

School Closings 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.

MIR will be closed for the winter holidays starting December 24 and will reopen January 7. No childcare is provided December 24–January 1, 2008, but is provided January 2–4, 2008. Register for childcare in the office.

Holiday Sing Rehearsal Notice

On the day of the performance (Tuesday, December 18), children will travel to the University of Redlands for a dress rehearsal. Please note that children will be transported by school bus.

The Holiday Sing is one of the most anticipated events of the school year, and we usually fill up the entire Memorial Chapel. Get there early to ensure your seat!

Saying Goodbye...

Sara-Frances Horton, assistant to Elementary teacher Kelly Read, will be moving to Hawaii over Christmas to get married and start a family. Although we are happy for her and this new chapter in her life, we are sad to be losing such a talented classroom assistant. Sara-Frances' last day will be Friday, December 21.

MIR has been interviewing qualified candidates for a replacement and plan to have the new assistant shadow Sara-Frances during her last week to get familiar with the students, the classroom, and the families.

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to call Maura Joyce in the MIR office at 793-6989.

December 2007

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
03 Family Services Toy Drive begins Jean & Maryhelen's class field trip	04 Nikki's class field trip	05	06 Dance class, 3:30 PM	07 Jean/MH & Mara/Emily's field trip Nikki's holiday luncheon
10	11 Sara's class field trip Dance class, 3:30 PM	12 Dance class, 3:30 PM	13 Dance class, 3:30 PM	14 Dance class, 3:30 PM Family Services Toy Drive ends
17 Dance class, 3:30 PM	18 School closes 3:30 PM HOLIDAY SING, 7 PM	19	20 Mara/Emily's winter solstice slumber party Class lunches: Kelly, Sara, and Margaretann/Nicole	21 Bluebird Day & assembly, 9:15 AM Mara/Emily brunch Class lunches: Kara/Dorana, Jean/Maryhelen, Kristin School closes 12 PM
24	25	26	27	28
School closed for winter holidays. No childcare.				
31	01	02	03	04
School closed. No childcare.		School closed. Childcare by reservation.		
				

School Closure Date Change—Update Your Calendar

MIR will be rescheduling one of its childcare days to Friday, February 1, 2008 from Friday, February 15, 2008.

MIR traditionally closes the Friday before Presidents' Day, providing childcare while teachers attend training. This year, an exciting, new training opportunity related to our First 5 goals has come up. Teachers at all levels will attend the conference *Meeting Special Needs in the Montessori Classroom* on February 1-3, 2008. This requires that we adjust the school calendar. **The school will be closed Friday, February 1, 2008, and childcare will be provided by reservation. Friday, February 15, 2008 will be a regular school day.**

Please note the change on your school calendar, and thank you for your support for your teachers in their professional development.

The Icebox

The Monthly Newsletter of Montessori in Redlands

December 2007
Volume 34, Issue 4



Oh, hear the angel voices!

Children are set to sing and dance at the Holiday Sing

MIR students, toddlers included, are practicing hard to ring in the holiday season with this special program, which will be held at University of Redlands Memorial Chapel on **Tuesday, December 18**. The children sing, dance, and put on plays, always to a capacity crowd.

School will close at 3:30 PM on the day of the performance to give students a chance to rest and prepare. Please drop off your children at University Hall at 6:30 PM. The program begins at 7 PM.

Admission to the Holiday Sing is free. We will be asking for volunteers to provide cookies and other holiday snacks for after the show. Please check your parent folders for more information as we get closer to the event.

What's Inside

- Christmas Toy Drive (PTM Corner)
- December Sports Report
- Please Fill Out Demographic Survey (Board Corner)
- MIR Scenes/Student Articles
- Annual Fund Donations Gain Momentum
- Saying Goodbye to Sara-Frances

“Love” Song

by MAURA JOYCE, HEAD OF SCHOOL

No matter which holiday your family celebrates this season, there is music to honor each one. It is fitting that the MIR tradition at this time of year is our annual Holiday Sing. Music in the Montessori setting is not an isolated subject, taught by a specialist. Rather, it permeates the children's work on every level. Whether they play the bells, tone bars, or recorder; clap rhythm charts; sing; or listen, the children experience music as an integral part of their intellectual and spiritual life. Music is poetry, mathematics, history, art, language, and more.

