

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



BLUEBIRD BULLETIN

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Parent Education Night Positive Discipline

Parenting is harder than it looks

Raising children is hard. Before we become parents, we have a very clear idea of all the things we won't do, and of all the things we'll do "right." If we do all of the "right" things for our children, the theory goes, they'll rarely misbehave. We'll have a picture-perfect family.



Then we have actual children.

If you're finding parenting to be a lot more challenging than you imagined, this Parent Education Night is for you. Join us on

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The Most Important Teachers of All

by MAURA JOYCE, HEAD OF SCHOOL

"Before I got married I had six theories about bringing up children; now I have six children, and no theories."—unknown

The children at Montessori in Redlands are most fortunate to have teachers who are meticulously trained in child development and the Montessori curriculum. They have done a full-year's worth of training and several more of mentoring. Many of the MIR teachers have multiple decades of experience, and all of them have engaged in professional development on a regular basis. I myself have two Montessori diplomas, a Masters in Education, a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics and Philosophy, and engage in professional development and exchange at least twice a year. As an educator, I feel prepared.

But as a parent, I wasn't given **any** training before I began the most challenging job I have ever had. Maria Montessori herself recognized that the most important teachers in the child's life are the parents. Most

days, that feels like a lot of pressure! I don't have a degree in parenting! And why is it that all the things I learned about child development were much easier to implement in the classroom than in my own home?

Like your children, my son did not come with an instruction manual. I started out just doing the best I could with what I had. Sometimes that was just great, but other times it has been really, really difficult.

Several years back my husband and I made the choice to take a parenting course with Penny Davis, a trained Positive Discipline parenting educator. This seven-week commitment really changed our perspective on how to approach our son, and, finally, provided me with the "training" I had craved. It did not give us

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PARENT-TO-PARENT

By Vanessa Leslie, PTM President

Welcome back parents, staff, and students of Montessori in Redlands!

We hope your holidays were full of happiness and you had many opportunities to create wonderful memories. 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 2012.



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

The holidays are over but the birthdays are sneaking up...

Order wrapping paper, gifts, and birthday or other supplies through Innisbrook. Shop online at innisbrook.com. Our school code is 102074. Orders will be shipped directly to your home. Funds help sponsor PTM events and activities.

Next PTM Meeting

Our next meeting will be held Thursday, January 12, at 6 PM. All parents are welcome! This is a great opportunity to get involved in your children's school and meet other parents. PTM has sponsored childcare for parents who wish to attend. RSVP in the office for childcare. The meeting will be followed by the Parent Education Night at 7 PM.

Bluebird Item Sales on Hold

We are negotiating with another vendor to provide quality Bluebird T-shirts and will let you know when these are available. Once again, we apologize for the delay and inconvenience this has caused.

From the MIR Development Office

Annual Fund Classroom Incentive Deadline Extended

Thank you to everyone who supported the MIR Annual Fund and worked hard to turn in their pledges by the end of the year to count for the classroom incentive program. Each and every pledge is very much appreciated!

Last year we were able to provide an online pledge option, which allowed you to submit pledges until December 31. This year, we apologize that we could not offer that option. We understand that as a result, many of you did not have an opportunity to turn in your pledges by year-end.

Because of this, **we will extend the classroom incentive deadline to Monday, January 9.** This means you can still help your child's class reach 100%. Any amount counts! You may fill out and print the pledge form at montessoriinredlands.org/bridgethegap and bring it in to your child's classroom or the office.

On behalf of the students of MIR, thank you for your support!

Spring Gala Volunteers Needed—Help Us Make this a Night to Remember

Do you like to throw a great party? How would you like to volunteer to help with this year's Spring Gala? There are plenty of opportunities to help! Showcase your skills and have fun while ensuring the success of this amazing event. We need help with the following activities:

- ◆ **If you're a whiz at making fabulous gift baskets**, we need your help wrapping silent auction items
- ◆ **If you like shopping and love a good bargain**, help us put together great items for the silent auction baskets.
- ◆ **If you're patient and persistent**, we could use your help soliciting for local silent auction donations and program book advertisements
- ◆ **If you have decorating talent**, we'd love your help setting up the day of the event. Clean up help is also needed!
- ◆ **If you don't have a lot of time** but would like to help, we have various small projects for which we need help (artistic and computer skills a plus!)

