

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



BLUEBIRD BULLETIN

MAY 2012 VOLUME 38, ISSUE 9

© Montessori in Redlands, LIC# 360910803-4-5

What's Inside...

PTM News and Notes. 2
 Birthday Bags 4 Kids drive
 PTM Board elections
 Teacher Appreciation Week

Report from the Board 3
 The WASC Experience
Curriculum Matters.3
 Serving the Community
Transforming Leadership through Montessori. 4

National Bike to School Day. 4
From the Development Office. 5
Tune in to Circus.7
School Calendar.8
 Order Your Spring Photos by May 5

Spring Carnival to be Held on Saturday

Join the fun on May 5!

The MIR Spring Carnival will be held Saturday, May 5, 11 AM–3 PM. It will be a fun-filled day including a bounce house, inflatable obstacle course, food, classroom game booths, prizes, and more. The carnival will also include a Scholastic Book Fair and a Montessori Marketplace with merchandise from local entrepreneurs.

Admission is \$10 per family, which covers all games and activities. There will be hot dogs, burgers (meat and veggie), chips, and soda available for purchase at the food booth.

New this year—PTM will have a booth at the carnival stocked with paper and crayons to create artwork for the Art Cards Fund-raiser/greetings program. Bring 5 BoxTops to the booth and get a free entry to win one of two baskets with goodies and gift cards!

Bidding Farewell to MIR

by LEELA MADHAVARAU, ELEMENTARY PARENT

As the last of my four children prepare to leave MIR and transition to the Grove Farm School, I asked if I could write one last article for the *Bluebird Bulletin*. Unlike the many Board columns I penned, this one is an unashamed paean to Montessori education in general, and MIR in particular.

My children have not known anything but Montessori education—once my

oldest son started talking I knew I needed a form of learning that links together children’s ability to think for themselves while fulfilling Yeats’ promise that “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” I didn’t realize that I was also making a commitment to a form of education that is easily transportable across countries and borders. Ten years ago, our family arrived in Red-



Naveen and Anjali Carter-Rau, MIR '12

lands. Everything was different—landscape, climate, people, etc. I was hopeful that the upheaval wouldn’t be too much for the children. On the first day of school, we walked onto the Montessori in Redlands campus and suddenly the universe was restored to

(Continued on page 6)



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

Generous Families Provide Birthday Bags 4 Kids by VANESSA LESLIE, PTM PRESIDENT

Thank you to all the families who participated in our community toy drive. PTM President Vanessa Leslie was able to deliver many 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 7-11

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 will present teaching staff with a special something to say “thank you” on May 8.

Cast Your Vote for PTM Officers for 2012-2013

Nominations for PTM President and Treasurer 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 May 14–18.

Bluebirds Travel Far in Spring



Ellie Zhang proudly displays her Bluebird t-shirt from Angels landing at Zion National Park during a family trip this month.



Everett Smart wears his Bluebird t-shirt at the Tower of London in an unusually warm spring trip with his family.

Report from the Board

The WASC Experience

By MICHELE VERCOSKI, BOARD MEMBER

Around the MIR campus in April, you might have heard the buzz about WASC paying us a visit. You may have also heard that it was a positive experience for all involved. You may also be wondering, what is WASC and why did they visit MIR?

WASC is the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. This accreditation process is based on a six-year cycle and is designed to strengthen and improve schools in the delivery of quality educational programs. An important component of WASC is the self-study which requires key stakeholders and staff members to extensively evaluate the school's organization, programs and student learning within four main WASC criteria:

- ◆ Organization for Student Learning
- ◆ Curriculum and Instruction
- ◆ Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth
- ◆ Resources

Committees were designed to address these criteria. Committee members included members of the board, MIR staff and faculty members, and MIR parents.

Now that you have an idea of what WASC is, you may be wondering why do we have WASC and why should we care? In order for MIR to be recognized as a credible school, we need accreditation from a governing authority...WASC! We want our students to graduate from a school that WASC and the California Department of Education have deemed a reputable school.

Of course, we were able to provide enthusiastic answers to these questions and took great pride in demonstrating the unique and progressive nature of our school. After many months of diligent work and preparing a lengthy report, MIR

(Continued on page 7)



Curriculum Matters

By MAURA JOYCE, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Serving the Community

"A man is not what he is because of the teachers he has had, but because of what he has done."—Maria Montessori

When one thinks about community service, often the idea of volunteering time for a special activity or event comes to mind. In the Montessori world, service is a natural and integral part of everyday life. Children look forward to providing service to younger students, either in their own environment or another class. Service becomes a part of the fabric of the environment spontaneously. It does not necessarily wait for a special event.

