



Montessori Children's School

November 2011



Dear Montessori Families,

What a busy month October was! We had so much fun at our Costume March Friday morning with the largest parent turnout ever! Yesterday our staff was able to catch up on cleaning, organizing and necessary administrative work. Our staff puts in many hours and to have a full day to improve the classroom environment is absolutely crucial. If you are able to help clean our children's classrooms during professional days or early dismissals, please contact your teacher.

November is here! I am happy to inform you that November is a relatively quiet month. Our children are acclimating to the classroom by now and many are becoming "normalized".

Normalization is the single most important result of our work. (The Absorbent Mind - Maria Montessori)

Upon hearing the term "normalization" for the first time, most people cringe. *"What do you mean my child isn't normal?"* The term normalization is borrowed from anthropology and means "becoming a contributing member of society" (Dr. Rita Shaefer Zener, 2006). Normalization describes the process that occurs in the Montessori classroom, where young children learn to focus and concentrate for sustained periods of time, while deriving self satisfaction from their work. Normalization occurs when development is proceeding normally without deviation. Next newsletter, I will write about fantasy play in young children, which refers to "fugues". A fugue is one of a variety of deviations that can occur in the life of a young child. These deviations cause a child's natural development to deviate from its natural path. Dr. Montessori believed that a "deviated" child is in some way or other a disordered being, out of harmony; his movements undisciplined, his mind without focus. When deviations disappear in the child, normalization takes place.

Dr. Montessori stated that there are four characteristics that show that normalization is happening:

- **Love of work** - *The first characteristic present in the process of normalization is love of work. Love of work includes the ability to choose work freely and to find serenity and joy in work.* (The Absorbent Mind, p. 202)
- **Concentration** - *Singular concentration on one task. To help such development, it is not enough to provide objects chosen at random, but we [teachers] have to organize a world of 'progressive interest'.* (Absorbent Mind, p. 206).
- **Self-discipline** - *After concentration will come perseverance . . . It marks the beginning of yet another stage in character formation . . . It is the ability to carry through what he has begun. The children in our schools choose their work freely, and show this power unmistakably. They practice it daily for years.* (The Absorbent Mind p. 217)
- **Socialibility** - *There is only one specimen of each object, and if a piece is in use when another child wants it, the latter—if he is normalized—will wait for it to be released. Important social qualities derive from this. The child comes to see that he must respect the work of others, not because someone has said he must, but because this is a reality that he meets in his daily experience.* (The Absorbent Mind, p. 223).

Dr. Montessori believed that if a child is placed in a carefully prepared environment, she would learn to live in harmony with her surroundings. It is up to the Montessori Directress to prepare that environment so that the child is free to develop her personality and her mind from the opportunities that are presented to her in her classroom.

FUNDRAISING

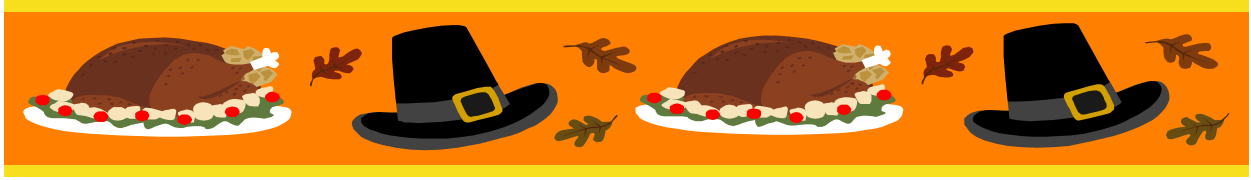
I would like to thank all of our families that helped with our fundraising events for October. Our fundraising weekend was a huge success!!!! The final figures will be available in next week's reminders. It took many hours, hard work and dedication, but was also fun. It really shows that we can pull together as a "school" and get the job done! I have heard nothing but praise for all the parents that helped at both Children's Day and Fantasy Fest. Thank you to ALL parents who participated in making it happen! Be sure to check and return your child's **take-home folder** for important information on fundraising and more!

With November comes Thanksgiving. We will need parents to help out during our **Thanksgiving Feast** this year. It is an amazing event for the whole family to enjoy. Please see the following page for more information about our upcoming events.

Just a reminder, **tuition** is due today, please be sure to drop your payment to the office prior to the 5th of the month to avoid a late fee. Also, we have heard of other schools having children with **head lice**, please be sure to check your child's head for lice/eggs. We would rather be safe than sorry. Thanks for all you do!

Kim Livingston, Head of School

PS - Robbi is looking for a place to move, in town with her dog Cody, contact her if you know of anything. Thank You.



UPCOMING EVENTS!

