



MONTESSORI MATTERS



Community Montessori School

Week of February 25, 2011

A NOTE FROM MRS. ASHBY:

Every so often we receive an article from Ms. Downs. She taught at CMS in the primary level for over 20 years, retiring 4 years ago. After a recent observation of her granddaughter at CMS, she wrote the following article. Please enjoy! And, please schedule an observation in your child's class ☺

WHAT AM I LOOKING AT? WHAT AM I SEEING?

Written by: Marnie Downs

As I eased myself into the "observer's" chair I immediately saw my granddaughter (after scanning the room of course) and was delighted to see her occupied and enjoying herself in her chosen task. She's 3 and it's her first year. Having been a Primary Level Montessori teacher (retired for 4 years) I knew what to look for and how to really "see" a classroom. I had been trained in actually observing my own classroom as often as possible. That meant to actually stop giving lessons and to stand up, get still and look, feel, hear the classroom, put out all my sensors and "see" what was really happening.

So how do you really "see" a classroom and what are the things you are looking for in order to know how it is all going? One of the first things I immediately noticed was the UNNOTICEABILITY of the teachers. I had to actually look closely to see where they were as they were settled in those little chairs and either not talking at all or talking so quietly I could not hear what they were saying. The main teacher was giving lessons with a few children at once though on different materials as we are trained to do. I noticed she was often scanning the room and watching every single child to see if her intervention was needed and if so in what way. Was she needed to help or to dissuade someone from some inappropriate behavior? Before I really noticed she was up and ever so slowly moving silently across the room, kneeling down to speak to a child, and then he took her hand and was led to go and sit beside the assistant for a moment. Notice the child was doing the holding and not the thing we so often see when a child is being corrected, the adult strongly holding the hand of the child and leading them. When the child has been taught to take the hand or the finger of the teacher, he still feels empowered and not at the mercy of a stronger, taller, adult! In his taking the hand offered he is in agreement with the action, not pulling away, thus creating the endless power struggle we all know and hate. It was all quite peaceful and what I know is this: just this one small detail has taken months to teach, repeat, talk about, act out as a little drama with humor, letting each and every child SEE and actually have a turn DOING this, getting to practice this so that when it is your turn to be "corrected" you are not surprised, not upset, neither unwilling nor invested in not obeying. It was all handled with respect and dignity. Just what a child needs to FEEL in order to change, try again, and learn. I was full of admiration for both the teacher and the child! I wanted to scream, "GOOD JOB GUYS!" but restrained myself.

I noticed a very young 3 year old singing as he cleaned up his "work", carefully going back and forth to the sink, happily alone and unhindered by anyone. I noticed a child stop a passing friend and ask for help carrying a small table and soon both boys were in gear, carrying that table. A girl was having trouble carrying a bucket of water and very soon was accompanied by another child who saw her need for help and filled it. For children to do these things they need first to be taught to even NOTICE them, to then be AVAILABLE and INTERESTED in helping another. Little children are consumed with their own

selves and what they want, etc. so they must be taught how to SEE others. This means little fun amusing lessons that are taught in a large group, acted out like little dramas that the children love and remember as they were fun to do! Then when a “real” moment occurs they see it and act on it, becoming aware and awake to others. This creates a whole classroom of kindness, availability to other’s needs as well as one’s own, and it creates friendships and self esteem. I then noticed a young 3 year old sitting near an older child who was doing word making and who became miffed when this younger one told her where to find a letter! The younger one (my granddaughter) simply got up and went away, finding something else to do. Not a large moment. But significant in that the younger one was able to tolerate the “don’t tell me that” and not have a meltdown about it, but simply to respect what had been said and get on with herself elsewhere. This has been taught. Neither child came into this class knowing she had the right to be left alone with her work, not interfered with, not interrupted, etc. and also that one can actually cope with being told no by another child. Both of these girls would have had to see this happen and experience this themselves for this small moment to have gone as it did.

SEEING a classroom requires some knowledge and also some willingness to really settle in and be open to what is really happening. It requires being interested in more than just watching your own child, and being available to learning yourself! A Montessori classroom is actually a microcosm of the world! It is full of aliveness and surprise and is unpredictable just like real life. It IS real life and that is why it is so hard to teach this method. One must be willing to learn as you go, on your feet, moment by moment. To be able to tolerate not knowing what is going to happen next and to find that not knowing is exciting and enlivening! All teachers know (just like parents) that you need to be as prepared for the day as you can with that list in your pocket. But you also need to be totally willing to go with what presents itself and kiss that list good bye! Infinite patience, infinite love, infinite willingness. Whew.

