

Woodland Montessori School
5 Parkhill Road
Kalispell, Montana 59901
tel. 406-755-3824
woodland@mtmont.com

Kalispell Montessori School
349 Willow Glen Drive
Kalispell, Montana 59901
tel. 406-755-3826
frontdesk@kalispellmontessori.com

Community News

March 16, 2011

The Three-Year Cycle

Article adapted from Global Montessori Schools

The three-year developmental cycle is at the very heart of the Montessori educational experience for our children at Kalispell Montessori Schools. It is what assures our children such success and it is one of the features that distinguishes our educational program from others. Curriculum development, staffing, classroom design, student admission, re-enrollment, and placement all revolve around it.

It drives the educational continuum (our academic scope and sequence), determines materials purchased and placed in the classrooms, and defines student record keeping, progress, and assessment. It is a clearly-defined and discrete educational unit with a beginning, a middle, and an end for each child, with the third year in each sequence a capstone year that is a culminating experience academically, emotionally, socially, and developmentally. If not followed, a child's work in that three-year sequence is simply incomplete. Why is it at the core of all that we do?



In the classroom and out, the older students take on the role of mentors to the youngers. By being a teacher or being a moral supporter, this practice develops lifetime skills through experience.

Dr. Montessori saw the growth of an individual from birth to age 24 in four "planes of development:" birth to 6, 6 to 12, 12 to 18, and 18 to 24 years of age. In each of these planes humans have unique needs and characteristics which she defined. She then developed a methodology and materials to respond to the needs and characteristics of the evolving individual at each plane. Those needs and characteristics grow and then diminish in importance during each six-year plane. That is, they are at their strongest at each midpoint and are at their weakest at the points of transition (age 6, age 12, and age 18) from one plane to the next.

With each plane divided into three-year developmental cycles, conventional "kindergarten," and sixth grade, are endings at our schools, completions that are culminations and not beginnings. This runs directly counter to the paradigm in schools across the country where kindergarten is the start of the elementary sequence and sixth grade may be the beginning of Middle School.

We know that ages 3 and 4, Grades 1 and 2, 4 and 5, and 7 and 8 are years of academic and intellectual explosion. Yet, Dr. Montessori observed that in the 6 year olds (kindergartners), 9 year olds (Grade 3s), 12 year olds (Grade 6s), and 15 year olds (Grade 9s), their great work was social and emotional and lays the foundation for the next "explosion." She concluded that unless the social and emotional growth was addressed directly and effectively, rather than suppressed, academic growth could slow and suffer. Rather than fighting the social and emotional growth of the children in the third year of each sequence, Montessori encourages it. How? Instead of making those students in their transitional years the youngest of the children in a sequence, we make them the oldest and most mature in their group. We give them age-appropriate responsibility. We make them educational and civic leaders in this community. The leadership of the older children has remarkable impact on the health of the three-year community they help lead, and it allows the oldest children in each cycle to stand tall with confidence during an uncertain time while internalizing the



L
I
L
A
C

C
L
A
S
S



The Montessori classroom is infused with language throughout. Children are unconsciously working left to right, learning new vocabulary, and strengthening their pincher grip. The realization of the ability to spell words on his own is the source of great delight! Taking pride in achievements is integral to the Montessori experience.

Three Cheers for Our Volunteers

Big thanks to our volunteers from Montana Academy/Sky House who are here regularly each week. The teachers appreciate another set of hands to help out in the classrooms, with anything from cleaning to Guinea pig care, or even the dishes. They gain as much out of spending time with the children and helping out around the school as the children do from their energy and positive models of responsibility. This year's group is exceptionally helpful and engaged with the children. It's win-win for all!

Please note: by our policy, no volunteer or visitor is ever alone with a child or children.

"There are no seven wonders of the world in the eyes of a child..."

Kindergarten



The kindergartners enjoy experiments. It is fun to explore, make hypotheses, and discover. Here, a corn starch experiment is messy and fun!



It was a bluebird day for the kindergartners at Blacktail Mountain! They learned to make pizza (snowplow) or shared their expertise with pizza-making technique as leaders. A great time was had by all!

