

Dear Friends,

We spent many years not organized enough to stay in touch with our alumni. Now that we have an alumni committee who has worked hard to get our data base together, we are able to keep you informed about the school and to hear what's going on in your lives.

This reaching out has added joy to my life and it has formed a bridge for current parents to hear the history of the school from past parents and students. So many of the current parents have commented on how remarkable it is to talk with a past parent and see that they had and still have the same passion and good feelings about the school as our parents do now.

As we have mentioned in earlier newsletters Mr. Ashby and I are living in the small white farmhouse on the new land. Our address is 727 Stone Road. We have a lovely large deck that is great for just looking out over the land and visualizing what is to come.

I invite each and every one of you to stop by, anytime. If we are not home you are welcome to sit on the deck and walk the land. It is a great place to bring your children for a picnic, play in the stream and just enjoy nature. If you are looking for an outing this summer that will "get you away" without traveling too far –come on by.

I hope to see many of you at Mrs. Downs (Bassiri) celebration June 11, 2006. It will be such a gift for her to share her last memories with her former students. It is hard to see this hard working,

dedicated, warm and loving teacher leave our program. Come help us say good-bye.

Best Regards,
Janet Ashby

**Retirement
Celebration of
Marnie Bassiri Downs!
Please Join Us!!!!**

**Sunday, June 11, 2006
6:30 p.m.
St. Michael's Episcopal
Church
2025 Bellefonte Dr.**

**Please send any pictures,
mementos, videos, stories,
etc... to Cameron Shoaf at
shoaf8@peoplepc.com**

**Watch for your invitation in
the mail.**



.....And Now.

**Twenty Eight Years in
the Classroom
By Marnie Downs**

Someone asked me the other day why I wanted to retire? Wasn't I really too young to stop working? What was I going to do with myself? WHAT'S NEXT? That is always the biggie. I am learning to tell the truth: I don't know. I think I will slow it all down and try and stand still for a little while...then see what comes. Most of the people I say this to look a little quizzical and behave politely yet I catch that look in their eye. The look that says, "Why would you leave something you so evidently love? Something you've given your life to?"

Good questions. I've asked these and countless others too. Sometimes there is this answer: I want to sleep more. I want more time for nothing at all. I want not to have to leave my house every single day whether I want to or not. I want to go to the library and cruise the stacks and read magazines in the blessed silence. On other days there is this answer, which fits the politically correct bill: I want to write that book on teaching for teachers. I want to finally really get into watercolors



Mrs. Downs with Michael Davis 1988.....

and see what I can do if I had the time. I want to go to Italy with my sister Susie and take Charlie on one great trip a year. People find these acceptable. They have ambition in them. Our culture likes that. They have future gazing in them and we like that too. It gives us a sense of security to future gaze, imagining our life will turn out just right if we just keep making plans. And actually I hope I do those things. They've been on my list for some time. That book (about half of it) sits in my computer (yes, I've got it on floppies!!!). An unfinished painting also sits in my art room (once I stop in the middle of a painting and let it sit for too long I lose interest...and I will just have to start another). I am a knitting fool and cannot stop making sweaters for anyone I can think of (want one? Crew neck or V ?).

But here's the thing. I want to learn to trust myself and life as it comes. It is hard for me to slow down and even harder to actually relax. I want to learn to allow my life to unfold and just watch, pay attention, try and listen. Trust. Hear what attracts me, what calls, what awakens my aliveness and follow that. See if I have other gifts and give them!

An image came to me some weeks ago. I am in a small bay, getting my little sailboat ready for a very important voyage. I have painted it bright red and there is a new white sail. I am packing the things I need (journal, paints, one book, chocolate! tent, but no compass). I want to trust the wind. The boat remained plain until the other day I saw it in my mind's eye and it had acquired a name. The name of the boat is in fancy cursive, stark white, splashed across the front of the bow. Its' name is YES.



Rebecca Self our MMSK science teacher.

Alumni Spotlight on Rebecca Breazeale Self By Lisa Powell

Many people say your Montessori learning experience stays with you forever, and in the case of Rebecca Breazeale Self, those words could not be more true. Although she attended CMS for primary school only (1981 to 1984), she recalls the love for learning instilled in those years as a driving force behind her academic success and strong desire to be involved in Montessori education as an adult. Rebecca is in her second year of teaching science at MMSK.