So now you know just a little bit about what you are looking at and maybe a little more about how to SEE what you are looking at when you observe a Montessori classroom! Have fun! It is an adventure!

MARCH-APRIL-MAY CMS 2011 SCHOOL CALENDAR

March

3	Thursday	Lower Elementary Visiting Night
11	Friday	No School Parent/Guide Conferences—All Day/Drop In Program in Gym
16	Wednesday	Capital Campaign Info Meeting 6:30 p.m. CMS Library Board of Directors Meeting 7:30 p.m. CMS Library
18	Friday	No School Parent/Guide Conferences—All Day/Drop In Program in Gym

April

4-8	Mon-Fri	No School—Spring Break
11	Monday	School Resumes
21	Thursday	General Election and Parent Meeting with Band Concert 7:00 p.m.

May

18	Wednesday	Board of Directors Meeting 7:30 p.m. CMS Library
25	Wednesday	Last day of school all levels—All 3,4, & 5 year olds leave at 11:35 a.m. Graduation 1:30 p.m. Students stay until regular dismissal. Afterschool Program Available
26	Thursday	Sixth Grade Graduation Trip

OFFICE NOTES:

1. **Just a reminder:** Parent/Guide Conferences have been scheduled. A conference slip has been sent home with your child. Please call the office if you have not received your note.

2. **We need to be gearing up for our Annual God's Pantry Food Drive!**

Collection barrels will be in our library beginning February 28th .

Watch for the Big Blue Can☺

The drive lasts Monday, Feb. 28th thru Friday, March 4th

We are especially fond of God's Pantry and the work they do. Our Middle School students enjoy doing Community Service there.

Some of their most needed items are:

Canned Beans

Canned Vegetables

Canned Tomato Products (sauce, stewed, puree)

Canned meat (tuna, stew, Vienna sausages, salmon)

Rice & Potato Products

Flour (Bisquick, cake/muffin/bread mixes)

Cereal (breakfast, oats, grits)

Pasta (macaroni & cheese, spaghetti, noodles)

Milk (dry or canned)

Corn Meal

Peanut Butter

Soup

Spaghetti Sauce

Fruit Juice

Canned Fruit

Baby Food

Thank you!!

PRIMARY LEVEL –Hughes, Somsel, Vujakovich:

Hughes: Starting a study of spring and amphibians. We will be taking the extended day students to Salato Nature Center soon. We are enjoying this beautiful weather.

Somsel: Enjoying the various activities the children are doing. Amphibians, and presidents are being presented.

Vujakovich: The students are exploring amphibians and shells. We are excited for the warmer weather and spring to come!

LOWER ELEMENTARY –Gray & Thompson:

Gray: We are enjoying exploring magnetism, multiples, fractions, Monet, and Bach. We are getting back into our spelling and reading groups and continuing with our Little House on the Prairie series. If anyone has pictures or a DVD of our play to donate to the class—please do, we're making albums.

Thompson: Children are exploring math, fractions, geometry, reading, grammar, and biology activities with their inquisitive and reasoning minds. Confident work is a daily acquisition and inclusion of different work mates is exciting!

UPPER ELEMENTARY - O'Loughlin & Simpson:

The upper elementary students are finishing up fairy tales and many are deeply involved in stories, plays, play adaptations and other personal writing projects. Some of them have enjoyed sharing their work with lower elementary and primary students. They are pursuing other interests including chemistry and physics experiments and lessons, winds and rain in geography and stories of the development of writing and printing as well as the story of Colonial America in history.

AFTERSCHOOL NEWS: Before and Afterschool Phone Number is 333-0020!!

On Friday, March 11th and Friday, March 18th we will have our all day program/drop-in for the extended day through elementary children and drop-in care for the 3&4 year olds available for the half hour when their parents and guides conference.

For the older students, all day charge is \$25.00; under 5 hours is \$15.00.

Children should bring their own lunch--a morning and afternoon snack is provided.