Contact Jill McDermott at jill.mcdermott@montessoriinredlands.org for details. Thank you!

Report from the Board

by PAMELA FORD, PRESIDENT

As the new year begins, members of MIR's WASC Self Study teams are at work putting together a large document that will describe MIR. You have heard bits of information about this process—diligent, enlightening—and about the intended results—continuing accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and gaining a better understanding of MIR's strengths and areas for growth.

I am working on a section of that self-study report and I'd like to share with you what it means to do this. The Focus Group I'm assigned is studying what is labeled as "Category A: Organization for Student Learning." That is broken into four criteria: School Purpose, School Governance, School Administration, and Staff. I'm working on the section on Governance, which means the section about the Board of Trustees.

WASC provides us with the outline of the report they would like for us to produce. In the section on Governance, they have provided several statements that I must address to various degrees. In addition, I have to provide the evidence that the statements made are an accurate reflection of what happens at MIR today and what has happened here over the past six years.

So here is an example of a statement made by WASC that our report must address. *The Board of Trustees' policies are directly connected to the school's mission and vision and to the school-wide learner outcomes.* This is a loaded statement because the answer demonstrates several of the areas that WASC wants us to address as we study ourselves. First of all, this statement relates to the very first category of the self-study: the school's Purpose. To complete the section on Governance, we have to have identified our Purpose and communicated that clearly. Second, the Board must have "policies" which literally means that the Board has in place a mechanism for consistency in its decisions and di-

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Curriculum Matters

By PETER DAVIDSON,
ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

When Reading Is Magic

"Education is not something which the teacher does. It is a natural process which develops spontaneously."—Maria Montessori

If you notice me walking across campus with a clipboard in my hand, I am probably on my way to substitute in a Primary classroom. I keep a stack of blank slips of paper and a pencil on it, because I know how much new readers simply love reading handwritten words and phrases. It is simply magic to them that I can have an idea in my head and make it manifest on a piece of paper and that they can decode it! It's an excitement that all of the *Bob Books* and other primers in the world can never match.

Last month, for instance, I was substituting for the afternoon in an all-day class. Two of the 5-year-olds had just put a project away and were looking around for their next choice of work. One was slightly older and, as I happened to know, a more advanced reader. I pulled out my trusty clipboard and wrote a single phonetic word, *rug*, for the younger of the two. She sounded it out, "errrr-uhhhh-gggg, err-uh-gg, rug!" and looked at me expectantly. "Well," I said, "can you place that label with the item it names?" With a giggle, she placed the label on the gray carpet beneath our feet.

Next, I wrote the word *cup*, and again she sounded it out before zipping off across the classroom to place it next to a cup on the counter. I would go on to write word after word with her reading and matching each label with joy and enthusiasm every time. Why? Because there is something magical about reading something "hot off the press," directly from my pencil to her mind.

I was already thinking ahead to the other phonetic labels I would write for her, words like *clock* and *map* and *cactus* when I noticed the older girl was watching and waiting impatiently for a turn. "Oh, I have something a little different in mind for you," I said, and wrote a phrase—*the pencil*. "I'd like you to bring me that."

When she brought me a standard #2 writing pencil I exclaimed, "That is indeed a pencil! Thank you, but that's

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CURRICULUM MATTERS (*cont.*)

(Continued from page 3)

not *exactly* the pencil I was thinking of.” I then proceeded to add the word *red* to the phrase. This time when she returned I let her know that, “That *is* a red pencil, but it is still not *exactly* the pencil I was thinking of,” and added the word *shortest* to the phrase. This time when she returned I was finally able to reassure her that, “Yes, that is *exactly* the pencil I was thinking of!”