After leaving CMS and living abroad with her family in Germany for a year, Rebecca attended The Lexington School, Sayre, and the math and science magnet program at Dunbar High School. She went on to major in architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, graduating in just 3 years. When asked how architecture led her to a career in science education, she stated that after graduating she realized architecture did not have the element of discovery she longed for, and she was drawn by her science background at Dunbar and MIT to teaching high school chemistry and physics. Rebecca and her husband lived in the Washington, D.C. area where she taught high school for 2 years.

Deciding to leave the hustle and bustle of a big city, Rebecca and her husband moved to Madison, Wisconsin to be near her sister. While there, Rebecca worked toward her cheese making license

(very scientific and fun!) and got back to her Montessori roots. She worked in a Madison Montessori school helping out with their after-school program and teaching science in their new middle school program. Rebecca was there for a year before serendipity played a part in her return to Lexington and the CMS/MMSK family; Rebecca's mother had run into Ms. Ashby and they got talking about Rebecca, and the rest is history.

The Montessori method emphasizes a thematic, goal-oriented approach to learning, and Rebecca loves the opportunities the new land is affording the MMSK science program. The kids are so excited to make a difference for the school community. Right now they are studying two occupations – building a bridge (or bridges) and bees. Raising bees is a good example of how they can help enhance the land and provide something of value for economic exchange, a broad goal established by Maria Montessori.

One of Rebecca's goals at MMSK is to get students excited about science. Once you speak with her you can see how her enthusiasm is infectious and she is well on her way to reaching that goal. Best of luck at MMSK Rebecca!



MMSK students studying science on the Land!!!!

Being a Parent

By Bill Adams

Gulliver among the Lilliputians; it was my first thought on my return to Community Montessori School after having been away for almost thirty years. The chairs are small. The restrooms are small. The overall feel is, well, small. The education, however, is quite large, and thus my return.

My name is Bill Adams, and my sister and I were students at CMS in the mid to late seventies. I wasn't nearly as large as I am today of course, and I'm sure at that age I hadn't realized the exceptional nature of the learning system in which my mom and grandparents had carefully placed me. They really believed that I would have a better education at CMS, though at the time it was just school to me, probably like every other kid in the US feels about his or her own school.

I moved away after a few years, and I continued my education through high school in the public schools of Eastern Kentucky, though I never forgot the Montessori system. The jump-start it had given me proved to be incredibly worthwhile, providing a basis for what turned out to be a nice academic career and a solid foundation for learning.

After college, marriage, a move to Los Angeles, a move back to Lexington, and the inception of a small tech company, my wife and I decided to have children. With two little girls in need of a wonderful place to learn, I contacted Mrs. Ashby to see about the possibility of having my oldest attend CMS. Lauren began last fall in Peggy's class, and we couldn't be happier.

Now it's not just about a nice ending, and it's not about the bit of pride I feel having my daughter attend my first school. Those are true, but I suppose the point of this is to state my belief in and support for CMS and the Montessori system. My wife and I considered

a public school for our girls, but only a little. There's really no place like CMS, and I can't imagine sending my children anywhere else. Not only will they receive a stimulating education full of discovery, but they'll make lifelong friends and hopefully come to love CMS like I do. The school, whether the current location or the new, will be comfortable and safe. And big learning will take place. Learning that's just right for them at their ages.

Beyond this short story of my family's link to CMS, I've got a request for alumni: Get involved. Most alumni don't have children at CMS, but the children who learn there can use your help. If you have a skill that could help out, great. If you have some time to offer, wonderful. If it's just a donation, hey, that works too, right? The Capital Campaign is in full swing with the purpose of building a new school, so support in this area would be welcome I'm sure. I can't tell you what a wonderful environment the CMS folks have dreamed up for tomorrow's students. Who knows - maybe my future grandchildren will reap the rewards of the support and involvement you and I offer. Maybe your children and grandchildren will experience CMS also.

CMS/MMSK 4th Annual Golf Scramble

Sunday May 21, 2006

**Golf Club of the Bluegrass
6000 Harrodsburg Rd.
Nicholasville, KY
223-4516**

**Range Balls.....12:30 p.m.
Lunch.....12:30 p.m.
Shotgun Start.....1:30 p.m.**

Prizes, Gifts, Lunch

For more information contact
Paul Hickner at
859 296-1346 (home)
859 277-4805 (CMS)



Mr. Paul Hickner our Music Teacher.

