



Castle Mound Montessori

Where the magic of learning begins!

January Newsletter



From Varsha's desk...

**HAPPY NEW YEAR
&
WELCOME BACK!!**

I hope everyone enjoyed their holidays!!! These past few weeks have been extremely busy for everyone; parents shopping for the last minute gifts, entertaining families that came into town for the holidays, children waiting in anticipation for the "big day", opening all the gifts on the "big day", and then the afterwards of everything being over. It is definitely a tiring, but quite an enjoyable holiday. We hope everyone received what they were expecting, had a wonderful holiday, and are ready for the new year to start.

Our second semester of the school year is just as busy as our first with many events and activities. Our lead directresses are also returning back for the second semester after their well deserved time off and are ready to get back to work with all of our children. Thank you very much for your patience during the last two weeks. I know at times it seemed like your child was never in the same room during pick up time, but when we do not have as many children and teachers as during the regular school times, we do have to combine classrooms and rearrange staff to keep our state required classroom ratios. I also want to express my thanks to all of you for understanding our reasons for being closed on both Christmas Day, the day after Christmas Day, New Year's Day and the day after. Our staff works very hard all year long and we believe they deserve this time off, especially during this time of the year to spend time with their families and loved ones.



GIVING TREE.... MY HEARTFELT GRATITUDE

On behalf of the school, I would like to express our deepest appreciation of your generosity for supporting the Jonathon's Place. CMM volunteered to help support Jonathon's Place to help bring the holiday spirit to the unfortunate children of this facility. With all the gifts received by our families, we were able to deliver two large boxes of gifts to the Jonathon's Place. Once again, my heartfelt gratitude for all of your support.



BOOK EXCHANGE

The book exchange was definitely a better success story than last years. All of the children enjoyed the morning of the book exchange playing various different games and exchanging the books with one another. Thank you parents for supporting our event.



SCHOOL WILL BE CLOSED



CMM will be closed on **Monday, January 19th** for the observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day and for teacher's in-service day. This day will be used as a continuing education day for our teachers to receive additional training hours to better serve your children.

KINDERGARTEN NIGHT

Primary student parents, we ask that you reserve Wednesday, January 21st from 6:30pm to 8:00pm for this informational night. This night will help you decide once and for all why it is extremely important for your five year old to remain in our Montessori program versus going to another institution. This night will be hosted by our McKinney Director, Pam Malbeouf, who comes to us with vast knowledge of how important it is to keep your child in the program. Pam has been a director of her own school for thirty years and had hundreds of kindergarten students graduate from her program. She will be able to explain to you how the child will benefit and how critical it is to his/her future success. We will also have some of our teachers available to talk about their experiences of children who remained in the program during their kindergarten years and of children who left the program and returned.

PLEASE RESERVE THIS DATE IN YOUR CALENDERS!!!



Article by Tim Seldin

Montessori and Traditional education each follow distinctly different approaches which are based on their own set of assumptions about the nature of children's intelligence, the nature of effective teaching, beliefs about what is the best way to motivate students to learn, and differing perspectives about what is the appropriate relationship between students, teachers, and parents.

In the past, many people, including many Montessori educators, assumed that there was an all or nothing divide between Montessori and the rest of education. This did not endear Montessori to the thousands of innovative teachers who loudly have cried, "I may not be a Montessori teacher, but I do these things in my classroom too!" We are left with the fact that some schools who do not call themselves Montessori may offer some of the things normally associated with Montessori education, leaving the real divide not

between Montessori and non-Montessori education, but between Montessori/child centered approaches based on partnership and community, and the much more prevalent and familiar traditional approach.

In recent years, many educational reformers have discovered for themselves the validity of the principles and practices that we see as the building blocks of Montessori classrooms. Some are aware of the connection of these principles and practices to Dr. Maria Montessori; others have no idea. But we can take pride as more schools experiment with elements of the Montessori Way.

On the other hand, America is presently obsessed with tests, achievement and accountability, all of which are leading a far great numbers of classrooms away from a child-centered approach to one focused on test scores and an attempt to impose order and discipline through power and authority. We are living in an era when many schools boast of their high standards, challenging program, and return to the "Basics." The significance of Dr. Maria Montessori's work was not simply that she the first to clearly articulate and popularize these ideas and put them into practice, but that she then went on to organize them into a systematic and revolutionary model of education that is effective, adaptable, sustainable, and replicable around the world.

There is a set of principles and practices behind the approach that most of us call traditional.