Music during the holiday season is inspiring to the children because of the messages the songs relay. The children's reactions and insights into the holidays never cease to amaze me. They identify the messages of joy, peace, and hope that are found in the music and believe that they are projecting them to the world through their voices. Children across the world are the hope of their parents, communities, and of all of us, for they offer a new future. Their voices remind us of the bright future that they will offer all of humankind.

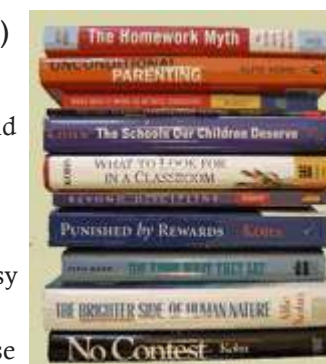
This year, we have chosen “love” as the theme for the Holiday Sing. I eagerly await the children's interpretation, through song, of what love means to them. I expect all of us to lift up our voices and join the children in celebrating the love of this holiday season.

An Evening with Alfie Kohn

by VANESSA CAUSLEY (MOTHER OF LOGAN, AGE 3)

As I attempt to write my thoughts on an evening with Alfie Kohn, my three year old son, Logan has been vying for my attention, wanting me to sit and draw bridges with him.

Prior to attending Mr. Kohn's seminar, my initial reaction would have been “Logan, I'm busy working; go and color. I will be in later.” He would pout, whine, and wander off into the house



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DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Students

Jacob Paugh	12/5
Nathaniel Ralston	12/7
Keerthana Toure	12/7
Ella Sabo	12/9
Trinity Villa	12/10
Dutch Rumary	12/16
Elaine Spencer	12/16
Ella Eaton	12/17
Anthony Hage	12/17
Caroline Wagner	12/18
Hannah Brenchley	12/22
Shreshta Aiyar	12/24
Ananya Anand	12/24
Clair Breshears	12/27
Kalu Obasi	12/28
Rachel Porter	12/28
Benjamin Walton	12/28
Reid Norton-Brainerd	12/29
Adam Desmarais	12/30
Jonathan Montemaro	12/31
Maia Richards-Dinger	12/31

Staff

Lisa Oliver	12/5
Jill McDermott	12/10
Nicole Fedorow	12/12
Nikki Farooq	12/17
Kelly Read	12/20
Rosemarie Casale	12/21

PTM Corner



We thought that this month we could take a moment to describe PTM a bit more. The Parents and Teachers of Montessori (PTM) has four main functions:

- ♦ To increase parent involvement in the school.
- ♦ To educate parents on Montessori theory and practice.
- ♦ To encourage communication among the school staff, the Board, and parents.
- ♦ To nurture a sense of community at Montessori in Redlands.

PTM is essentially like the PTA (Parent Teachers Association) organizations at other schools. We hold several events each year, including the Halloween and Spring Carnivals and Camp Montessori. We hold monthly meetings to which all parents are invited and welcome to attend. At these meetings, we organize our activities, plan events, create a network of parent support, and connect with MIR administration.

Mainly we work to create ways for students, parents and teachers to socialize, get to know each other, and learn from each other. We also continue to look for ways to be involved in our local community, such as through the recent food drive and the current holiday toy drives.

Amazing Support for Food Drive

Thanks to all the families that donated! We delivered an amazing 554 lbs of food to Redlands Family Services. This food will support more than 1,500 grateful families this winter.

Christmas Toy Drive

We are collecting toys through Friday, December 14 for the Children's Fund 19th Annual Celebration of Giving Campaign. Please drop off new, unwrapped toys either in the office or at the curb on the North Side of campus. Children's Fund is the non-profit component of the San Bernardino County Children's Network. They provide emergency resources to thousands of at-risk children in San Bernardino County.

Next PTM Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 17 at 6 PM in the Yoga room.

