



BLUEBIRD BULLETIN

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What's Inside...

PTM News and Notes 2
 Holiday Food Drive
 Holiday Supplies from Innisbrook
 Bluebird T-shirts Available Now

Report from the Board 3
 Reporting from the AMI Summit
Curriculum Matters 3
 The Language of Music
Scrapbook 5
 Rock climbing and burrito fundraiser

Experiencing Our Own Ah-Ha Moments at Journey & Discovery 6
 One parent's experience
Your Donation is Music to Our Ears 7
MIR Calendar 8
 Holiday Schedule

Continuing a Musical Tradition with Holiday Sing

Annie. The Lion King. A Christmas Story (yes, *A Christmas Story*).

What do these have in common? They are all famous movies and famous musicals with a long and storied performance history, and all are currently running on Broadway.

MIR has its own musical tradition, one started in its very first year—the Holiday Sing, which will be held this year on Wednesday, December 19 at the University of Redlands Memorial Chapel. In honor of famous musicals,

(Continued on page 8)



The Season of Giving

by LISA KENSOK, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

“The life of a man consists not in seeing visions and in dreaming dreams, but in active charity and in willing service.”—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

On November 27, 2012, a new initiative took hold, called #GivingTuesday. The founding principle is simple, as stated on the website (givingtuesday.org): “We have a day for giving thanks. We have two for getting deals...Wouldn't it be great to have a day for giving back?” The initiative was started by New York's 92nd Street Y, partnering with the United Nations Foundation, to kick off what they call “the giving season.”

And indeed it is the season of giving. Charitable giving and work of all sorts increases tremendously in December, from volunteering in soup kitchens to monetary donations to worthy causes to buying livestock for families in developing countries in lieu of traditional holiday gifts.

Here at Montessori in Redlands, we have a tradition of giving that is both seasonal and year-round. Like many organizations, our PTM sets up a holiday food drive to benefit Joseph's Storehouse, a Redlands organiza-

We have a day for giving thanks.
 We have two for getting deals.
 It's time to have a day for giving back.



The giving starts November 27.
#GIVINGTUESDAY

tion. The food drive runs from December 3–14. In spring PTM runs a toy drive for Birthday Bags 4 Kids, a Redlands organization that ensures that children in need receive something most of our children take for granted—birthday gifts.

MIR students learn year-round the value of giving. “Service” is not just a seasonal act but embedded in the curriculum. Elementary

(Continued on page 2)



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

EVENTS AND CALENDAR

Holiday Sing

This year, the Holiday Sing concert will take place December 19 at the University of Redlands Memorial Chapel beginning at 7 PM. All classes will be performing holiday songs for the enjoyment of all in attendance. Family and friends welcome. School closes at 3:30 PM.

Next PTM Meeting

The next meeting will be held Thursday, January 17, at 6 PM before the next Parent Education night. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Come find out what is happening in our school and meet your PTM room representatives.

FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS AND T-SHIRTS

Get Your Holiday Supplies from Innisbrook

It's not too late to order wrapping paper, gifts, and other supplies through Innisbrook. You can place orders online at innisbrook.com. Our school code is 102074. Orders placed online will be shipped directly to your home. Funds help sponsor PTM events and activities.

Show Your School Pride: Wear a Montessori Bluebird T-shirt

Bluebird T-shirts in all sizes can be purchased at the MIR office for \$12 and are available in black and pink. Take a picture someplace interesting of you or your child in a Bluebird shirt (or Montessori shirt), and you may have it published in the *Bluebird Bulletin*! Submit photos to Lisa Kensok at lisa.kensok@montessoriinredlands.org, or drop off a CD/DVD or printed picture in the office.

SEASON OF GIVING (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

students help out in Toddler and Primary classrooms with everything from setting up nap mats to reading to the younger children. Primary students learn to care for their community and environment, taking on jobs such as cleaning or feeding class pets. Toddler students learn the fundamental concept of empathy for others, and how to tend to others' needs. (For a full discussion of how students learn to serve their community, see Maura Joyce's "Curriculum Matters" article in the May 2012 *Bluebird Bulletin*.)