“But, let’s read the phrase together. ‘The pencil red shortest.’ Is that the way we usually would say it?” With a smile she said “No way!” I used scissors to cut the phrase into pieces and, to her delight, rearranged it several ways, ‘pencil the red shortest’ and ‘shortest the pencil red,’ eliciting a smile and a chuckle at each mistaken effort. “How

would you arrange it then?” I asked. “The shortest red pencil!” she responded, and arranged the words in their proper order.

I went on to play this game with her for the next half hour. She didn’t realize it, because I never actually used the word, but in addition to reading practice she was getting an experience of the detective power of the adjective. At the same time I continued to write single word phonetic labels for the younger girl. Both girls were engaged with reading work, and one with grammar work, right? But with a joy and enthusiasm that I surely don’t remember experiencing with either reading *or* grammar. That’s the power of a pencil and some slips of paper. It’s magic.



MOST IMPORTANT TEACHERS OF ALL *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 1)

direct instruction, that is, it was not a “how to” course. Rather, it provided us with a process for looking at our child’s behavior and creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust in our home. It helped me to remember that as his parents, we are the most important teachers in our son’s life.

In a Montessori classroom, the children learn the balance between freedom and responsibility. They have as much freedom as they can handle and be responsible with. In Positive Discipline, parents learn the balance between kindness and firmness. As parents we can be kind and still stand our ground and maintain the limits and rules of the family. In Mon-

tessori, the relationship between teacher and student is built on trust. We trust that children are capable and that they will, with guidance, act responsibly. The same is true for the principles behind Positive Discipline. Being able to incorporate that into your home when your children are young, builds a trusting relationship for their later years.

Penny Davis is back and will be featured at our next Parent Ed night, Thursday, January 12 at 7 PM. She will spend about 90 minutes presenting the basics of Positive Discipline, engaging the audience in sharing of stories and role-play. Penny will also be facilitating a 7-week parenting course beginning in February for interested parents. This is an opportunity not to be missed!

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 1)

Thursday, January 12 at 7 p.m. to hear parenting educator Penny Davis share the basics of *Positive Discipline*.

Positive Discipline is a program designed to teach children to become responsible, respectful, and resourceful members of their communities. It teaches important social and life skills in a manner that is deeply respectful and encouraging for both children and adults.

Childcare is available to registered Primary and Elementary students. RSVP in the office, call 793-6989, or at <http://goo.gl/CUw4T>.

Penny will also hold a seven-week parenting class to teach the skills of Positive Discipline. This class will begin in February. Learn more on January 12!

BOARD REPORT *(cont.)*

rections for the school that is transparent. And, third, this statement indicates that the Board must be clear that the decisions it implements are consistent with the school’s curriculum and student learning outcomes.

When I address this topic in the self-study report, I will include descriptions of the structure of our Board. The Board was re-structured a few years ago to make it more efficient and more productive at the same time. That’s why you hear about various committees carrying out Board directives, Committees include Finance, Facilities & Technology, Marketing, and Long-Range Planning. This self-study will include descriptions of the ways in which the committees report back to the Board and the ways in which the committees enable the successful achievement of the student learning outcomes. For example, the Facilities & Technology Committee might arrange the installation of shade structures so that the Montessori curriculum can be carried out in the great outdoors during the sunniest of Redlands’ days. This would be implemented in conjunction with the Finance Committee’s management of the budget and the Long Range Planning Committee’s commitment to continued use of the campus in this manner.

I did mention that I have to cite evidence in this process. In this case, I would have to cite minutes from Board meetings over the past few years that demonstrate how the Board structure was changed. I would also refer to MIR’s by-laws; committee minutes; the whole school goals set by the Board annually; the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes; and the *Living the Montessori Journey* document, which outlines our strategic vision.