The youngest children in the Montessori Toddler communities begin their road to becoming world citizens with experiences of empathy. Very quickly they learn through the lessons of grace and courtesy that they are not the only ones with needs. They experience the needs of their peers and quickly learn to offer their friend a tissue or hold the door open for them.



In the Primary class, children begin to have regular classroom "jobs"—whether it be dusting a shelf or feeding the fish, the children engage enthusiastically in the care of the environment for the good of the community. Our mixed ages allow for children to always be in the presence of either older students to help them or younger students in need of their help.

(Continued on page 5)



Transforming Leadership through Montessori

by PETER DAVIDSON, ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

“This is my thesis: caring for persons, the more able and the less able serving each other, is the rock upon which a good society is built.” —Robert Greenleaf, Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness

I came upon this quote as I was preparing to present leadership training to a group of school principals. The challenge in such a training is to help these principals move beyond the traditional “transactional” model of leadership (I’ll give you what you want if you do what I want) under which they grew up, to a more effective and transformational one. As James MacGregor Burns states in *Transforming Leadership*, “Leadership...is not the same as the exercise of power.... True leadership only exists if people follow when they have the freedom not to.” It is also about moving from the hierarchical “top down” structure of the last century to a more collaborative or even “bottom up” approach. Jim Collins (*Good to Great*) describes the leader who guides an organization to greatness not as dictatorial or even charismatic, but as humble with a strong determination and will.

It struck me that this is the kind of leadership we aspire to model for our Montessori students on our best days. We also provide students with opportunities to practice this style of leadership throughout their Montessori careers, especially at the end of each cycle. When they are the oldest in a mixed-age class, students naturally assume a role of leadership. Not only are they models for the

younger students with their behavior and competence, but they actively seek out opportunities to help and support the younger ones as well. How often have I seen a five-year-old tie a three-year-old’s shoe, or help carry a puzzle map, or tirelessly pedal them around the playground on a two-seater tricycle? How often have I been prepared to intervene in a social conflict only to have one of the older students step in instead and help their younger friends find a path to friendship and reconciliation? How often in elementary class meetings is it the older students who present a solution to some social difficulty by helping to create the mores and agreements all students will treat each other within a community of friends?

The ultimate example of this leadership at MIR is to be found embodied in the bearing and actions of our 6th graders, soon to graduate. Many Upper Elementary students are happy to give a tour to a prospective parent, read with a primary student in Primary, or set up the nap mats in the Toddler classrooms. But it’s these 6th graders who carry out these humble tasks with the most generosity and pride. And we are proud as well, to send such leaders out into the world.

First National Bike to School Day is May 9

May is National Bike Month, a month dedicated to celebrating the power of the bicycle. Consider riding a bike to work or school to save money, get exercise, help the environment, and explore Redlands’ new bike lanes. Important dates to remember this month include:

National Bike to School Day:

Wednesday, May 9

National Bike to Work Week:

Monday, May 14–Friday, May 18

National Bike to Work Day:

Friday, May 18

As an added incentive to encourage bike riding, stop by the MIR office for some healthy snacks and participate in a drawing to win a \$15 Redlands Cyclery gift cer-

tificate. Every day that parents, students, or employees ride their bike to school or work on Bike to School Day and during Bike to Work week, you can enter your name in the basket in the MIR office. The more times you ride, the more opportunities you have to win! The winner’s

name will be drawn on Friday, May 18, Bike to Work Day.

So dust off those bikes and ride with your child to school on Wednesday, May 9, and begin training for Bike to Work

Week May 14–18. You’ll feel great and you may take home a nice little prize!



CURRICULUM MATTERS *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 3)



In the Elementary classes, service goes beyond the walls of the classroom. Children will choose to do service in another classroom. Their work is varied—setting up napping mats, preparing snack, caring for classroom animals, tying shoe laces, listening to emergent readers, or just sitting with a younger child while they work.



Our Upper Elementary students venture out further still, into the Redlands community. For example a group of students have been taking weekly trips to Mission Commons Retirement community this year. These students plan activities for the residents and spend the afternoon engaging with them in cards, puzzles, games, and cooking. Other classes have traveled to Braswell's to sing and serve lunch.

