

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



BLUEBIRD BULLETIN

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Book fair sponsored by Frugal Frigate

Ready for Their Spotlight

Children are set to sing and dance at the Holiday Sing

MIR students of all ages will sing and dance at the Holiday Sing, which will be held at 7 PM on Tuesday, December 16 at the University of Redlands Memorial Chapel.

All classes are practicing hard on their songs for this annual program. (No doubt you've heard many renditions of your children's song at home already.) This is a truly special program that always plays to a capacity crowd. Admission to the Holiday Sing is free.

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 and find your seat.

We need volunteers to provide cookies and other holiday snacks for after the show. Please let your teacher know if you can assist.



By Maura Joyce, Head of School *"A child needs peaceful sameness in order to construct his inner life."*—Maria Montessori, *A Child in the Family*

DAYS GET SHORTER...LIFE GETS FASTER?

When I was teaching in a Montessori elementary classroom, one of my favorite lessons was about solstice and equinox. Each year in late autumn, I invited the children to record the sunrise and sunset over a period of weeks and watch the days get shorter and shorter. I can only imagine that the shorter days of autumn and winter caused our ancestors to curb activity, as

they had less and less light to accomplish their tasks.

Modern life can take the opposite approach, particularly in the month of December. We may have less light, but our workdays don't get shorter and we often try to squeeze more into this last month of the year. Because of that, this time of year has

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Montessori Through Our Child's Eyes

By Kylene Silliman, Parent—Have you ever wished to be a fly on the wall of your Montessori child's classroom? My husband and I often have. Our 3 1/2 year old, Aynsley, started her Montessori education in Christine's class. During Aynsley's first month I once hid in the observation loft for about an hour to scope out Aynsley's day, but after having a

new baby that wasn't really an option any more. After a fairly easy go at potty training, Aynsley was welcomed into Sara's class

where she now happily spends three hours of every day. Aynsley lets us in on little snippets of her routine here and there. We have participated in many pretend

"I once hid in the observation loft for about an hour to scope out Aynsley's day."

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PARENT-TO-PARENT

From the PTM—We thought that this month we could take a moment to describe the purpose of Parents and Teachers of Montessori (PTM). 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 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 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 food and toy drives.

We hold monthly meetings at which we organize our activities, plan events, create a network of parent support, and connect with MIR administration. All parents are invited. **The next PTM meeting will be held on Thursday, Jan. 15, 2009 at 6 PM.**

PTM NEWS AND NOTES

Food Drive Extended to December 8

Redlands Family Services needs food donations this holiday season. To participate, bring nonperishable food to your child's classroom or the office by December 8.

Christmas Toy Drive

We are collecting toys through Monday, December 15 for the Children's Fund 20th Annual Celebration of Giving Campaign. Please drop off new, unwrapped toys either in the office or at collection boxes around campus. Children's Fund is the nonprofit component of the San Bernardino County Children's Network. They provide emergency resources to thousands of at-risk children in San Bernardino County.

Low on Wrapping Paper? Need a Gift?

It's not too late to order wrapping paper, gifts, and other supplies through Innisbrook. You can place orders online at www.innisbrook.com. Our school code is 102074. Orders placed

online will be shipped directly to your home. Funds help sponsor PTM events and activities.

Coffee Curbside: We had a great time visiting with parents last week at curb. Join us again on December 16, 2:45 PM-3:30 PM. PTM will be selling shirts, tote bags, and Laptop Lunchbox accessories.



Next PTM Meeting: Thursday, January 15, 2009 at 6 PM

HELP WANTED: PART-TIME SPANISH INSTRUCTOR

MIR is looking to hire a part-time Spanish Instructor.

The Spanish instructor will work with children ages 3–12. The ideal candidate is a native speaker, has a Bachelor of Arts, experience working with children, and knowledge of our Montessori programs.

MIR is an equal opportunity employer. We offer a competitive salary and a supportive work environment.

Contact Maura Joyce about these positions.

Report from the Board...