Throughout the year, the school also asks parents, MIR staff, and the MIR Board for their support. For example, the Scholastic Book Fair that runs December 5–12 in the foyer entrance to Jean and Maryhelen's classroom helps the school earn new books. MIR's 6th year students hold periodic fundraisers to raise the money needed to send all 21 students on their trip to Washington, D.C. The next two events include a Barnes & Noble book fair all day on Saturday, December 8, and a Gourmet Pizza Shoppe night on Wednesday, December 12, 4–9 p.m.

COMMUNITY

Holiday Food Drive for Joseph's Storehouse

PTM will hold a food drive for Joseph's Storehouse December 3-14. To donate, bring non-perishable food to your child's classroom or the office during that time.

Joseph's Storehouse is always looking for help. To find out how your family can volunteer, call 909-793-5677.

Scholastic Book Fair: Buy One, Get One Free

The winter fair runs December 5–12 in the foyer of Jean and Maryhelen's classroom. Each purchase helps MIR earn books for the school. Just in time for the holidays, if you buy one book, you'll get one free!

In keeping with the season of giving, #GivingTuesday through December 21 is when we ask you to consider pledging and giving generously to the MIR Annual Fund. You can give at any time during the school year, but if you give by this date, your donation will be "music to your child's ears." Every class that reaches 100% donations by December 21 will get to select a musical art installation of their choice—large musical instruments intended for use outdoors. Stop by the MIR entry way to play with our new wind chimes for yourself and to make your donation or pledge. You may also donate online through PayPal (visit montessoriinredlands.org/giving for the link). In all cases you may make one lump sum donation or set up monthly installments.

Thank you for your generous support of the MIR community and the larger community in the many ways that you give—time, money, and resources—throughout the year. Your generosity and spirit inspires and sustains us. May this season bring you and your children joy and peace.

Report from the Board

Reporting from the AMI Summit

by MAURA JOYCE, HEAD OF SCHOOL

As a member of the Board of Trustees, it is my turn to write the Board Corner. Although I do not have a vote, my work is very important. My role on the Board is key to the Board members' understanding of how the school is doing and how their work affects the school's stability and future development. Another important aspect of my work with the Board is to keep them informed of MIR's part in the larger Montessori community in the United States and abroad.

In our September meeting, I reported to the Board how different Montessori organizations in the U.S. are working to influence the conversation about education reform in America's public schools. Different Montessori organizations, like the Association Montessori International (AMI), American Montessori Society (AMS), and others, are beginning to discuss how they can work together to have one voice and one vision to contribute to the dialogue about the future of education in the U.S.

In an attempt to create a vision for how AMI Montessori can concentrate its efforts to promote education that honors natural child development, promotes intellectual creativity, fosters independence (physical, social, and academic), and uses discovery and interest as learning tools, AMI invited its U.S. Affiliate organizations and individual members across the country to participate in a Summit in Baltimore last month.

There were two objectives for the Summit: to create a vision for AMI in the U.S. and to design strategic steps to realize this vision. To achieve the first objective, it was necessary to employ experienced facilitators and invite a wide diversity of stakeholders. The Summit hoped to have teachers, school heads, trainers, school Board members, people working in private schools, public schools and those who are forwarding the cause of children from a spectrum of economic and social backgrounds.

I asked the Board of Trustees if MIR could support the Summit by sending a group of people to Baltimore to participate. The Montessori community here in Redlands, which includes MIR and Grove, represents a wide

(Continued on page 4)



Curriculum Matters

By PETER DAVIDSON,
ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

The Language of Music

Parents often ask about music in the Montessori classroom. Sometimes we are so excited to share with parents the math or language or science or geometry materials that we forget to talk about art and music, although we hold them in equal esteem with the more purely "academic" pursuits.

