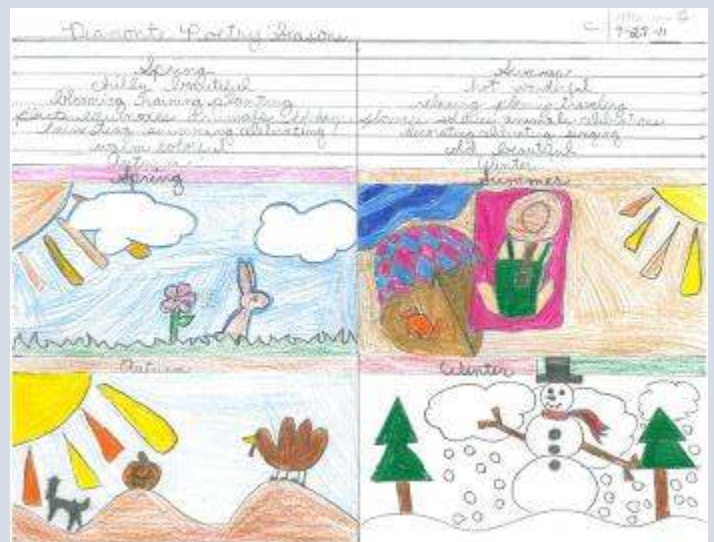
### Progression of Writing in the Montessori Program

The following show how MIR students learn to express themselves through writing from the time they can hold a pencil to when they move on to college.

#### Primary



#### Elementary



#### High School

“Curiosity is a prized asset in my family. With this particular sense also nurtured by Montessori education from the age of 4 until the present, I have always asked questions. Many were the child’s “why” but I also wanted to know “where” and “how”. I always got answers—atlas or historical tomes were hauled out and the subject explored fully (sometimes too thoroughly for a child’s limited attention span). Being exposed to this attitude at home and school is a great privilege and one that I would like to use to expand Americans’ knowledge of the wider world...” — Sanjay Carter-Rau, MIR alum and The Grove School student, from a college entrance essay.



# BIRTHDAYS



## students

Ariana Martinez	5/2
Laura Sousa	5/2
Jordan Cherniss	5/4
Aja Levesque	5/4
Jessica Martin	5/4
Sanjana Fernando	5/5
Sarah Kensok	5/8
Owen Greene	5/9
Ronnie Ravins	5/13
Sidarth Kulkarni	5/16
Kennedy McCarthy	5/18
Jackson Clemens	5/19
Hennessy Mueller	5/19
Sean Sam	5/22
Drew Blauth	5/23
Peter Van Esch	5/24
Addison Wroolie	5/24
Liv Massih	5/26
Zoe Herford	5/28
Brendan McFann	5/29
Elyess Aidoudi	5/31
Aislin Henry	5/31
Reyna Moore	5/31

## staff

Maryhelen Campa	5/11
Jacqueline Chandler	5/19

## Go for a Ride: May is National Bike Month

Celebrate spring and National Bike Month with a bike ride. On Saturday, May 21, Team Learning 4 Life and the Ride Yourself Fit bike club will be hosting a fun-filled family event celebrating a good cause. Team Learning 4 Life is an 8-man team that will be competing in the 2011 Race across America to raise funds for special education programs at Arrowhead Christian School. Doug Richards is a member of the team and his daughter Brenna is a MIR alumna. Ride Yourself Fit is a local bike club created by MIR alumni parents Steven and Alesandra Wilson

to promote fun, fitness, and fellowship. The fun begins at 8:00 a.m. and will feature several rides with SAG support. [Family Fun Ride Details](#)  
May 21, 8 am – 1 pm  
Arrowhead Christian Academy  
105 Tennessee Street, Redlands

- Kids bicycle safety clinic
- Helmet fitting/give away
- Bike fitting/tune-ups
- Professional BMX trick riding demonstration
- Celebrity guest speakers
- Live music
- Lunch buffet
- Live & silent auctions/raffles

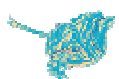
Visit [teamlearning4life.org](http://teamlearning4life.org) to register.

## How many muscles does it take to hop? Find out at the MIR Hop-a-Thon

On Friday, June 3, MIR is teaming up with the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) to hold a Hop-A-Thon. Right after the Bluebird Assembly, MIR students will “hop for children who can’t hop for themselves” for two minutes. The goal is to raise funds for children suffering from muscular dystrophy. Look for more information soon.

## MAY 2011

<b>2</b> Staff in-service day. No school, no childcare.	<b>3</b> Teacher Appreciation Day Lango classes	<b>4</b> Parent-Infant class, 4–5:15 PM	<b>5</b> Nicole’s class to San Bernardino Planetarium Lango classes	<b>6</b> Maria’s class Mother’s Day Tea, 9:15 AM
4th and 5th years trip to Pali Mountain				
<b>9</b> Elementary testing, grades 3–6 PTM Board Elections open	<b>10</b> Jean/MH’s class to Page Museum Elementary testing, grades 3–6 Lango classes	<b>11</b> Sara’s Class to Rancho Jurupa Park Parent-Infant class, 4–5:15 PM	<b>12</b> Lango classes	<b>13</b> Nikki’s class to Brookside Park Scholastic Book Fair Ends
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> Lango classes	<b>18</b> Dorama/Kara’s class to LLU Children’s Hospital Parent-Infant class, 4–5:15 PM	<b>19</b> Lango classes	<b>20</b> Coffee, Tea, and M.E., 9:15 AM PTM Board Elections Close
Emily/Teesie’s class camping trip to El Capitan State Beach				
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Lango classes	<b>25</b> Parent-Infant class, 4–5:15 PM	<b>26</b> PTM Room Rep appreciation night, 7 PM Lango classes	<b>27</b> Parent-Infant discussion group, 4–5 PM
6th years’ trip to Washington, D.C.				
<b>30</b> Memorial Day — No school, no childcare.	<b>31</b> Summer School Registration Deadline Last day to cancel or make changes to summer sessions 1 & 2 Lango classes	<b>1</b> Recital for Yang Chen’s music students, 12 PM	<b>2</b> Maria’s class Father’s Day brunch, 9:15 AM Lango classes	<b>3</b> Bluebird Assembly, 9:15 AM Hop-a-thon to benefit the MDA Emily/Teesie’s class pool party, 10 AM



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

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