Parent Survey Launches

By Leela MadhavaRau, President, Board of Trustees—As we move towards the start of a new year, the Board is monitoring what impact, if any, the current financial downturn will have on the school. We are confident that our prudent financial planning will take us through this current situation.

Simultaneously, we are moving forward with our long-range strategic planning. As we proceed with this initiative, we will be asking for your input on a number of issues relevant to the future direction of the school. 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 Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation. The survey should only take a few minutes.

Accreditation is important to the success of MIR, particularly as the process enables us to receive feedback from external evaluators. Our continually glowing reviews are a testament to the school's solid academic foundation. At the moment, we are working towards a mid-term review in April 2009, a review for which we are already fully prepared. In 2011, we will be up for a full review. We have already completed more than half of the goals set for that evaluation. To this end, you will be asked to complete a more comprehensive feedback survey in the spring. 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, I welcome your questions or comments. I am best reached at leela_madhavarau@redlands.edu.

Leela MadhavaRau

President, Board of Trustees

leela_madhavarau@redlands.edu

Phone: (909) 528-2813

MIR 'GO GREEN' CORNER

PAPERLESS OPTIONS AT MIR

As part of our environmental stewardship initiative, we are offering new options for the *Bluebird Bulletin* and other school communications.

Paperless Option

You can be notified by e-mail when new issues of *Bluebird Bulletin* are available online and to receive school notices by e-mail as well.

Paper Option

You can opt to continue to receive printed versions of the *Bluebird Bulletin* and all school notices.

Paper and Paperless Option

You can receive both print and e-mail versions of the *Bulletin* and school notices.

Let us know your preference—stop by the office or e-mail us at info@montessoriinredlands.org. If you do not send us a selection, we will continue to provide you with paper copies of all materials.

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the potential of being more stressful than cheerful!

Let's learn something from our Montessori children to offset the "rush" of the holiday season or the race to the end of the year. All Montessori students have the luxury of time to complete a cycle of work. The setup and cleanup of each activity is just as important as the activity itself. Children are encouraged to work until they are satisfied with the process of learning. They have time to reflect, share what they have learned, and contemplate the next endeavor they will take on. Lunch and snack time provide a ritual for the children. Setting out tablecloths and placemats, plates, cups, and utensils happens before one sits down to eat. Meanwhile, yesterday alone I left laundry on the floor, not taking the five minutes to put it away, and I ate two meals standing up!

Let's treat ourselves to a slower pace. Set the table, light candles, arrange flowers in a vase. *Do* one less thing and *complete* one more thing to feel the satisfaction of a job well done. Better yet, set aside time to examine the pace of your day, share a story about it with a friend or even daydream about your next vacation.

The teachers and staff of Montessori in Redlands wish you a happy, peaceful and slow holiday season. Best wishes for the New Year!

Under Construction: Students at Work

Saving Energy at Home by Travis Zook, 5th year MIR student

One way to save energy at your house is to shut off all of your lights and unplug electronics when you're not using them. Many electronics continue to use electricity even when turned off. It helps by using less electricity and it doesn't make your electric bill so high. In fact, if all Californians unplug all of their electronics when they're not using them, it would be like taking 120,000 cars off the road.

Another way to save energy is by putting solar panels on your roof. Many people get their electricity from fossil fuel power plants, which pollute the earth. The sun is a better way to get electricity because it is a renewable energy source. Trust me, I've studied it for a long time. So please just try to do something to help the earth.

If you do want to learn more you can go to a web site called FlexYourPower.org.





Cup Stacking: Group Dynamics gone WILD

By Rachel Mickelson, PE Teacher—For the last month, I have been teaching the skills of cup stacking during the 12 PM hour of physical education. Margaretann’s class has been taught all the cycles and has adequately mastered the skills.

On this day, I had planned to incorporate relay races, speed relays—anything that would utilize both their skills in cup stacking as well as their cardiovascular strength. However, the lesson did not go as planned for a variety of

reasons. Every kid loves to actually build and stack the cups and before today, I never let them. So, we decided that it would be okay to build with the cups since they had already mastered most of the skills.