L I N D E N



The Cultural curriculum in the Montessori classroom leads children to read, write, and understand mathematics. It is not reading, writing and math lessons taught in isolation, but the practical application of these skills in areas which the children are interested that best creates the passion to learn. Lessons in the cultural area include sciences, history, geography, international studies, art and music. This photo shows exploration of the layers of the earth and matching the corresponding labels.

C
L
A
S
S

B I R C H C L A S S



We recently added place mats to our lunch routine. The children really enjoy setting their spots for lunch! We are also making great use of the new water table (made by Kari's father-in-law) to rinse our dishes when we are finished eating.

*...there are seven million."
~Maria Montessori*

A P P L E C L A S S



Apple Tree Class ended their study of Asia with an outing to the Alley Connection. This was a wonderful opportunity to taste Asian food and practice manners. The chopsticks were a great hands-on source of focus for these inquiring minds.



Elementary I

“Our aim is not merely to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize....”

By third year students often are motivated to read books they're interested in. Often times third year students are capable of completing book reports on self chosen books.



Two students of different ages practice the difficult concept of clocks and telling time at their own levels. After developing the understanding of basic time telling ①, students can create a more dynamic understanding through works that include matching words, analog and digital times, and using problem solving skills by using our 3rd grade Time B work ②.

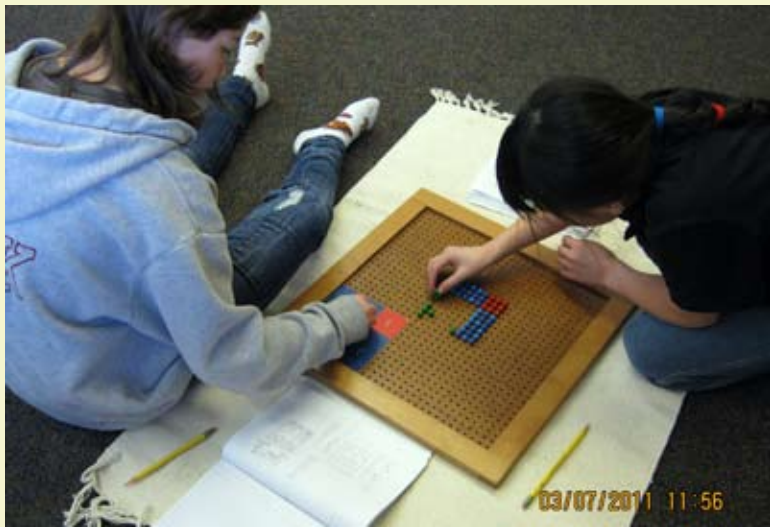




A big work of double digit stamp game division ①. This has been many years in the making! Students complete the sequence of concrete works in the first year building on the experiences with materials of similar color and concept in their Montessori early childhood years. This photo ② shows using the stamp game material to explore subtraction.

Elementary II

...but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his inmost core." ~Maria Montessori



Here are two photos of EII students making the square of a binomial using hierarchical material. This material builds on previous math materials such as the bead frame, stamp game and checkerboard. It uses the concept of "place" to indicate value rather than "quantity" to indicate value (such as in the golden bead materials where each bead represents a value of "one").

The layout on the pegboard shows a pattern of squares and rectangles, and each part is a visual representation of the actual value.

Practical Application: this equation can be used to calculate two dimensional surface area, e.g. surveying.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

After 30 years of Montessori, there's a lot to shout about...

On Monday, February 14th, The Daily Inter Lake announced that 18 Kalispell (Glacier & Flathead High Schools) students qualified for the National Forensic League Speech and Debate Tournament that will happen in Dallas in June. Of those 18, seven are our very own Montessori alumni.

From Flathead High School

Sam Watson, Lincoln-Douglas Debate
Kelly Hendrix, Public Forum
Peter Hoag, Duo Interpretation
Zac Parker, Lincoln-Douglas Debate

From Glacier High School

Logan Hendrix, Public Forum Debate
Mariah Gladstone, Policy Debate
Flint Martino, Public Forum Debate

The teams must now put their problem-solving skills to the practical task of earning the funds to travel to Dallas for the meet.