A Man with Many Hats

By Beth Ruggles

Mr. Paul Hickner has been the physical education teacher at CMS for 8 years, and also runs the school band program. Mr. Hickner received his undergraduate degree in Music Education from Indiana University, followed by a Masters degree in Trumpet Performance, as well as Ph.D. work in the field of Brass Pedagogy. Combine Mr. Hickner's extensive music education with his enthusiasm for sports of all kinds, and it is easy to see why CMS is fortunate to have Mr. Hickner on board!

Before moving to Lexington from Connecticut, Mr. Hickner stayed home with his two children, Christopher and Sarah, while freelancing as a musician and giving music lessons. He continued in the same role after he and his family moved to Kentucky, then learned of the job opportunity at CMS while his children were in attendance there.

Though initially hired as the physical education teacher, Mr. Hickner has established himself in many roles at CMS. Mr. Hickner leads three school bands at CMS, each meeting once a week after school. He also gives private music lessons throughout the week, with 90% of his students attending CMS. Though his first love is the trumpet, Mr. Hickner is more than qualified to teach almost any instrument, from piano and drums to clarinet and saxophone. He also works as math tutor, sometimes reading teacher (currently, the regular teacher is on maternity leave), and does many

odd jobs to help maintain the school.

Though not formally trained in the Montessori way, Mr. Hickner loves to listen to what the children do in the classroom and often takes aspects of classroom work as inspiration for PE activities. In line with Montessori principles, Mr. Hickner is careful not to place emphasis on winning and competition, making his major focus helping the kids learn to get along.

Mr. Hickner is also responsible for setting up and maintaining a successful recycling system at CMS, involving the children in the effort. He also collects Box Tops for Education, the proceeds of which go toward purchasing and maintaining gym equipment, an expense, which is not in the school budget. In addition, the Fourth Annual CMS Golf Tournament, another of Mr. Hickner's creations, will take place this May and is open to all CMS/MMSK staff, parents, and Alumni.

Mr. Hickner's wife, Paula, works at the University of Kentucky in the university's music library, teaching one course a year in music cataloging. Their son, Christopher, is now a freshman at UK, and their daughter, Sarah, is a freshman at Paul Lawrence Dunbar High School. In addition to his CMS commitments, Mr. Hickner continues to freelance and plays the flugel horn with the Lexington Brass Band.



Update on the Bridge to the Future Capital Campaign By Katie Toffey

The Bridge to the Future Capital Campaign continues to move along nicely. We currently have \$1,100,000 in commitments and pledges, these coming mostly from our currently enrolled families. Presently, we have 65% of our families that have made commitments to the campaign.

We are working on creative ideas on how our treasured alumni can making a lasting contribution to the new building and the land at giving levels that are comfortable for everyone. Stay tuned for details to follow in the fall. If you would like to make a commitment to the Capital Campaign at this time, you can download a copy of the "non-binding" letter of intent from our website at www.cmsmontessori.org. Our dream for the new campus cannot become a reality without the support of all of our families – current and past!

This winter we unveiled our "pink tower" thermometers which have been placed at CMS and MMSK to help capture the progress of the campaign. We have also begun to contact foundations for their support. This is another area where parent volunteers are helping to research and write the grant proposals.

If you know of any contacts that may be able to help with the

Capital Campaign please call me at 277-4805 or ktoffey@cmsmontessori.org. Thank you, to each and every one of our alumni and past parents, for your continued support of CMS and MMSK. Please come visit the new land at 727 Stone Road. It is already becoming an integral part of our curriculum and lives. We look forward to working with all of you as we *build our bridge to the future!*



Help us get to the top.....

Have you relocated? Please provide your new information. Thank you!

Name	
Maiden Name	
Street Address (apt. #)	
City, State, Zip	
Home Phone (area code)	
Alternate Phone (area code)	
Email Address	

Tell us about yourself. What have you been up to...marriage, birth of a child, new job, etc...?	
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Please provide any contact information on your classmates.	
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Thank you for taking time to update us.

Please return this form to:

Community Montessori School
166 Crestwood Drive
Lexington, KY 40503
859 277-4805
Or Email us at Jashby@cmsmontessori.org

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166 Crestwood Drive
Lexington, KY 40503