

Montessori Children's School  
Weekly Newsletter  
September 2011



**Dear Montessori Families,**

Well our first week of school is behind us and all is going really well. Our new students are arriving day-by-day to be introduced to the wonders of the Montessori classroom. Everyone is working hard to get into a routine again. You may hear your children talking about what "lessons" they have been working on. The lessons in a Montessori classroom are specifically created for "hands on" learning. Some lessons are progressive and a child can begin in one way and progress to more challenging approaches as he/she learns. The lessons are put out in a specific order. The "prepared environment" is Maria Montessori's concept that the environment be designed to facilitate maximum independent learning and exploration by the child. In a (primary) classroom, for example, a three-year-old may be washing clothes by hand while a four-year-old nearby is composing words and phrases with the movable alphabet, and a five-year-old is performing multiplication using a specially designed set of beads. In the prepared environment, there is a variety of activity as well as a great deal of movement. The environment is actually teaching the child, leaving observation and more one on one time for the teacher (Directress) to spend with the children. Through observation we are better able to determine the child's needs and allow them to learn without interference from the adult. It is truly a beautiful process!

Our Pre-Primary students are working with specifically prepared Montessori lessons also. Ms. Andrea and Ms. Liz present a new lesson to the children every day and the morning work cycle is overflowing with discovery! Additionally there is constant development of social skills they will carry with them always. It is important for all our children to learn respect for the environment. This includes the classroom as well as our earth. Ask your children what lessons they worked on and what they like best about school. This helps them to remember all the exciting new things they learn every day. I realize that for some of you, the beginning school experience is the first time your have been separated from your child. Be patient and decisive. Once you say goodbye, mean it, if you continue to go back to your child after beginning to leave, for "one more hug", it only draws out the process and is more stressful for your child. If you have any concerns about your child's day, you may call me and I will check in to see how your little one is doing. Please see our list of books on the following page to help you through this important transition process. Both programs are in full swing and the children never stop learning. The process of growth and development that takes place at your school is truly amazing. I'm proud to be a part of it.

Our **Kindergarten** students will be participating in a Peace March Wednesday, September 21st in the morning. The children walk to the White Street Pier as a group. They will need to wear white and bring a water bottle. Please sign your child's permission slip which will be sent home in your child's take-home folder next week and return it before Friday the 19th. Again, this is for our Kindergarten students only. If you would like to walk with us that would be great, just let your classroom know.

The month of September is busy for all of us! We have our first corporation meeting of the year on Thursday, September 15th beginning with a social @ 5:30pm and the meeting being called to order @ 6:00pm. On Friday the 23rd is our first fundraiser of the year at the Bottlecap. We will have free childcare during the Bottlecap fundraising event for the first 15 children that sign up. Signup sheet is in the office. Be sure to mark your calendar for our upcoming events. We have a new fundraising committee and welcome new ideas. Come to the first fundraising meeting on Wednesday, September 7th @ 8:30 in the aftercare room. Be a part of "fun"draising efforts at Montessori Children's School

See details on the following pages.

This year I will be sending out **monthly** newsletters and weekly reminders. Please note, payments for tuition, aftercare or pizza must be submitted to the office. Please do not send cash or check in the take-home folder.

**Spirit Day** is every Friday! Send your child to school in his/her Montessori Peace t-shirt. The kids love wearing the same t-shirt and we have more colors and sizes available in the office. Show school spirit this Friday.

Please feel free to contact me any time with questions or concerns about our school. I have an open door policy and am here if you need to talk. I will also be having a morning coffee with Kim for anyone interested in meeting myself, board members and other parents. Check the calendar and upcoming events for more details.

I look forward to an amazing year of growth and learning.