There is another set of principles and practices based on partnership, not domination; mentoring rather than control, and a sense of community rather than a sense of intimidation. We call this The Montessori Way.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Jan 5th	Academic Classes Resume
Jan 19th	School Closed
Jan 22nd	Kindergarten Night



Maria Montessori Quote of the Month

“education is a natural process carried out by the human individual, and is acquired not by listening to words, but by experiences in the environment.”

An Important Article on: Montessori versus Traditional

People often ask "*How is Montessori different to traditional education?*". It is so hard to give a short answer to such a big question! Montessori education is very different and in very many ways. But after quite a bit of thought I have found a way to focus on just a few of the most important ways. So how is Montessori different? **It is Upside Down, Inside Out and Around the World Education.**

It is **upside down** because while most people believe that the secondary school and the tertiary years are the most important ones for education, we believe it is at the other end that the most important learning occurs - the early years. So, although Montessori education does cover all ages from birth to eighteen, it is the *first 6 years* that we believe are the most crucial.

In those early years the child is learning how to learn, how to focus and concentrate, how to begin and end an activity, how to love learning for its own sake. It is at this time that, through a combination of their own choices and the environment they find themselves in (social, emotional and physical environment) that they are actually forming themselves. The child is building themselves with what they have. Their sense of self, their personality and their ability to do and to be. These are some of the reasons why these early years are the most important years in education and in life.

It is **inside out** compared to traditional education because it is generally thought that education is something that happens from the outside to the inside, from a teacher to a student, from a textbook to a brain. This leads to curriculum being delivered in bite sized pieces - from the outside to the inside where it is hoped it will be digested and stored for later regurgitation.

In Montessori we believe that the best and only real learning comes from the inside to the outside.

From within the child's own unique self, through their own head and their own hands creating their own knowledge. We believe that education should not be something done to the child, or for the child, but something done by the child.

Because of this, children in Montessori classrooms are given the gift of human knowledge at it's broadest, the biggest picture and the details as well. All scattered like seeds for the children to pick up. Each classroom is filled with many interesting and enticing

activities to explore and investigate. The children are inspired by their own interest and supported in their active learning journey.

The teacher in a Montessori classroom often seems invisible. They will be over there somewhere, working quietly with one child or with a small group. They are hardly ever up at the front talking to the whole group of children at once. The teachers follow the child, each as an individual rather than expecting the children as a group to follow the teacher.

It is also not the Montessori way for the teacher to yell or impose external discipline, rewards or punishments because the children have been supported in developing their own self discipline and inner motivation. They really love to learn and it is all happening - on the inside.

A Montessori teacher greets each individual child at the start of the day, observes each individual child and gives lessons to each individual child, not rigidly according to the curriculum or the textbook. To do this the teacher needs to really know each child, on the inside, so as to know what to offer them next.

This inner learning then comes to the outside in many active and creative ways. This happens through older children helping younger ones in the three year multi-aged classrooms, through the child's drive to make a difference in the world, through their confidence and assurance and through their sense of wholeness.

It is around the world in two ways. There are locations of Montessori schools on every continent and in more than 200 countries. It is around the world in perspective as it is a truly international education with geographical and cultural learning well beyond traditional school's curriculum. The vision of humanity, history and ecology conveyed by the Montessori approach encourages each child to seek a wider and deeper connection to the world.

The Montessori child builds themselves and then a global awareness and social perspective that cannot help but be expressed on the outside in some caring and constructive way.

So how is Montessori different, we really could not count the ways, but these are just a few - it's ***upside down, inside out and all around the world!***

The preceding article was written by Leanne Terran.

NEW STAFF

Please help us welcome our newest staff members to our growing community of teachers and administrators to better serve you:

Ms. Dee Ann Bogard: Dee Ann will be our new assistant guide in the Fawns classroom working with Ms. Rupika. Ms Dee Ann comes to us several years of experience working with young infants and toddlers. Ms. Robyn Taylor had some unforeseen personal matters that needed to be attended to and had to resign her position as the assistant guide in the Fawns classroom. We wish Ms. Robyn well.

Ms. Brianna Garner: Brianna will be our new assistant guide in the Raccoons classroom working with Ms. Merci. Ms Brianna also has experience working with children. Ms Asra Wahid's pregnancy was at risk and her doctors had to put her on 100% bed rest for the remainder of her pregnancy which in turn required her to resign her position as assistant guide in the Raccoons classroom. We wish Ms Asra and her baby well.

Ms. Marcia Rios: Marcia will be assisting in the front office as an administrator.

Again, please help us welcome our newest staff members to our growing community at CMM!!!