Bluebirds Fly South for Thanksgiving



Bluebirds Evan and Colin Garcia display their Bluebird shirts and their silly side in Ensenada, Mexico.



Contributions Gain Momentum

Generous donations have characterized the MIR 2007-2008 Annual Fund, moving us closer to our goals of \$50,000 and 100% participation. **Financial gifts now total \$17,604.** Thank you to all who have donated or pledged!

Our classroom participation program deadline is fast approaching, so we encourage you to submit your pledge as soon as possible either at your child's classroom or in the office.

Why is 100% participation so important? Is my single donation worth that much?

Yes! Community participation in the MIR Annual Fund is crucial to our efforts to seek outside funding sources through grantors. Last year's high participation rate (94%) provided important leverage with First 5 San

Bernardino in securing our grant for the *First Contact* special needs program and with our bond holders as they considered whether to support the purchase of our school property. Annual Fund gifts also directly support teachers and staff in their mission to help your children realize their full potential—academically,

Parent to Match 100% Incentive

One generous parent has offered to match the incentive for every class that reaches 100% participation. At 100% participation, your class receives \$150 toward a field trip of its choice. The parent, who wishes to remain anonymous, will give each class that reaches that goal an additional \$150 to use as they wish.

socially, and emotionally.

Donate or offer your pledge today. Make your donation in convenient monthly installments (ask how at the office) or pay at one time. All contributions must be received by June 30, 2008.

Classroom totals:

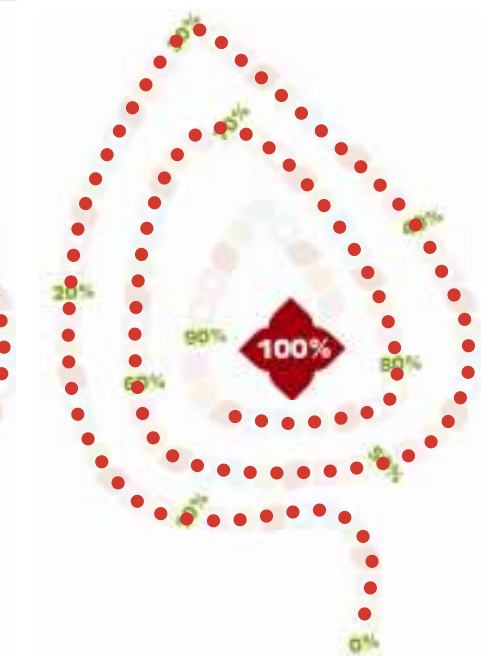
- Christine—33%
- Aedin—57%
- Liana—14%
- Jean/Maryhelen—12%
- Kara/Dorama—44%
- Nikki—38%
- Kristin—13%
- Sara—23%
- Mara/Emily—38%
- Kelly—21%
- Margaretann/Nicole—32%
- Emily/Justin—14%



Schoolwide participation: 29%



MIR Board participation: 63%



Staff participation: 87%

(Continued from page 1)

and begin to annoy our two very elderly dogs who would then come running into the study, avoiding Logan's unwanted attention. In the past, this would lead to firm words: "Leave the dogs alone" and his persistent annoyance towards the dogs culminating into "time out." Other times, I would resort to promising items, or allowing extra viewing of a favorite DVD, just so he would leave the dogs alone. Mr. Kohn would label this a reward (or bribe) and suggests that the end result is only "temporary compliance," and an eventual return to the undesired behavior. After all, children will continue to do something if they are getting something else in return.

When I first heard this, I was a little shocked...to hear it put so bluntly. I am from a generation where this was a common way to manage children. And although this had been my experience growing up, reading parenting books that promote this approach with children, I have often felt frustrated and unclear as to how this is conducive to raising a responsible, caring, and honest young person.

And it was with this ambivalence that I attended Mr. Kohn's seminar, hoping to grasp a new approach toward parenting my toddler. He presented quite a lot of information based on years of research, experience as a teacher, and observations of young students.