Yours in Dedication,

*Kim Livingston*

*Head of School*

**Annual Back to School**



**Date: Friday, October 7th**

**Time: 6:00 - 8:00pm**

**Where: Our pavilion/playground area**

Every year we have a back to school gathering to get to know our other Montessori families. We will have it on campus in the playground area and it will be a “potluck”. Just sign up and let us know what you will bring. Your choices are any type of food, drinks or paper products. Bring what you love to eat and share with our families. Please come by the office to sign up or email your choice to [robby@montessoriskeywest.com](mailto:robby@montessoriskeywest.com) and we will be happy to put you on our list. This is a fun event for the whole family! We look forward to seeing you there!

# UPCOMING EVENTS!

## **“Fun”draining Meeting**

Come with your ideas and enthusiasm. We will be meeting on Wednesday, September 7th @ 8:30am. Every parent must participate in fundraising at Montessori Children's School. Most of our events take place in the next two months so now is the time to get your hours done. Get involved NOW so you can choose what event best interests you. We encourage families to do more than the minimal required fundraising hours, work off all your hours doing something you like and helping the school meet its fundraising goals. Fundraising money goes to our operating budget, anything above our fundraising goal can go towards our front yard projects. Come and find out all the fun stuff we have in mind!

## **Mandatory Corporation Meeting**

Our first of three yearly corporation meetings will take place on Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>. We will have refreshments from 5:30 until 6:00pm and the meeting will begin promptly @ 6:00pm. Montessori Children's School (MCS) is a corporation, of which parents are the members. You are corporation members of the school while your child is enrolled. We have a volunteer governing board which meets monthly to review with the Head of School all financial and pertinent information related to school operations. The Board of Directors and the Head of School will be speaking and you will have a chance to meet all of our staff members. As parents it is important to be informed of school activities. Our social will take place in our newly renovated front yard and the meeting will take place in the playground area since we do not have any indoor facilities that accommodate all of our families. At least one family member is required to attend. Ms. Alesia's classroom families will be responsible for supplying the food and refreshments. Please be sure to be in touch with Tami McGrail, the roommom for the Kapok Room who will be organizing the food and refreshments.

Childcare is provided. We serve pizza to the children, let them play and watch a movie. This is a big treat for them as we do not make a habit of turning on the TV at school! If you need childcare you must sign up in the office so we can properly provide snack and adequate staff members to watch the children. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting!

## **Workpay Party!**

Our first group workpay party will be held on Saturday, September 17th. Bring your children if you need to, one of the volunteers can watch the children while the rest of us work! Please show up anytime after 8:30am, bring your work gloves, if you have a nice paint brush bring that too. Our first priority will be the outside of the Gumbo Limbo room.

## **Coffee With Kim**

Join Ms. Kim on Thursday, October 20th for coffee and tea and an informal question and answer. We know it can be overwhelming for new families, there is so much happening and so much to learn! If you have any questions about Montessori Children's School and our policies and procedures or would just like to get to know Ms. Kim, board members and other parents, please join us after you drop off your children @ 8:30. We provide the coffee and tea! Bring a snack if you'd like. More information to come.

# Important Office Information

## **Student Records**

We STILL do not have updated records for some of our students. In your child's take home folder there was a summary sheet of your child's file contents. Your child is not able to attend school until we have complete records. New students have a 30 day grace period to submit the required records. A new student is defined as one that is attending childcare in the state of Florida for the first time. The Department of Children and Families does frequent checks on children records and this is a requirement by law. Submit the required forms immediately please. We greatly appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

## **LATE Arrival Policy**

It is important for our children to get to class on time to start their day off on the right track. We are happy to receive the children any time between 8:00 – 8:30 am. If you are running late, and do not make it to school by 8:30, please do the following.

Park your car and walk in to school through the office. You are to sign a late slip, which you need to give the teacher when you walk your child to class. We appreciate your efforts to be punctual. If you would like to walk them into class, please do so closer to 8am. Class begins promptly at 8:30am and it is a disruption to the students and staff if you are in classroom after that time. We greatly appreciate your cooperation with this important part of the children's day.