As parents, what would you want your children to be exposed to in music classes in their early and elementary years? You would probably want them to learn some lovely songs and to sing enough that they learn to carry a tune. You might want them to receive a bit of ear training, because you've heard that this is the age when children either develop this skill or go through life unable to distinguish pitch. You would probably hope that they would be exposed to a variety of musical expressions and perhaps a bit of music history. You might even hope for an introduction to musical notation.

We provide all of that and more in the Montessori classroom. The operative phrase is "in the classroom." Rather than being confined to a music class for an hour once per week (often all that's provided in most schools), in Montessori these activities are included in the daily life of the class and respected at the same level as any other form of learning.

As an example of how music is integrated, the Montessori sensorial material known as the "Bells" is found in most classrooms. It consists of two series of bells ranging from middle to high "C." One series has black and white stands that correspond to the black and white keys of the piano. The other, called the "brown bells," has stands that are left with a natural wood finish.

For the early lessons, the four black bells (and the four corresponding brown bells) are left on a lower shelf, so the child is working with only the white bells (and their corresponding brown bells) that represent the diatonic scale of 8 notes (C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C). While the white bells remain stationary as the "control" set, the child can mix up the set of brown bells, then match each to the white bell that corresponds in pitch. After much successful practice with matching, children become so familiar with the diatonic scale that they can put the bells in order from middle to high C by ear

(Continued on page 4)

BOARD CORNER *(cont.)*

spectrum of AMI Montessori stakeholders. The Board was eager to contribute to the Summit and we sent a delegation of people that provided the diversity AMI sought. Our delegation included: myself; Peter Davidson, Assistant Head; Kim Montague, Toddler Assistant; Gena Engelfried, Principal of The Grove School; and Michael Artigue, AMI-trained former MIR teacher who currently works in a charter school that uses the International Baccalaureate curriculum. This group collectively has AMI training on all four levels (Toddler, Primary, Elementary, Adolescent), private school experience, public school experience, administrative and Board experience, and experience training administrators and teachers.

Our five delegates contributed much to the 24+ hours of discussion that took place over the 2 ½ days. It was an intense process with lots of ups and downs, but the result was powerful. Conversations that needed to happen to get different branches of AMI on the same page did, and the beginnings of a collective vision for the future emerged. Reports from the multiple threads of work at the Summit are soon to be available online and follow-up calls are taking place. What

was clear from all participants was a common goal: getting quality Montessori to more children through more teacher training and more advocacy for public Montessori.

Having the U.S. recognize Montessori as a viable and powerful option for the education of all children is more than a dream—it is a real possibility that some feel is just around the corner. This Summit was an important first step. Our group was excited to learn about the advocacy that is happening nationwide, which is bringing Montessori to school board meetings at the city, county, and state level. Other people were excited to hear about us. They asked questions about MIR and Grove, and were in awe of what we have created here in Redlands: an environment for children 18 months to 18 years that incorporates both private and public programs. Montessori is gaining ground as a national movement and some people see the MIR/Grove model as one that could be valuable in leading the way. We are doing very good work for children here at home. It was a great experience to share our story and be part of the larger vision of bringing Montessori to more children in the U.S.

CURRICULUM MATTERS *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 3)

alone. They no longer need to play the white bells, except at the end to check their work. Could there be better “ear” training than this?

But we are not done. Now the teacher adds in the four black bells and their corresponding brown bells, thus adding the sharps/flats. The same matching and grading work ensues but now with a full chromatic scale.

In Montessori we always provide experience first, before attaching language, and the Bells are no exception. Only after this rich matching and grading experience do we teach children the names of the notes and their position on the musical staff. The chil-

dren begin to learn to write and read music, in a similarly natural manner to the way that they learned to write and read words.

In Elementary, the work with the bells continues, adding in other aspects of musical notation, and extends to work with the elementary music material called the Tone Bars, which allow for transposition and an exploration of other scale patterns.