Scrapbook



Apple Tree Class with their Woodland Park adopted tree. At their next visit, they will use a stethoscope to listen for the flow of sap - a sure sign of spring!



The Kindergarten skiers



Elementary 1 at the
Vo-Ag Center



Elementary Knitting Club



Congratulations to Tyler Hong, recipient of 1st Place for a Flathead Valley 5th & 6th Grade essay contest sponsored by the Elks Club, "Why I'm Proud To Be An American." Nicely done!



In 1979, a 10-year-old boy and his family of 12 set out from Vietnam on a year-long journey to America in hopes of greater opportunities. On the way, Thai and Malaysian pirates intercepted them, abducted women and stole valuables, leaving most families empty-handed. All needed help. A United States government sponsored program rescued them and brought them to America, where the boy and his family found food and shelter. That boy was my father. I am proud to be an American because America helps people in need - like my Dad.

Like my father and his family, the people of Haiti, for example, suffered in 2010 when a 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit them. Within 24 hours, the American Red Cross collected \$7,000,000 for the Haitians, showing how kind Americans are to people in need. Humanitarian relief has saved many lives, including the Haitians and my Dad's.

Since America started, it has been a place for refugees. The English came here looking for refuge. They got together and created the United States of America. Ever since, it has been a country of helping people.

Today my father is a therapist with a Ph.D. who helps people because he knows what it feels like to really need help. When I grow up, I want to go to Africa and help others. Helping others is what it means to be an American. My father's family of 12 is now a family of 42. Many people owe their lives to America, including me. I'm proud to be an American.



Bulletin Board

THREE YEAR CYCLE con.


academic work of the first two years by sharing their knowledge and expertise with the younger students in the group. They become role models for the younger students, who long to reach their level of academic accomplishment and community responsibility.

We embrace the maxim, “You do not understand something until you can teach it,” and giving lessons to the younger students in the group requires that the oldest children reduce complex concepts to their simplest elements and then convey them with clarity and understanding. If they cannot, it is clear that they need a lesson before going on! Thus, without fully realizing what they are accomplishing, our “third-years” internalize and consolidate the academic skills they have garnered for two years before exploding into the next three-year cycle.

The three-year grouping also makes sense because we know from experience that Kindergartners have much more in common with 3 and 4 year olds than they do with 8 and 9 year olds. Grade 6 students have much more in common with Grade 4 and 5 students than with Grade 8 students. Clearly, the full benefit of the educational program accrues to our children in the third and capstone year of each cycle, and a student’s educational experience is greatly diminished without it. So too, is the program and the educational experience for the younger students left behind without the gift of the leadership, mentoring, and instruction from the older children they have come to admire.



- **WEAR GREEN FOR ST. PATRICK’S DAY:**
Thursday, March 17th.
- **RE-ENROLLMENT DUE:** Friday, March 18th.
- **SPRING BREAK:**
Early Dismissal Friday, March 25th,
No School March 28-April 1st.
Woodland open for care for children up to 10 years old - please call for drop-in space availability.
- **WOODLAND CHILDREN’S EXPO:** Thursday, April 14th.
Watch for more info.
- **NO SCHOOL:** Friday, April 22nd. Watch for care reservation.
- **KME ELIZABETHAN FESTIVAL:** Thursday, April 28th
- **ELEMENTARY 1 TO BIG CREEK:** Tues-Wed, May 3-4
- **MONTESSORI MAGIC (TALENT SHOW):** Thursday, May 5th
- **CARNIVAL:** Thursday, May 12th at KME
- **ELEMENTARY 2 SPRING TRIP:**
Wed-Fri, May 18-20th to Lewis & Clark Caverns, Museum of the Rockies (Bozeman)
- **KILA TRACK MEET (KME):** Wednesday, June 1st



May Peace Prevail On Earth

Que La Paz Prevalezca En La Tierra