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Community News

September 2, 2009

A Fresh New School Year

Summer is always a time to re-group and re-organize in preparation for the coming school year. In sorting through the years of old magazines in the office (Woodland) a copy of Montessori Life from Fall 1999 emerged with a cover story featuring “Cooking with Julia—A Montessori Child.” This seemed somewhat fitting since a film about Julia Child is currently in theaters.

There was nothing particularly earth-shattering in the article. Julia Child (formerly McWilliams) went to a Montessori school through the third grade beginning in 1915 and successfully pursued a career in something she loved to do—cooking and teaching. Shouldn’t we all be so lucky! It seems so simple, but is it really?

Another thing that recently graced our e-mail was a video clip produced by Sony for an executive meeting. It flashed, in a very flashy way, statistics that sketched out the exponential times that we live in. “We are currently preparing students for jobs that don’t yet exist... using technologies that haven’t yet been invented... in order to solve problems we don’t even know are problems yet.” “Years to reach a market audience of 50 million: radio 38; TV 13; internet 4; iPod 3; Facebook 2.” This is all truly mind-boggling! It makes one wonder how, as parents, teachers, and members of this accelerating global society, do we approach this?

The good news is that the answer is with us and we can take great comfort in realizing that Montessori approaches it very well. Stephen Glenn from the Positive Discipline parenting class videos Raising Self-Reliant Children in a Self-Indulgent World also discussed this subject; and even Julia Child expresses the same sentiment in the article from 1999. It is clear that it has never been more important for children to *learn how to learn*.

Montessori places great emphasis on strong foundations. Not solely academics, but even more fundamental than that. Julia Child said in answer to the question about whether or not her time at Montessori influenced her work, “...it started you organizing.” Organization is part of all the works that the early childhood children use, and the same format continues into the elementary. In this progression, organization grows from the focus of the work to the foundation of the work, but all the while, the level of the child’s interest is of the utmost importance. In this fashion,

with patience and at the child’s pace, the enjoyment of learning (hence the ability and desire to learn) is nurtured.

We look forward to the beginning of another school year and welcome all of our returning and new students. It feels good to know that we are giving our students tools that will be useful for a lifetime no matter what the future holds!

“Once you learn the basics, you can just put them together any way you want.”

~Julia Child
Montessori Life Fall 1999



Annual Theme

As is the regular routine for the beginning of the school year at Woodland, the staff meet and, among many other things, decide on an annual theme for the year. This theme serves to highlight some particular aspect of our school or goals we may want to focus upon. This year we have chosen the theme of **Promoting Interconnections**.

Interconnections has a very broad scope. From the very finest focus of basic inter-child socialization to the widest angle of each individual's relationship to the world, there are interconnections at every step along the way. Attention to these relationships has always been incorporated into our Montessori curriculum, but this year we'd like to place special emphasis on what these relationships mean and how our actions affect them.

The progression as we sketched it out is:

- basic socialization,
- immediate community,
- all things/the world.

Other significant relationships include:

- between living things,
- child and academics,
- school and home,
- work and life,
- freedom and discipline,
- silence and action.

We hope that with our increased focus, families will also find the energy to concentrate on the significance of these interconnections. In doing so we may all increase our awareness and strengthen these important relationships.

Accreditation Visit

Last winter we were so excited to have reached our goal of completing and submitting a Self Study to the American Montessori Society to accredit Woodland Montessori School. This project, which in itself took about a year to complete, was actually just a step in the process to accreditation. The final step (at least

the last step that involves us directly) is the On-site Visit. We are both excited and nervous to say that our On-site Visit has been scheduled and will take place October 4th-7th.

The visitation of a team of Montessori experts will be both challenging and welcome. Although there will be a lot of preparation required leading into this event, we are looking forward to sharing our school with peers of the national Montessori community and also to their input on how we might improve.

Montessori as a philosophy is not trademarked and is therefore open to wide, or even partial, interpretation. To Woodland Montessori School, accreditation will validate that we follow the national standard for Montessori education as it has been established by the American Montessori Society. We will be the first in Montana to reach this point and hope that our families appreciate our dedication to quality!

In case you may be wondering, our school schedule for the children will not be altered in any way during the On-site Visit. In fact, business as usual will be the best course of action and what the visitors will want to see.



From the Classrooms

The classrooms have all been prepared and the teachers and their groups of children have just begun to get to know each other and learn the classroom systems and expectations. This is an exciting time of the year!

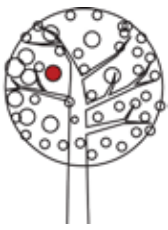
Some things to note: Katy Meyers will begin Music circles on Tuesday, September 15th in all classrooms. Each classroom will address foreign language separately this year. Kindergartners will begin Ice Skating for P.E.

on Monday, November 9th. Keep an eye on your Communicator for information about field trips or events as they come up.

Big Yard Tree House

Please join us in sending thanks to Ethan Welder for designing and building the fabulous new tree house in the Big Yard. We think it will be a place on our playground that will inspire great imagination and wonder, yet keep young feet at a reasonable height from the ground. Take a minute to visit the tree house – as you look up through the branches, you'll see what we mean!

The tree house was paid for by funds raised by the 2008 Innisbrook fundraiser.