He cited many studies illustrating how positive reinforcement is not effective, traditional discipline is not effective, consequences are not effective. And that as adults, we are destroying the natural interest children have to learn and absorb everything in their sphere of influence, and their intrinsic

When he offered his solution, I missed it, it was so obvious. His answer: You need to address the underlying reasons for what is going on for the child.

motivation to learn or complete a task is deadened. He explained that as a result, loss of interest occurs and their motivation only comes in the form of a reward. He talked at length about the how we measure success in our children by grading them, assigning homework and papers, which may or may not have a grade given. He pointed out that the natural consequence is that children don't focus on the learning but instead ask of assignments "does this count?" or, more dishearteningly, "do we need to know this?"

It was obvious to me, as he explained his analysis of these findings, that I had to adjust my approach with Logan.

As Mr. Kohn stripped away the tools I had relied on, I waited to hear what could be an alternative to a parenting without positive reinforcement and educating without grading or homework while still ensuring moral development in young

people. When he offered his solution, I missed it, it was so obvious. His answer: you need to address the underlying reasons for what is going on for the child.

I left the seminar and wrangled with this concept all night and since that time, have been considering ways in which I can alter my approach with Logan. So my response to my son this evening was "Sure. Let's draw bridges. I can finish this later." As a result, a different outcome was obvious here for all involved, and the interaction was far more positive than the potentially negative outcome. I have consigned myself to reading some of Mr. Kohn's material and to begin to develop a framework for myself to engage Logan differently.

My ultimate objective has always been to nurture Logan's natural interest in the world; encourage creativity in how he chooses to live his life; and, most importantly, care for others. Since listening to Mr. Kohn's views on parenting and education, I am constantly re-evaluating my interaction with Logan, hoping the path we travel together can be more rewarding for both of us.

Alfie Kohn has written many books and articles on parenting, education, and human behavior, and these are available in bookstores or online. For more information, visit www.alfiekohn.org.

Pick Up Fun (and Easy) Gifts at the Scholastic Book Fair

The Scholastic Book Fair is a great place to shop and benefit your child's class at the same time. Browse and buy books and other educational items in the foyer of Jean and Maryhelen's class (in the main campus) until Friday, December 14. All classes receive free books from Scholastic as their part of the profit from the sales.

December Sports Report

by TEESIE EMGE, MIR PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER

Running

Congratulations to all the Bluebirds who participated in the Loma Linda Lopers' annual Holiday Classic on Sunday, December 2, 2007. There was an Elves Trot (for kids 3-6 years old) and 5K and 15K runs. For information on winners and results, go to www.lopersclub.org. Are you a runner? Parents and children are both invited to join the Bluebird Running Club, which meets at MIR on Fridays at 7:30 AM (8:00 AM for younger runners).

Congratulations also go to the Middle School students who participated in the Mt. SAC Cross Country Invitational, in Walnut, California, on October 12, 2007. Mt. SAC is one of the nation's largest and most prestigious cross country competitions for elementary, middle, high school, and college students.



Soccer

Registration for the AYSO Spring and Fall 2008 soccer seasons occurs on Saturday, December 8, 8 AM-2 PM at the Redlands Sports Complex. Spring registration fees are \$60; the season runs March-May. Fall registration fees are \$90 and the season runs September-November/December. To qualify for the fall season, children must have been born before July 31, 2004. New players will need to bring proof of birth date. To register online, visit www.eayso.org. Learn more at www.redlandssayso.org.

Exercise Opportunities for the Whole Family

Walking, running, jumping, and skipping improves cardiovascular fitness, strengthens muscles, and improves bone health, but did you know that they also can improve the ability to learn? Experts are saying that exercise boosts brain function, that physical activity can anchor learning up to 90% better, and that students who exercise do better in school. Our campus is beautiful; please enjoy it through physical activity. In addition to the Running Club, in January we will begin shooting hoops before class 8:00-8:25 AM on Fridays on the basketball court. Join the fun and get your exercise boost!

You Could Win a Gingerbread House

BY CLAIR BRESHEARS

D'Anne Breshears, a parent of one of the 5th years in Mara and Emily's class, has made a gingerbread house. The 5th year students are raffling it off to earn money for their trip to Washington, D.C.