What is most profound in our Montessori environment is that community service comes from the children. It is not a mandated activity, but rather one that our children seek to do with enthusiasm. Watching this come from the children is inspiring to us all. As Head of School it keeps me focused on the essence of Montessori and the importance of our jobs at Montessori in Redlands. Beyond academics, our curriculum includes the experiences of being a part of humanity—generosity, community, service, and love.



From the MIR Development Office

Our Annual Fund reached 98% school wide participation, a new record for our school! New to the school and missed the campaign? Forgot to turn in your donation? It's not too late to donate! Stop by the office for a donation form, or donate online at montessoriinredlands.org/bridgethegap. If you made a pledge to the 2011-2012 Annual Fund and have not yet turned in your donation, please do by June 30, 2012. Thank you for your support!

Thanks again to everyone for making our Spring Gala a huge success! Next year's theme is Paris: La Belle Époque. Planning begins over the summer, and we can always use your help and creativity. Contact Jill McDermott at jill.mcdermott@montessoriinredlands.org to volunteer or for more information.

MIR created a 60 second promotional video in conjunction with the City of Redlands Community Video Project. Stay tuned for more information, as the video is expected to launch sometime this summer.

BIDDING FAREWELL TO MIR (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

its natural balance. Sanjay and Rohan had been attending Montessori Radmoor School in Okemos, Michigan, an AMI-affiliated school set amidst 8.5 acres of woods. It felt like a unique environment but in a grove of grapefruit trees were buildings that looked the same, classrooms that looked the same and a learning methodology that transcended the difficulties of leaving friends behind. We had travelled thousands of miles but also come home.

When asked to choose a single phrase to explain my dedication to Montessori education, I usually reply that these are schools that allow my children to retain that sense of curiosity that is inherent in us all. All too frequently, curiosity is bred out of us because it is difficult for the adults in the world to keep answering questions. I received positive confirmation of my decision when my oldest son started to apply to various universities. In one of his college applications, he wrote

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 – atlases 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...I will never regret the education that has made me an independent, inquisitive, resourceful thinker.

Those words above confirm for me the strength of Montessori education. Living the Montessori Journey is not necessarily the easiest path. It is not the model of education with which many of us grew up (as my son discovered—you do have to explain it on university application forms)—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 enthrone 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.

I could write pages and pages about the benefits of Montessori but I will confine myself to one more element—"Help me to do it by myself." This principle of Montessori education creates human beings who understand that they learn by doing. Perhaps most importantly for me as someone working in a university setting, children who learn by doing also learn that they might fail. I was explaining to someone that too few of our university students have learned how to fail successfully, to understand that the process is often more important than the product. Maria Montessori's granddaughter, Renilde, commented: "The most sensible advice Maria Montessori gives is 'Follow the Child.' It will take many generations for humanity to understand the common sense of this injunction. When it does, and only then, humanity itself will begin to fulfill its potential."

Thank you, Montessori in Redlands, for believing in educating the whole child—my children are the proud beneficiaries of all that you have taught them over the past decade. May they take their learning into the world and light many (educational) fires.

Sanjay Carter-Rau (MIR '05) will be entering his second year in the Faculty of Arts at the University of British Columbia. Rohan Carter-Rau (MIR '08) will be spending his junior year in Muenster, Germany as a Rotary International Exchange Student. Anjali and Naveen Carter-Rau (MIR '12) will continue to learn by doing at the Grove Farm School.

Leela MadhavaRau served on the MIR Board of Trustees for six years, including five as President.



Sanjay Carter-Rau, MIR '05



Rohan Carter-Rau, MIR '08

Tune in to Circus



Join the YMCA of the East Valley and many of your fellow Bluebirds for exciting performances by The Great All-American Y Circus. Performers of all ages will thrill you with circus acts from acrobatics to juggling to unicycling and much more. This is fun for the whole family!

Fridays – May 4, 11, 18 – 7 PM

Saturdays – May 5, 12, 19 – 5 PM

Sundays – May 6, 13, 20 – 3 PM

Tickets – \$14/adults, \$9/youth, (children younger than 3 are free if they sit in an adult's lap during the show). Buy your tickets now at the YMCA.

Location – Roy Coble Gym at the YMCA

REPORT FROM THE BOARD *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 3)

welcomed the WASC Visiting Committee which consisted of four educators from California schools. We met them on Sunday, April 15, at our school and gave them a tour of the entire campus and each and every classroom. In Journey and Discovery fashion, the team was able to observe and explore the full spectrum of our programs. The WASC team spent the next three days observing in classrooms, reviewing student work, interviewing students, teachers, parents and all of the community members that worked on Focus Groups.