PAMPERED CHEF FUNDRAISER

As you know, our goal this year to meet our budget is \$24,000.00. It's a big chunk of money and we're already on our way to reaching it. Monday next week we have our Pampered Chef recipe exchange and demonstration. Monday the 7th of November beginning at 5:30pm come to school and enjoy seeing all the wonderful Pampered Chef products and exchange your favorite recipe. Childcare is free and they'll get to enjoy all the lovely dishes you will share! If you did not receive a Pampered Chef catalog in last week's take-home folder, please stop by the office, we have a few extra. MCS gets 25% of sales. If you can't make the event, you may order online and we still get our 25% of sales.

THANKSGIVING FEAST

Thanksgiving is a wonderful time of year and we enjoy the season of giving at MCS to it's fullest. We all try to concentrate on what we are thankful for in our lives. It has been a long standing tradition at MCS to have a large parent and student gathering to celebrate Thanksgiving. Our celebration will take place on Tuesday, November 22nd, the last day before our Thanksgiving break. This is a parent run party. Our Hospitality committee will organize the event this year, but we need help. Sign-up sheets will be posted outside the office next week. Please be sure to sign up to bring in a food item. The parents help set-up, serve and clean-up which you may also sign-up for outside the office. We need turkey, ham and a;; the trimmings! The children will be making their own placemats, during class students will be discussing what our American Thanksgiving celebration stands for. This is a joyous time and we invite all family members to attend. Please join us in this traditional event.

WORKPAY

- Help to put away all of the fundraising equipment and supplies in our new shed
- Purchase and change A/C filters
- Parents to help clean classrooms
- Check and replace all fluorescent bulbs in classrooms
- Leaf blow our beautiful lawns
- Safety Parent—to check our playground equipment and classrooms for safety hazards
- Parents to check students heads for lice

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

FROM THE OFFICE

Please be conscientious about getting your child to class on time. By getting your child to class early, you allow your child to begin their day in a peaceful, unhurried manner. If you arrive after 8:30 you may not go into the class with your child. If this is difficult for your child, then please be respectful of their feelings and get to school early. If you come at 8:00am you can spend a few minutes with your child in the classroom! What a treat!

Save the Dates

Wednesday – November 2nd – Mangrove classroom pictures
Thursday – November 3rd – Banyan classroom pictures
Monday– November 7 – Pampered Chef & recipe exchange fundraiser @ 5:30pm
Friday– November 11 – Veteran’s Day – Holiday, no school no childcare
Tuesday – November 15th – Visit from the fire department
Tuesday – November 22nd– Thanksgiving Feast—details to come!
Wednesday –November 23rd thru Friday, November 25th – Thanksgiving break, no school/no childcare
Tuesday – November 29th – DATE CHANGE Mary Kay Skincare Gifts Fundraising party @ 5.30pm
Wednesday – November 30th – coffee with Kim @ 8:30am
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, December 5th, 7th, 9th – Early dismissal, parent teacher conferences
Thursday – December 15 – Conch Tour Train, Christmas caroling and holiday party – more details to come
Friday – December 16 – Scholastic Book Fair on campus! Check your take home folders this week for catalogs
Monday– December 19th – DATE CHANGE Bake Sale – Banyan Room
Friday – December 23rd thru Friday, January 6th, Winter break – camp available, details to come

What is Montessori?

The Montessori method is an educational approach for children, based on theories of child development originated by Italian educator Maria Montessori in the late 19th and early 20th century. It is applied primarily in preschools and elementary school settings, although a growing number of middle and high schools are in existence.

The method is characterized by an emphasis on self-directed activity on the part of the child and clinical observation on the part of the teacher (often called a “director”, “directress” or “guide”). It stresses the importance of adapting the child’s learning environment to his or her development level, and of the role of physical activity in absorbing academic concepts and practical skills. It is also characterized by the use of autodidactic (self-correcting) equipment to introduce various concepts.

The benefits of a Montessori education are numerous. The main goal of Montessori is to provide a stimulating, child-oriented environment that children can explore, touch and learn without fear. Each child learns at his or her own pace and has a sense of accomplishment by completing a lesson or task on their own. Teachers are understanding and encouraging, so that the child can enjoy learning and feel happy about his/her purpose in life.

There are many ways parents can help instill the Montessori method at home. Let your child help in the kitchen. If they are taking a long time to complete a task, do not try to do it for them. Be patient and let them complete the task on their own, they are usually very proud of their accomplishment! When you come to school, let your child walk with you instead of carrying them. Give your child lots of praise when they accomplish a task. Please be careful not to compliment them and then tell them how the task could have been done better. Doing this takes away the praise you have just given them. Give your child some age appropriate responsibilities....like cleaning up after themselves, wiping off the table after dinner or feeding the pets.

By working together, we can give your child all the love, skills and necessary tools to be contributing people in our community and our world.

Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed.

-Maria Montessori