PLEASE LEAVE ALL ELECTRONIC ITEMS AT HOME: THIS INCLUDES PHONES & GAMEBOYS!

**"The child is truly a miraculous being,
and this should be felt deeply by the educator."**

Maria Montessori - The Absorbent Mind



www.celebrationforeducation.com

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*Wedding Caption

We are less than **25 days from spring** – a time of renewal. This is a time of renewal for CFE too! We need to renew our commitment to our school by beginning to focus again on this important endeavor. As we begin to move forward towards our 2011 event, I wanted to take a last opportunity to thank all of the **FANTASTIC** businesses that were so generous with their support of our school – each of us & our children – with their Corporate Sponsorships. If you have been able to use any of these businesses recently, thank you! **Sponsorships are critical** to all of us in helping to keep our tuition rates as affordable as possible as well as providing other crucial budgetary support.

We are just starting to “gather” the committee again and begin with preparations toward 2011 – securing sponsors, seeing if we can't start getting some donations secured, generating ideas for our Live Auction, etc. **Please consider joining the Celebration for Education Committee!** As I always say, we can **never have too many members** and many hands DO make for lighter work.

Here is what we know to date:

- 1) We have one committed Bronze Sponsor for 2011 already – Neace Lukens Insurance Company. **Let's see how many we can get before the end of the school year!**
- 2) We have had a few donations trickle in already. Let's see how silent auction items we can collect and how many exciting Live Auction packages we can put together between now and May! **What do you want to be able to bid on at this year's event??**
- 3) Ticket prices will remain the same for 2011: **\$45 in advance and \$50 at the door.** Maybe you can get **some commitments for your tickets now!**
- 4) Advertising prices will also remain the same: \$100 for (business card size) 1/8 page, \$150 for 1/4 page, \$300 for 1/2 page, \$500 for full page. Ads are a FANTASTIC money generator...let's try to top last year's number (35 sold). **Can we get 50?**
- 5) The Celebration will be held: **Friday, November 4, 2011 at the Keene Barn and Entertainment Center.**

Please contact me if you need ideas regarding seeking donations, for selling your tickets, etc. – I'm happy to help! If you need paperwork for “soliciting” a business for donation or sponsorship immediately, please contact me & I will get you what you need. If you need us to contact someone on your behalf, please let me know! Looking forward to getting this ball rolling! THANK YOU!

Mark your calendar: Friday, November 4, 2011!!

Kristi Lancianese: (859) 825-8669 or kristicfemail@insightbb.com



The final Capital Campaign Informational meeting is scheduled for March 16, 2010. If you have not yet attended one of the informational meetings please make every effort to attend. We will be calling families to remind them to come. **These are for the families who were not able to attend the meetings held in the fall. It is very important that all of our families hear the message on the wonderful future plans for CMS, Inc.**

*Wednesday, March 16, 2010 at 6:30 pm – CMS Library
(Childcare will be available in the Gym for \$1.00 per child, per hour)*

Thank you to the families that attended the Campaign meeting last week!

Kroger Gift Cards to Benefit CMS, Inc.

So far in 2011 CMS has earned \$550 from the Kroger cards. Stop by the office and get your Kroger card today!

Each card costs \$5.00 and has a \$5.00 value already loaded on it – so really costs nothing!

For those of you not familiar with Kroger Fundraising, it is a great way, at no cost to you or your friends or family, to raise money. Using them is easy – it simply means you have two transactions rather than one at the time of checkout. Before the cashier swipes any of your groceries, simply hand them your fundraising card and tell them how much money to add to it. He/she will add those funds and you may use any credit card, check or cash to pay for that amount. Then proceed with your grocery checkout and use the newly loaded fundraising card to pay for your purchases! Many families are already using a Kroger card for other organizations, and you can continue to do so. I simply mark my cards with a Sharpie as to which organization it is for and then alternate them weekly (or daily sometimes!). Cards can be used for Kroger Gas as well.

How much do we earn? Over a three week time period from December – early January, we earned \$250.00! Each time our organization purchases a total of \$5,000.00 on the cards we receive a check for 4% of the total. Currently only a small number of our families are using the cards. If more of our families used the card, CMS could earn a few thousand dollars each year (or more). Cards are available here tonight or in the CMS office.