But the Bells and Tone Bars don’t begin to encompass all of the ways that children experience and learn about music as part of the daily life of the classroom. Singing is part of nearly every day in every Montessori classroom and increases in challenge and complexity as

the children progress.

From their earliest days in the Toddler class, students also clap rhythms together. We draw upon this preparation when the time comes for the presentation of the values of notes (e.g., whole, half and quarter notes) and the ways in which those note values are written.

From the beginning, we also train children in moving their bodies to different moods and rhythms of music in the group work of “Walking on the Line.” Listening to different types and styles of music is also part of their daily experience, and fits into both their classification work (the names of instruments, composers, and styles of music) and their

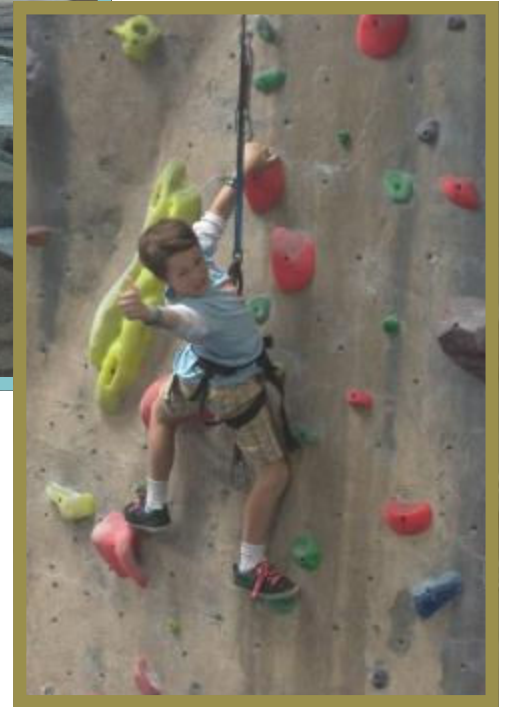
exploration of human history (how music has been expressed in different cultures at different times).

What’s most important about all of this is that it takes place in the classroom, not in a separate class with a specialist. What does this communicate to the children? That musical expression is not the realm of a few gifted people, but a birthright common to all of us. With the right experiences, all children can sing and carry a tune, all children can train their ears, all children can learn to read and write music. In other words, all children can participate in one of the basic expressions of what it means to be human, in the language of music.

SCRAPBOOK



Elementary students go rock climbing at Hangar 18 in Riverside for their P.E. fieldtrip.



MIR 6th year students prepare for their recent burrito fundraiser. Even though they started in the wee hours of the morning, they still manage to smile cheerfully.



Experiencing Our Own Ah-Ha Moments at *Journey & Discovery*

Christie Pleiss, TODDLER AND PRIMARY PARENT

As many of us experience everyday in our busy lives, dropping and picking up children from school does not offer much time to look around the classroom, or really think about the specific work our children choose each day. Thankfully, there is an opportunity twice a year to immerse yourself in your child's daily life at MIR. As an added benefit, you will enjoy several hours of child-free time with your spouse, partner, or family member (breakfast snacks, coffee, and lunch included!).

Although we have been a MIR family for close to two years, life with an infant and young toddler (now both MIR students) did not allow our attendance at *Journey & Discovery* until this fall. We had heard many great things about this event, ranging from "mind-blowing" to the most curious image, shared with me by PTM President Jen Burrows, of classrooms where the children have "disappeared:" work remains on the floor and on tables, "in progress". Finally, my husband Greg and I had the chance to attend and experience this for ourselves.

Before we embarked on our "journey" (and subsequent "discovery"), everyone congregated in the Yoga Room to kick off the day. I noticed that there were not only current MIR parents but also prospective parents, particularly those with older elementary, middle, and high school children who were interested in exploring The Grove School middle and high schools.