What started as a 12 cup build became a whole class build in a matter of minutes! What impressed me most was how the students automatically “pooled” their cups and worked together to build IMPRESSIVE sized triangles. Tables worked together, and when their cups fell down, they just immediately took their cups to the next biggest

tower and added on. By the end of class, I had the whole class building together one tall tower. The students were

enthusiastic, encouraging, and thrilled to be working together on a whole class experiment!



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ceremonies of “the earth goes around the sun.” She has given us our fair share of lessons, and I often play the role of Sara when Aynsley wants to practice show and tell. But we really want to know more about our daughter’s experience.

On November 8, my husband and I had the privilege to step into Aynsley’s world for a day when we attended *Journey & Discovery*. This was a unique experience where parents and staff spent the day as our children: kneeling on the floor next to little mats to do our work; dirtying the soles of our feet at the Grove Farm School to join a seminar or collect eggs; and adorning safety goggles to do a chemistry experiment at Grove High School. It is obvious that Aynsley’s education is not the approach either of us grew up with and certainly not the style I am accustomed to teaching in my own second grade classroom. The day, for me, revealed an enlightened approach to learning that is both developmentally appropriate and challenging for a toddler on up to a young adult.

To begin we took a silent walk that wove through the various classrooms and around campus. Surprisingly, after strict instruction, our large group maintained silence for a complete hour while observing our children’s environment. The campus was, as always, serene, and the rooms inviting and comfortable. There weren’t any textbooks or worksheets. Consequently, there weren’t any desks to house them. In the Toddler, Primary, and Elementary classrooms there were mats rolled out on the floor with work ready for us to get our hands on. There were also tables and chairs in every classroom in all programs. Everything was sized appropriately for the children. I was reminded of the same feeling I had almost two years ago when I first stepped into Christine’s class for an observation...utopia.

During this period of exploration I was impressed by the breadth and scope of the tools our children have at their disposal. These tools teach new concepts by addressing all modalities of learning. They also entice children to seek knowledge by empowering even the youngest children to make choices in a carefully prepared setting. Additionally, with the tools made available to them, each child is afforded the time to practice as long as needed until achieving mastery at his/her individual pace. Our children are getting a hands-on education.

As a mother and GATE certified public school teacher, I am happily surprised at how completely the Montessori setting exceeds my expectations by meeting the needs of all children.

The second part of the day gave all of us a chance to explore the tools our children use daily when they are taught lessons and do their work. I had fun fitting my 5’11” frame into tiny chairs to do my work. I put toothpicks in a little glass jar, labeled parts

of speech, discovered that leaves actually have different names, and did cross multiplication on a checkerboard. When I got stuck the teachers were there to give me a lesson. For this I was grateful because I’m not sure my husband and I would have ever figured out how to multiply on the checkerboard.

During this time I learned that a Montessori teacher acts as a guide to offer a three-period lesson. The first part of the lesson is usually done one-on-one or may be given to a very small group. For me this approach is exceptional for many reasons. This individual time with the teacher makes a child feel significant. Additionally, in a classroom of mixed ages, a young child is free to watch a new lesson being given to someone else. The young child may learn the new concept at that time if he/she is ready or may be observing something to look forward to in the future. On the flip side of the coin, as a form of review, a child who needs a lesson re-taught can also watch a new lesson being taught to someone else. Then he/she can continue working on that concept rather than moving on too quickly or being held back in all subject areas because he/she hasn’t perfected a concept in one area.

The second part of the lesson is practice. This is such an important element because all children grow and develop at their own pace. Children need time to practice new concepts until they have a strong understanding without the pressure of moving on too quickly.

As a teacher, I was very interested to find out how the Montessori teachers know if a child has really learned each concept. Then I learned about the third part of the lesson. This is when the child is able to prove mastery of a concept by demonstrating to their teacher what they know without being administered a “test.” Once a child has completed a three-period lesson, the child then turns around and teaches what he/she knows to another child. Sometimes children learn better from their peers, and the child who is doing the teaching is reinforcing what he/she knows. Aynsley tells me when she has had a friend teach her a lesson because she enjoys learning from her peers.