Off and Running

Welcome to those new to our community and welcome back to our returning families! The summer has been spent re-charging and preparing for a fresh new school year. With a new coat of interior paint and some other little face-lifts here and there, we are so excited to be back in session.

As is our tradition, there are a couple of events that happen right away in the first month of school. Our thanks go to Jessie Cady for once again heading up the Innisbrook wrapping paper sale and to Lynn Ritzdorf for the super fun and super fast Montessori Mile.

Innisbrook is an important fundraiser contributing largely to our scholarship fund so we hope that everyone will be ready to do their part to make it successful. Watch your Wednesday envelopes for your sales packet and some new high-tech ways to participate.

Start training now if you haven't already to make those three laps around the track with the kids on Wednesday, September 30th. Sign-ups for the fun run will be in the envelopes. Montessori Mile is open to the public so friends are welcome too!

Special Classes

All students will rotate through the Special Classes on our schedule for 1:30-3:00 Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. We are so pleased to welcome back the talents and expertise of Julie Stone, Sherry Johns, and Jonna Hoag.

Enjoyable enrichment enables students to explore the Cultural subjects by different venues. Using creativity and making presentations to an audience contribute to developing confidence and a firm sense of individuality. Experience is a great teacher!

Other music extracurriculars are offered in cooperation with KME. Band (brass



Julie Stone,
music



Sherry Johns,
theater arts
and puppetry



Jonna Hoag,
will be presenting Year
Two of her three-year
rotational art program

and woodwind) with Greg Harms Tuesday and Thursday mornings; private piano lessons with Julie Stone by arrangement; private guitar with Andre Floyd after school by arrangement; and private music lessons (piano and voice) with Laura Arnold from North Valley Music School by arrangement. Please contact these instructors directly to join or schedule lessons (contact info available in the office).

Beating the Flu to the Punch

Since last spring, public agencies have been issuing warnings and making grim predictions about the upcoming flu season. While sometimes such things seem to be blown a bit out of proportion, we nevertheless want to avoid this bandwagon and will employ extra vigilance in our preventative measures. Hand washing and coughing techniques will be re-visited the first week of school and parents can help by reinforcing these things at home: cough into the elbow, wash hands frequently. We also ask that families follow our illness protocol (see Parent Handbook at www.kalispellmontessori.com) and keep students home when appropriate. As a school, we will concentrate on thorough disinfection, particularly door handles and other points of communal use, and cleaning. If you are interested in flu shots for your family, please contact your doctor or the County Health Department.

Open Invitation from Dave Hibbs

I want to take a moment to extend an invitation to all of our families. If you would like to schedule a 15 to 30 minute conference with me, I would feel very good about a school-wide 100% response in the affirmative. The topic of the conference is basically up to your choosing. We can discuss your questions regarding our mission and philosophy, school policy, or business and operational issues. We can discuss any lingering concerns or grievances you may have (a "clear the air conference"). We can simply strengthen our social connection or build new connections for those of you with whom I am not yet well acquainted. I would like to start scheduling immediately and have met with all interested families by the end of September. Please email your requested time and date to daveh@kalispellmontessori.com. I look forward to seeing you all!

Elem II Field Trip

The Elementary II fall overnight (one night) field trip has been scheduled for Thursday-Friday, September 17-18th at the Harms' and McCadden property at Duck Lake. Only a stone's throw from the Many Glacier entrance to Glacier Park, arrangements are being made for some Ranger-guided activities. We will be camping and plan to have a great time! Watch for more info next week.



Bulletin Board

Labor Day - No School

Monday, September 7th

Centers Closed – care NOT available

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All Montessori Family Campout

Lions Camp at Bitterroot Lake

Friday-Sunday, September 11th-13th

Information enclosed

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4th Year Parent Info Meeting

MANDATORY FOR 4TH YEAR FAMILIES

Tuesday, September 15th

6:00 p.m.

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Woodland Soup's On

Tuesday, September 15th

5:00-6:00 @ Woodland

Care available

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Elem. II Fall Overnight

Thurs-Fri, September 17-18th

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Montessori Mile

Wednesday, September 30th

Information enclosed

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Picture Day

Woodland: Thursday, October 1st

KME: to be announced

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Woodland Open House

Thursday, October 1st

All classrooms

Scholastic Book Orders

Both campuses will once again participate in Scholastic Book Orders. The Scholastic system is an easy way to purchase books at affordable prices and encourage reading. For every purchase, the schools earn credit toward a point bank and with those points can acquire books for their libraries or various other school-related items. Book orders should be returned to the school where they came from.

Each school has a separate policy for order payment. Woodland allows charges to family accounts (note on your order form) or a check to Scholastic. KME requires a check to Scholastic to accompany the order.

Please enjoy this service!

Websites

Parent Handbooks are now available on both school websites. The handbooks are full of handy policies and procedures. Don't be afraid to take a look!

Lunch menus, activity calendars, and newsletters will be posted too. The websites are also a great way to share with grandparents, friends, or relatives!

Woodland: www.mtmont.com

KME: www.kalispellmontessori.com

Positive Discipline

Coming soon starting in October!

Stephen Glenn is our rock star! Everybody who's taken this class has absolutely loved it. It's full of great information and helpful techniques for gracefully negotiating all sorts of relationships. It's actually recommended that this class be taken three times for maximum benefit!