## **Aftercare Registration– full day**

If you are interested in having your child participate in our aftercare program, please come to the office and fill out a registration form. All full day students are eligible to participate in the program and we have a sibling discount rate. If you would like more information regarding this program please email Robbi, our Business Manager: [robbi@montessorikewest.com](mailto:robbi@montessorikewest.com) Aftercare can also be used for a "drop in" if you do not have a monthly set up and need childcare for the day. When you use the drop in option, instead of paying in advance, we bill you at the end of the month. If your child is staying to participate in the aftercare program please be sure to send them to school with an extra snack.

## **Pizza Friday - full day**

Pizza will be billed to your child's account monthly unless you opt to pay for the entire year for \$100.00. If your child does not participate in Pizza Friday, please let us know in the office. As workpay, you can provide the fruit and juice to go along with the pizza every Friday. We still have MANY days that we need parents to bring in fruit and juice as workpay for our pizza Fridays, the sign up sheet is outside the office.

## **Early Dismissal - full day**

Our early dismissal day this month is Friday, September 23rd. The dismissal time is after lunch and play @ 12:45. Those children signed up for aftercare on Fridays will go straight to the aftercare room at no additional fee. If you would like your child to stay in school until 2:30 you must sign up for childcare and the cost is \$15.00. Please call, email or stop by the office if this service is needed.

**Sign In Sheets**—We are now required by the state to have each child signed in and signed out by the individual bringing and picking up that child. The books will be available outside on the ledge before and after school, and inside the business office during the school day. Please be sure to help us with this requirement.

**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR IMPORTANT DATES & WORKPAY**

**We cannot know the consequences of suppressing a child's spontaneity when he is just beginning to be active. We may even suffocate life itself. That humanity which is revealed in all its intellectual splendor during the sweet and tender age of childhood should be respected with a kind of religious veneration. It is like the sun which appears at dawn or a flower just beginning to bloom. Education cannot be effective unless it helps a child to open up himself to life.**

*- Maria Montessori*

# WORKPAY

- We need someone to sweep our walkways on a daily basis. This is ideal for parents that walk to the property to pick their child up after school. It only takes a few moments.
- Rebuild hurricane shutters
- Lunch time helper—to help children with their lunches and –playground time
- Hurricane preparedness—hopefully we won't need it but in case we do....
- Leaf blow the playground and new grass weekly, we have a gas powered leaf blower!
- Hospitality Committee - Aid the committee chair in set up and organization of parties such as the Welcome Back party, Thanksgiving, Christmas Caroling and more.
- Early release Fridays—to help clean the classrooms, please see your teacher.
- Ask your child's teacher for the classroom wish list. See what your classroom needs!
- Windows—NOT cleaning! We need someone to get all of our windows open and operational so we can open our windows when the time comes.
- Plumbing - We need to install a new outdoor sink, install an new dishwasher and fix the kitchen sink in the Gumbo Limbo room.
- Pizza Friday—to bring in fruit and juice

**If you have completed any of your workpay or fundraising obligation, please be sure to fill out a slip in the office so we can credit your account. We tally the workpay slips monthly.**

## Save the Dates

- September 1 - MONTHLY TUITION IS DUE!
- September 5 - Labor Day - Holiday - no school or childcare
- September 7 - Fundraising meeting @ 8:30am
- September 15 - Mandatory Corporation meeting
- September 17 - workpay party! 8:30am on campus
- September 23 - Bottlecap fundraiser
- September 23 - Early dismissal @ 12:45
- October 7 - Welcome Picnic - see details in newsletter
- September 20 - Coffee with Kim

## Beginning Families Recommended Reading

- The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn
- Llama Llama Misses Mama by Dewdney
- I Love You All Day by Rusacks/Burns
- What to Expect at Preschool
- Maisy Goes to Preschool

### IMPORTANT!

#### Hurricane Procedure

When there is a tropical system coming towards the Keys, we follow the Monroe County School system advisories for school closures. When the public school system closes, we do also. Most of our windows are shuttered, but we do need to put up plywood for the main office and the front of the Kapok room. We need a small group of people to help secure the property when we close the school due to weather. Some of our latches for the storm shutters are in ill repair and need to be worked on also. Please let me know if you can help in this manner.