



# MONTESSORI MATTERS



Community Montessori School

Week of March 5, 2009

## Montessori Education in Houston

February 16, 2009

by: Melissa Galvez

**This ran on Houston Public Radio President's Day week-end when AMI had its annual Refresher Course which several CMS teachers attended. It ran in response to the signing of the new stimulus bill, which includes billions of dollars for education. For the group of Montessori educators who met in Houston, the changes may need to go deeper than dollars and cents.**



Association  
Montessori  
International

*"Because we have freedom to go wherever we like"*

Just imagine that. You're sitting in class, and you have to go to the bathroom. But you don't have to raise your hand, sign a pass, or scamper by the stern hall monitor. You just get up, and go. And you're in 6th grade.

*"Well, not wherever you like. You can't play in traffic"*

This is The Post Oak School, a Montessori school here in Houston. Montessori schools feel different than many other schools. In between lessons with the teacher, students sit with their friends at small tables, helping each other as they work. Freedom and independence are nurtured-but so is responsibility. Here's teacher Joe Lockett:

*"It's not just an academic method, it's also really a way of how you treat each other in groups. We have alumni who say, the freedom they had in Montessori education, they lost in high school, and they didn't get it back until they got to college. If you can have 4th or 5th graders acting like college students, I think that's pretty good place to be."*

These schools also stress creativity and tactile exploration. At 2 or 3 years old, Montessori students learn to count using brightly colored beads. By the time they get to 6th grade, they are learning binomial equations using colored blocks. Many other schools do this as well, but it's fundamental to what Montessori is. Student Rachel Levy says that this method really works.

*"It shows you how to multiply something, and you really get WHY 8 times 8 equals 64, you don't just memorize it"*

And that is what many people believe we need in education today-not just more money, or more standardized tests, but entirely new methods of education, for a new economy.

This weekend, Montessori educators gathered in Houston for their annual conference. The keynote was given by Sir Ken Robinson, a former professor of education and author of several studies on creativity and human resources.

*"I believe the great challenge we face is to change the whole public conversation about education."*

Sir Robinson believes that our current education system is built on an old model-one that churns out graduates like products from a factory. In the new economy, we have got to encourage creativity-or we will fall behind.

*"It's an essential part of being a human being, it's essential to the health of our communities, and it's essential for the vitality of our economies, that we are able to think differently, to meet change head on, to be flexible and adaptable, look at new circumstances and to adjust them if we feel that's right, or change them if we think it isn't"*

John Long, head of the Post Oak school, reminds us that the Montessori method has already had an impact on what we know as the new economy.

*"You're aware, of course, that Google was invented by two Montessori students. And if you want to check that out, you can look them up on Wikipedia, and by the way, Wikipedia was invented by a Montessori student."*

### **A Note From Mrs. Ashby: Just a word about late arrivals.....**

Our AMI trained teachers plan their classroom day around the 3 hour “*uninterrupted*” work period. This 3 hour “*uninterrupted*” work period is a very important aspect of the Montessori education environment. In fact it is such an important element of the philosophy, we would lose our accreditation if we did not plan our school day around this concept and adhere to the policy.

You, as parents, have chosen to “buy into” the Montessori approach to education. Therefore, for you and your child to receive all we have to offer, you need to “buy into” and respect this crucial 3 hour work cycle.

When your child continuously arrives late, they are not receiving the full measure of the Montessori day, not to mention that it also hinders the entire class when there are late arrivals.

We know that there is the occasional emergency, doctor appointment, flat tire, diaper change, and failure of alarm clocks--but please give us a quick call if you have one of these delays. We will inform your teacher.

School hours are from 8:15am – 3:00pm. We will be outside receiving students until 8:35am.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this information and for cooperating as best you can.

### **March & April CMS 2009 SCHOOL CALENDAR**

<b>March</b>	6	Friday	<b>No School—Parent/Guide Conference Day All Day/Drop-In Program available in the Gym</b>
	12	Thursday	Capital Campaign Informational Meeting in Gym 8:30 a.m.
	13	Friday	<b>No School—Parent/Guide Conference Day All Day/Drop-In Program available in the Gym</b>
	21	Saturday	Science Discovery Fair—Jock’s Gym 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.
	27,30,31	Fri, Mon, Tues	<b>No School—Spring Break</b>
<b>April</b>	1-3	Wed – Fri	<b>No School—Spring Break</b>
	6	Monday	<b>School Resumes</b>
	23	Thursday	General Parent Meeting/Board Elections & Student Band Performances

### **PRIMARY LEVEL – Franklin, Hughes, Somsel:**

**Franklin:** We’ve finished our study of China and Sri Lanka and are beginning to study India. We are finishing our fish study.

### **AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM - 333-0020**

\*\*Creative Endeavors (Art Class) will have a display of their creations.

\*\* The children are working on their routines for the open house performances.

(We’ll give you the date for the Open House later.)

If your child has chosen not to be in Gymnastics or Drum Class or Improv for the last several weeks, they will probably want to come back and catch up these next weeks if they choose to be in the Open House routines.

## **PARENT ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1) **For Sale:** 2002 Honda Odyssey, 89K, grey, \$7900 Call Alyson Jeter 396-9877.

2) **Need childcare for Spring Break or any other time?** Please call Charlie and Ellen Downs at 859-806-9957 or 502-316-3161. Arts and crafts, games, and food provided!

### 3) **Bunnies: free to great home**

Tilda, Huon, Bec and Marsh are returning home to Australia in June. Sadly, Australian Customs will not allow their pet rabbits to join them.

Pancake and Velvet are medium sized bunnies looking for a home without dogs. They come with a hutch but will need somewhere to run. They always use their litter tray, but do love to chew (especially power cords!).

If interested please call Bec at 494-2697. All questions welcomed.

### 4) **Two opportunities coming to Sayre in April in conjunction with Earth Day.**

The first is a showing of "Kilowatt Ours" at the Kentucky. Sayre is sponsoring a 12 PM showing at the Kentucky Theater - free and open to the public. We would like to see many folks from downtown (as well as area schools) spending their lunch hour watching this movie.

See [www.kilowattours.org](http://www.kilowattours.org)

The movie is about 35 minutes long - plenty of time for a discussion afterwards.

The second activity is part of our Unity in Education Lecture Series, done in conjunction with The Lexington School. Richard Louv, author of **Last Child in the Wood**, will be at Sayre Tuesday, April 28th at 7 PM.

There will be tickets available for purchase in the next few weeks.



### **Important information for the families new to CMS this school year:**

A Campaign Informational Meeting for newly enrolled families has been scheduled for Thursday, March 12th at 8:45 am in Jock's Gym. This is for the new families who were not able to attend the meeting with Mrs. Ashby during the study group last month.

Once you have dropped your children off, please park and join us in the gym's art room for coffee and donuts. Mrs. Ashby, Katie Toffey, our Development Officer, and Kerry Hamblin, Board Member and Campaign Vice Chair, will present the history of CMS and speak about the progress and specifics regarding the capital campaign.

Because we are a parent run school it is vital that all parents understand the importance of the Capital Campaign and what it means to the future of our school. The Capital Campaign committee takes the role of keeping our families as informed as possible very seriously. It is essential that each and every parent hear the presentation about the history of our school, the Capital Campaign and our plans for the future.