As expected, the "journey" portion of our day was an opportunity for reflection, silence, observation, and yes, emotion. This was the chance to travel through classrooms, Toddler through high school, completely silent for one hour without touching anything. (This was a challenge for someone like me.) We were simply taking in the environment, enjoying the chance to visit all of the stages of the MIR and Grove School experience. One of the highlights was walking as a group over to the Farm campus (the middle school) on a sunny but cool Saturday morning. The farmer's market visitors and vendors watched us travel across the farm in silent mode. We enjoyed reggae music playing on the stereo outside the woodshop as we walked between buildings.

I couldn't help noticing that not only does the size and complexity of the work change as you move up each level; the animals are also proportional to the size of the children who help care for them. Animals range from the tiny frogs and birds of toddlers, all the way to the goats, chickens, and pigs

of the Grove Farm School.

We thoroughly enjoyed the tour of the beautiful and unique grounds of MIR and the Grove middle and high schools. It was a great way to start the day and prepare for our hands-on discovery session to follow. Since our children are still in the early years of Toddler and Primary, we chose the Toddler through Elementary track.

The discovery session led to some key ah-ha moments for Greg and me. I saw familiar work and work "output." I spent some time at one of the tiny tables in Christine's Toddler class gluing paper shape cutouts onto an 8 ½ x 11 sheet of paper. This work jumped out at me, as we took home dozens of these sheets of paper with shapes ranging from circles and triangles to holiday-themed shapes (pumpkins and shamrocks).

Moving onto Primary, the range of work is vast, and again we had some ah-ha moments. First was when Maria showed us a lesson for metal inset drawings. We realized once again that we have been seeing the output of this work very frequently (daily right now). Mallory's drawer in the classroom is full of booklets of metal inset drawings, and little did we know that this is a key exercise in preparing for writing. Another ah-ha moment was when teacher Maryhelen explained sandpaper letters. This explains why we are hearing lots of letter "sounds" at home. The letters range in size and purpose across the classroom, from assisting with sound development, to reading, to writing and spelling.

Our final stage of discovery was Elementary. The work was certainly more challenging, and the lessons were key. Highlights included a lesson from Teesie about the parts of a seed via a lima bean dissection. Margaretann shared a fascinating lesson on "discovering Pi" as well as decimal math. I thought back to my own elementary school experience and how different this was. I could not imagine a single boring moment in this class.

Attending *Journey & Discovery* has reinforced how we feel about Montessori in Redlands and the valuable education and experience our children receive. We learned so much during this day and have even more appreciation for the remarkable teachers and staff of MIR and Grove. I highly recommend that all parents attend *Journey & Discovery*. Put the pieces of the puzzle together and have your own ah-ha moments.

From the MIR Development Office

Your Donation is Music to our Ears

The sound of thunder.



A gentle rain cascading on a roof.

A babbling brook.



Small pebbles thrown into a still lake.

"If children hear fine music from the day of their birth and learn to play it, they develop sensitivity, discipline and endurance. They get a beautiful heart."—Shinichi Suzuki

These are some of the sounds you can bring to your child when you donate to the MIR Annual Fund by Friday, December 21.

Our goal is 100% participation by the MIR Board of Trustees, employees, and families. As added incentive, each class that reaches 100% participation by its families will get to select a musical art installation of their choice from Natural Playgrounds.

These installations are sturdy, beautiful outdoor musical instruments that MIR students can play for their enjoyment and musical exploration. (Try one for yourself outside the MIR office, where we feature the wind chimes.) The "thunder drum," rain stick, musical fence, and "pebble harp" shown at left are some of the instruments teachers have asked for.

If you have not already pledged or donated, you can do so online (montessoriinredlands.org/giving; click on the Donate Now button) or by submitting your pledge form to your child's class or the MIR office.

🔗 **Donate now to maximize your tax benefit**—Your contribution may qualify for a deduction if you itemize your taxes. Make a lump-sum donation before the end of the year to have it qualify for the 2012 tax year.

🔗 **Consider a monthly donation**—If you are able, consider making a larger donation broken into monthly installments.