The gingerbread house will be on display in the office beginning Friday, November 30. Tickets will be available for \$1 each or six for \$5. The house [will be displayed] and tickets will be available at the Holiday Sing. The winner will be announced Friday, December 21 at the Bluebird assembly. (The gingerbread house is made of some non-edible and some edible ingredients, so we recommend one not consume it.)

BOARD CORNER

by LEELA MADHAVARAU, PRESIDENT,
MIR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Parent Survey Launches

We pride ourselves on maintaining a small community feel within MIR and hope that you feel comfortable coming to teachers, PTM representatives, Board members, or the Head of School if you have a question or concern about your children's education.

On a broader level, the school also needs to collect information from the whole parent body to be able to effect change and keep the school operating at a consistently high level. To that end, **we are requesting that you complete a demographic survey, available at www.montessoriinredlands.org/surveys**. We are required to complete this annual community profile to maintain our WASC accreditation. The survey should only take a few minutes.

In the spring, you will be asked to complete a more comprehensive feedback survey. We ask that you take the time to provide us with considered responses, be they positive or negative. Again, we undertake this process annually and use this feedback to consider adjustments to the school and its programs.

We know that you lead hectic lives, but please take a few moments now, and again in the spring, to give us your thoughts about MIR. We want to hear your voice.

As always, please feel free to contact me with questions or comments:

Leela MadhavaRau
President, Board of Trustees
leela_madhavarau@redlands.edu
Phone: (909) 792-2406

MIR Scenes

“Education is a natural process carried out by the human individual, and is acquired not by listening to words, but by experiences in the environment.”

—*Maria Montessori*

All photos are courtesy of Maryhelen Campa, Primary teacher.



Student Articles

Elementary Class Trip to Washington, D.C.

BY HANNAH SKAGGS, AGE 10

This year Mara's 5th year students are raising money all over the campus and the city of Redlands for their Washington, D.C. trip next year. We are raising money by selling things and all sorts of other stuff. Also, this year Mara's 6th year students are going to Washington, D.C. for the very first time! Every year the 5th years are going to be raising money to go to Washington, D.C. when they're 6th years.

Halloween

BY EVA AZENARO-ACERO, AGE 11

For many people, Halloween is a time to dress up and scare the pants off of everyone else. Most of the time, it is, but there is more to Halloween than the candy and costumes. Halloween was once known as Hallows Eve. People from Ireland (also known as Celts) decided to have large sacrificial bonfires. Children would run from house to house, wishing everyone luck and asking for wood to place on the sacred fire. After the fire people would be afraid to walk home alone in the dark, so they would carry a sacred ember in a holder (usually a radish) with a frightening face carved into it to scare away evil spirits. The Celts decided to dress up to frighten the spirits even more, and the children started to ask for candy instead of wood. Girls used to peel the skin off an apple in one long strip, swing it three times over their head, and toss it over their left shoulder. Why? To see the first initial of their sweetheart! The Celts came up with some neat Hallows Eve ideas. Can you come up with some creepy ideas? TRICK OR TREAT!



A Mermaid Christmas, by Leila Clutter, age 5 1/2, Jean and Maryhelen's class



Fractions

Artist unknown

A Trip to the Library

BY SYDNEY OLIVER, AGE 8

I needed some more information for the reports I am doing at school. So I asked if I could take a trip to the Library. The teacher said of course as long as I had a library card. My friend and I found a lot of information from the books that we got from the Library. When I went to go check out the books, the Library card was not updated, so I could not check out my books. Luckily, the assistant, Bobbi, this time was willing to check out the books for us. The moral of the story is make sure you have an updated library card in class at all times.

Art Lessons

BY LAUREL BOOTH, AGE 11

Carol Sonntag is giving Mara's Upper Elementary students art lessons from 1:45 pm to 3:15 pm, in their classroom. She is kindly doing it to better their art skills. Currently, they are working on watercolors and are enjoying it immensely.