This amount of detail is a rather impressive aspect of the MIR Self-Study process. There are dozens of statements in this study that must be addressed and the resulting report will include our strengths and our areas where we think growth on our part is warranted. Many volunteers have come together to work on this self-study including staff, parents, school administration, and board members. Although we will submit the report to the Visiting Committee and WASC office, it is really a document that is for the MIR community. When it is finished, I hope you will all take a look.

Thank you to all of the parent and staff volunteers who have helped us in the process so far, and the students too. It’s a very important process, and we are grateful for your help!

BIRTHDAYS

students

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Natalie Hage | 1/1 |
| Ayan Anand | 1/2 |
| Parker Abt | 1/3 |
| Sabine Pengelly | 1/3 |
| Nundhaa Sivabalan | 1/3 |
| Penelope Yang | 1/3 |
| Carolyn Lambson | 1/5 |
| Ivy Jean Symmes | 1/5 |
| Lily Mae Symmes | 1/5 |
| Daniel Larrance | 1/7 |
| David Larrance | 1/7 |
| Jalen Halsell | 1/10 |
| Avneesh Bajaj | 1/11 |
| Khloe Doss | 1/13 |
| Matisse Schutten-Burgess | 1/13 |
| Rhett Bogh | 1/14 |
| Kevan Mabudian | 1/15 |
| Rebekah Murphy | 1/15 |
| Claire Maury-Holmes | 1/16 |
| Sofia Singh | 1/16 |
| Asha Diekmann | 1/18 |
| Isabel Hopkins | 1/18 |
| Karina Brenchley | 1/23 |
| Lucas Youngman | 1/23 |
| Jadyn Dumond | 1/24 |
| Amanda Liu | 1/24 |
| Amanda Wong | 1/27 |
| Yuto Fujii | 1/28 |
| Mitali Patel | 1/28 |
| Ryder Imbriani | 1/29 |
| Anissa Kothapalli | 1/29 |
| Emily Lowe | 1/29 |
| Arnould Martinez | 1/29 |
| Anagha Nambisan | 1/29 |
| Caitlyn Yoh | 1/29 |
| Tomas Nauman | 1/30 |
| Jeralyn Macknet | 1/31 |

staff

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

It's a Flapjack Fundraiser!

This weekend the 6th years have an Applebee's Flapjack fundraiser! We are selling tickets for \$10 apiece and will be serving three pancakes, butter, syrup, two sausages, and drinks. The proceeds from this event will support our trip to Nantucket and Boston later this year.

If you would like to buy tickets, please come to Emily's classroom and talk to a 6th year student (or talk to any 6th year student from Emily's class that you know). We thank you for the support you have given us throughout the year and we hope to see you there! It will be tons of fun.—The 6th Years

MIR News and Notes

New choir to start: Elementary teacher Kelly will be starting a choir for 6-10 year olds. Choir will meet Thursdays, 3:45-4:30 PM starting February 2. Fliers with complete information will be available in your parent folders.

Lango classes resume next week: Lango classes are on holiday for one more week and will resume on Tuesday, January 10 at their normal schedule. We hope you have a Happy New Year!

Coach Liam to hold new soccer clinics: Soccer clinics for 6-8 year olds will start on Tuesday, January 17 and for 4-5 year olds on Wednesday, January 18. Look for fliers with complete information in your parent folders.

JANUARY 2012

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| 2 School resumes | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 9 | 10 Lango classes | 11 | 12 Jean/MH's class trip to the Getty Museum Lango classes PTM Meeting, 6 PM Parent Education Night, 7 PM | 13 |
| 16 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday—no school; no childcare. | 17 Lango classes Soccer clinics | 18 Nikki's class trip to the Folk Music Center Soccer clinics | 19 Lango classes | 20 Bluebird assembly, 9:15 AM Coffee, Tea, and M.E., 4 PM |
| 23 | 24 Lango classes Soccer clinics | 25 Soccer clinics | 26 Lango classes | 27 Staff in-service day. No school; no childcare. |
| 30 | 31 Lango classes Soccer clinics | 1 Soccer clinics | 2 Lango classes Choir starts | 3 Nikki's class field trip Jean/MH's class field trip |