Although the Visiting Team is not able to share what their accreditation recommendation will be to WASC, it is clear that they were impressed with MIR. The Team expressed feelings of happiness and peace from the MIR environment and their observations of the teachers and students left them impressed with how independent, articulate and driven our students were. In other words, the Team observed the fire our children have for learning and got to experience first-hand the light that we all see on a

daily basis that shines within our curious children. As a parent and a board member, I am grateful that the WASC visitation lends itself to the opportunity to observe those things that cannot be measured by traditional means: Some things you just have to see to believe.

Even without having received the final “accreditation” word, it is safe to say that the outcome of our visit was a success. This was in no doubt due to the incredible dedication and passion our teachers demonstrate in their daily work with children, our parent body - past and present - who partner with us in the education of their children, our board who provides the resources we need to continue this work and the strength of our administrative staff who support the teaching staff and parents. We are very proud of MIR and all of the MIR children, past, present and future, and through the WASC process, will continue to re-examine and re-commit ourselves to our programs. Thank you all for your continued help and support of our wonderful school!

BIRTHDAYS



students

Ariana Martinez	5/2
Laura Sousa	5/2
Jordan Cherniss	5/4
Aja Levesque	5/4
Jessica Martin	5/4
Sanjana Maria Fernando	5/5
Sarah Kensok	5/8
Ronnie Ravins	5/13
Sidarth Kulkarni	5/16
Ella Harris	5/17
Kennedy McCarthy	5/18
Jackson Clemens	5/19
Hennessy Mueller	5/19
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
Aislin Henry	5/31
Kanoa Le	5/31
Reyna Moore	5/31
Troy Pulido	5/31

staff

Maryhelen Campa	5/11
Jacqueline Chandler	5/19
Raina Martinez	5/19
Cate Brown	5/26

Bluebird Bulletin is published by Montessori in Redlands, 1890 Orange Ave., Redlands, CA 92373, License number 360910803-4-5. © 2012. Submit articles, pictures, or comments to [lisa.kensok](mailto:lisa.kensok@montessoriinredlands.org) or bring them to the MIR office.

Order Your Spring Pictures by May 5

Spring Pictures are here! Don't miss out on getting an updated portrait of your child. Here's how to order your pictures:

1. Go to sparrowstudiosonline.com and click on "Clients" in the upper right corner.
2. Enter your access code and click "Go." Your access code is your child's first name and the first letter of their last name; e.g., "Billy Smith" would be "billys."
3. Once inside, click on a picture to make it bigger. The previous and next images are visible in the upper right corner. You can scroll through to pick your favorites.
4. Once you've selected the picture you want, pick your preferred package from the list on the right under "View all products." Prices range from \$25 to \$75, with a portion of proceeds going to MIR. Special prices are good through May 5, 2012.

If you have any questions about ordering or getting online, please do not ask the school. Please call Sparrow Studios at 909-882-3922.



MAY 2012

30	1 Lango classes Summer School enrollment opens for new families	2 Emily/Teesie trip to Krikorian theaters	3 Lango classes 🎵 Choir	4/5 Spring Carnival, 11 AM to 3 PM Scholastic Book Fair begins Spring picture orders due
7 Staff in-service day. No school; no childcare.	8 Lango classes Teacher Appreciation Day 🍎 PTM Art Cards fundraiser ends	9 National Bike to School Day ⚽ Make up soccer clinics	10 Lango classes 🎵 Choir	11 Marie's class Mother's Day tea
14 PTM Board elections open Sara's class trip to Redlands Fire Station Scholastic Book Fair ends	15 Lango classes	16 Kara/Dorama's class trip to Loma Linda Children's Hospital	17 Lango classes Jean/MH's trip to L.A. Zoo 🎵 Choir	18 Coffee, Tea, and M.E., 8:45 AM and 4 PM Elementary trip to U of R (most classes) PTM Board elections close
21	22 Lango classes PTM Room Rep appreciation night, 7 PM	23	24 Lango classes 🎵 Choir	25 Bluebird assembly, 9:15 Nikki's trip to Brookside Pk Last day to cancel or change summer session 1
6th years' trip to Nantucket and Boston				
28 Memorial Day — No school, no childcare.	29	30 Liana's class EOY celebration, 9:15-11:30 Kelly's class talent show/ice cream social, 4-6 PM	31 Margaretann/Nicole's class play, 6:30 PM	1
Teesie/Emily's class camping trip				