You may also pledge now and pay later. Donation payments are not due until the end of the school year and your pledge counts toward the December 21 deadline. **Any amount counts!**



The MIR Board and staff have joined this year's 100 Club. **Help your classroom join the club—make your pledge by December 21!**

HOLIDAY SING (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

this year's theme is "A Musical Holiday." Students of all ages and levels will sing famous songs from Broadway musicals ranging from Grease to Oliver and many more. The show will close with the Toddler classes performing the always-popular grand finale.

Admission to Holiday Sing is free. Seating begins at 6:30 PM and the program begins at 7 PM. **School will close at 3:30 PM on December 19** to give students a chance to rest and prepare.

Holiday Sing is a truly special annual performance that always draws a capacity crowd. Please drop off your children at University Hall at 6:30 PM and find your seat as quickly as possible.

Cookies needed: We will need 12 dozen cookies from each class (all three Toddler classes count as one) for the reception following the event. Look for sign-up sheets in the classes. Please deliver cookies to the school by the day of the event. Thank you in advance for your help!

DVDs of the performance: You can order DVDs in the classroom or the office for family members who can't be at the show and for your own memories.

School Calendar for the Holiday

December brings many holidays and a more complicated school schedule. Please note below the dates of class field trips and year-end holiday feasts, and be sure to check classroom notices for updates.

School will be closed starting December 24 and will re-open January 7. Childcare is available January 2-4 by reservation. **The reservation deadline is Friday, December 14. Stop by the office to sign up.** Childcare is not available Monday-Friday, December 24-January 1.

Elementary Solstice party change: The traditional Elementary Solstice event will be a party this year, rather than a full sleepover. The Solstice party takes place Thursday, December 20, 3:30-8:15 PM.

Piano recital for Yang's music students: The winter piano recital for families of Yang Chen's music students will be held Thursday, December 13 at 12-1 PM in Kelly's classroom. Please contact Yang with any questions.

6th Year Fundraisers for December

Just in time for the holidays, the MIR 6th year Elementary students will host a Barnes & Noble book fair, complete with gift wrapping, 9-4 PM Saturday, December 8.

On Wednesday, December 12, bring the whole family for dinner at the Gourmet Pizza Shoppe on State Street from 4-9 PM. Students receive 15% of proceeds. All funds support the 6th year trip to Washington, D.C. Thank you!

December 2012

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
3 Bluebird Assembly, 9:15 AM Elem. dance class PTM food drive begins	4 Lango class	5 Scholastic book fair begins Margaretann/Nicole's Upper EI trip to Natural History Museum Elem. dance class	6 Lango class	7 Kara/Marie and Emily/Teesie's Lower EI trip to see the Nutcracker Jean/MH field trip to see the Nutcracker Saturday: 6th year Barnes & Noble book fair
10 Elem. dance class	11 Lango class	12 Sara, Jean/MH, Maria, and Nikki's classes—puppet show Elem. dance class Scholastic book fair ends 6th year Gourmet Pizza Shoppe fundraiser, 4-9 PM	13 Piano recital for Yang's music students, 12 PM Lango class	14 Nikki's holiday potluck, 9 AM PTM food drive ends Childcare reservations due
17 Elem. dance class	18 Sara's holiday potluck, 11 AM Emily/Teesie's Upper EI trip to Braswell's	19 Classes travel by bus to U of R for rehearsal, 9:30-1:30 PM School closes at 3:30 PM 	20 Nicole's class field trip to Purple Easel Maria's class potluck, 9:30 AM Elem. Solstice party, 3:30-8:15 PM	21 Margaretann/Nicole holiday breakfast, 8:30 AM Emily/Teesie holiday brunch, 10 AM Jean/MH holiday brunch, 10:30 AM School closes at noon
24	25 	26 	27	28
School closed for the holidays.			No school; no childcare.	
31	School closed (cont.). No school; no childcare.		School closed for the holidays. No school; childcare by reservation.	