Later, at the Farm, I went to the social studies and language arts classes. There I was impressed by the high level of questioning that was being presented to these young adolescents. In this forum the students have an opportunity to contemplate and share ideas that make connections to their lives.

We didn’t have a lot of time at the Grove High School before heading back to the yoga room for a much needed lunch. We did a quick chemistry lesson not unlike the chemistry lessons I had in high school. However, it was a good experience. During lunch we had more discussion time. I was concerned to hear that acceptance into the Grove Farm and High Schools is based on a lottery

“As a mother and GATE-certified public school teacher, I am happily surprised at how completely the Montessori setting exceeds my expectations by meeting the needs of all children.”

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2008-2009 MIR ANNUAL FUND

“EDUCATION IS NOT FILLING A BUCKET BUT LIGHTING A FIRE”

—WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Generous donations have characterized the MIR 2008-2009 Annual Fund, moving us closer to our goals of 100% participation and \$55,000 raised. **This year, classroom participation rates have already exceeded last year's rates at this time.** 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.

Classroom Totals

Christine—29%	Kristin—20%
Aedín—29%	Sara—24%
Liana—36%	Emily—44%
Jean/Maryhelen—27%	Kelly—35%
Kara/Dorama—35%	Margaretann/Nicole—34%
Nikki—33%	

We understand that this year is more difficult financially for many. Your donation amount is less important than the donation itself—**let this be the year that we reach 100% participation.**

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

Yes! Your participation is crucial to our efforts to seek outside funding sources through grantors. Last year's high participation rate (91%) provides crucial leverage with First 5 San Bernardino in continuing to secure funding for the First Contact special needs program. MIR is also applying for more grants this year, and participation rate in the Annual Fund is one of the most important factors looked at by grantors.

Annual Fund gifts also directly support teachers and staff in their mission to help your children realize their full potential—academically, socially, and emotionally.

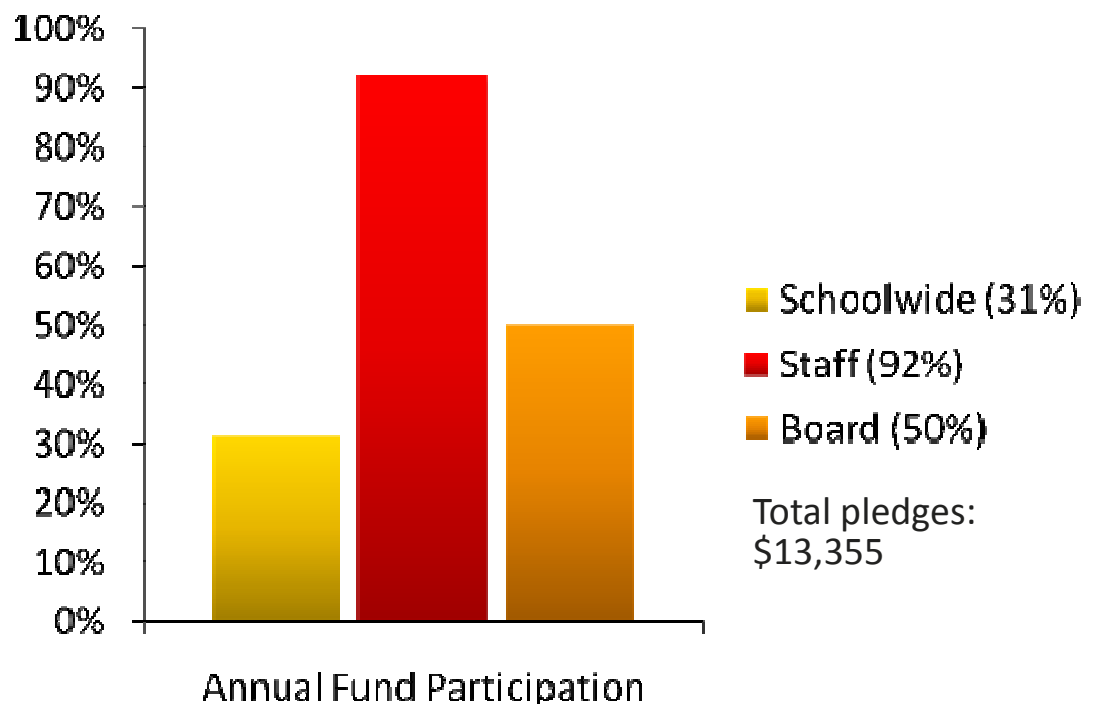
Donate or offer your pledge today in three ways:

1. Make your donation in convenient monthly installments (ask how at the office).
2. Ask to be billed (all contributions must be received by June 30, 2009).
3. Pay at one time in the office by check or credit card.

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(they are charter schools with limited enrollment) because I'd like to ensure that our girls will get to complete their Montessori education through high school.

I really enjoyed spending my Saturday as a Montessori child. The day reaffirmed how fortunate my husband and I feel to be able to give Aynsley the opportunity to attend Montessori in Redlands. We look forward to our younger daughter, Addison, starting the toddler program next fall.



BIRTHDAYS



students

Jacob Paugh	12/5
Keerthana Toure	12/7
Kavya Narayanan	12/9
Ella Sabo	12/9
Ada Bridgers	12/10
Carsyn Garcia	12/10
Trinity Villa	12/10
Angelica Vasquez	12/12
Ava Shvartsman	12/13
Dutch Rumary	12/16
Elaine Spencer	12/16
Ella Eaton	12/17
Caroline Wagner	12/18
Matthew Bline	12/22
Hannah Brenchley	12/22
Ananya Anand	12/24
Rachel Porter	12/28
Benjamin Walton	12/28
Reid Norton-Brainerd	12/29
Adam Desmarais	12/30
Maia Richards-Dinger	12/31
Jonathan Montemaro	12/31

staff

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

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Book Fair Offers Great Gifts, Supports MIR

MIR is pleased to announce that **this year's book fair is sponsored by Frugal Frigate**, an independent children's bookstore located in Redlands. Find books and other educational items in the foyer of Jean and Maryhelen's class (in the main campus) until Friday, December 11.

By patronizing the book fair, you benefit your child's class and support a local merchant. All classes receive free books as their part of the profit from the sales.

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 22 and re-opening January 5. No childcare is provided December 22–26, 2008 but is provided December 29–31, 2008. Register for childcare in the office.

Holiday Sing Rehearsal Notice

On the day of the Holiday Sing performance (Tuesday, December 16), 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 University Memorial Chapel. Get there early to ensure your seat!

December 2008

1 PTM Christmas Toy Drive begins (see page 2 for info)	2 Dance class, 3:30-5 PM in yoga room.	3	4 Nikki's on-campus field trip—ceramics project	5 Jean/MH and Kara/Dorama's classes—field trip to the Nutcracker
8 PTM Food Drive Ends	9 - Dance class, 3:30-5 PM in yoga room. - Sara's class sings at Plymouth Village, 9:45 AM 	10 Sara's class end-of-year celebration, 11 AM	11 Piano Recital, 12 PM	12 - Childcare reservations due for holiday break - Nikki's class holiday potluck, 11 AM
15 PTM Christmas Toy Drive ends	16 School closes at 3:30 PM HOLIDAY SING PROGRAM, 7 PM 	17	18 - Kara/Dorama's class holiday potluck, 12 PM - Emily's class holiday sleepover	19 School closes at 12 PM. Bluebird assembly. - Emily's class breakfast, 8 AM - MH/Jean's class brunch - Kristin's class potluck, 10 AM
22	23	24	25	26
Winter holiday break. No school; no childcare .				
				
29	30	31	1	2
Winter holiday break. No school; childcare by reservation .			Winter holiday break. No school; no childcare .	
		CHILDCARE CLOSSES AT 12 PM		