
Philomath Montessori School

February 2009



For the Families and Friends of the Philomath Montessori School

Classroom News

A handful of days have elapsed since the Auction and I'm still so proud of our kids. I thought they performed very well even though our "round" of Shalom Chaverim did not end as it should have. Somehow we all finished together. I'm not quite sure what happened there. Oh, well. The kids obviously enjoyed their moment in the spotlight and I have heard only good things from them about their activities in the gym and library. Mel Norland and her team of volunteers did a fantastic job. I shall try to inspire some of the children to write some thank you notes.

As you know, we are studying Argentina. We are learning about the various biomes, particularly the grassland or Pampas, which vary from elevation to elevation. We have learned about the gauchos and how they come in from hard weeks of labor on the Pampas and blow off steam in town by dancing the fiery and expressive tango. We have a great selection of tango music on CD (thank you Hinds-Cook family) with which we do Walking on the Line. I love that genre of music and the children clearly find it inspiring. One can see that in their dancing. We have also started to do some walking "heel to toe" as we call it. Then the line is really more like a

tightrope, requiring balance and control. I was reading some Montessori literature recently which reminded me of how much children are naturally driven to balance on curbs, fences, etc. It was Montessori's genius for observation that guided her to create this particular "heel to toe" activity on the line to satisfy that inclination in the child. But back to Argentina.

We have learned about how European the cities of Argentina are, due mostly to a great Italian influx. The architecture and lifestyle of city-dwellers are similar to that found in Europe. They tend to stay up very late and dine at nine or ten p.m. Many enjoy an afternoon rest much as they do in Spain. Many urbanites escape to small farms on the weekends where they grow their own meat and produce and enjoy the wholesome activities of the country. Germans often have small plots of land and a little shed outside the city limits to enjoy similarly.



Emily and Simone are sorting the Vertebrate and Invertebrate cards.

We are singing Spanish-language songs such as Des Colores, Somos el Barco and Mi Chacra, which is the only authentically Argentine song we know. It tells about a little farm and has lots of repetitions which makes it easy to learn. We are learning some Spanish. I know many of our parents speak Spanish well and even fluently. Fortunate you. What our staff lacks in knowledge and accuracy, we make up for in confidence and enthusiasm. I tend to throw in the 20 or so Spanish words I know into my English sentences. "Let's put on our zappatos and go afuera! Vamos, muchachos!" "Lo siento, I do not know Espagnol for "Smelling Jars." The children, of course, think I'm multi-lingual. In fact, they believe themselves to be quite fluent as well.



Anna Gratz is putting together the Parts of the Tree Puzzle.

I recently demonstrated to the full-day class and also a few of the older morning children, that the tilt of the earth on it's axis is responsible for the seasons of the earth. With our wonderful painted globe and a brass spherical vase representing the sun, it was plainly visible that while the Northern Hemisphere is enjoying summer, the Southern Hemisphere is tilted away from the sun, creating winter. Showing this

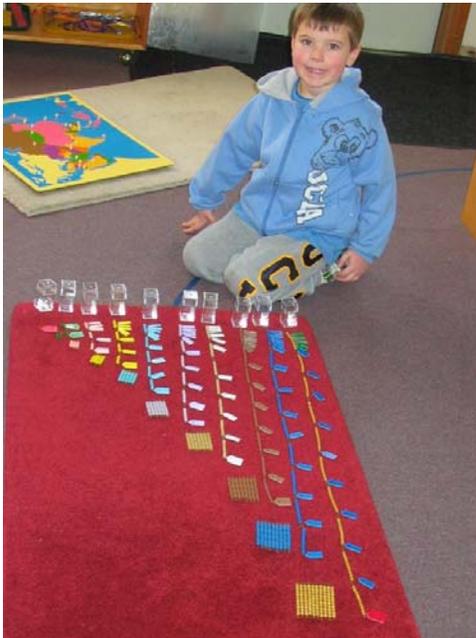
phenomenon with simple materials that the children can access daily means that they can recreate the demonstration and truly come to understand it via a multi-sensory approach. In a typical school, this lesson would probably be a didactic presentation by the teacher. Here, it is a transference of activity, as all our lessons are designed to be. I see on the calendar that the Children's Open House is taking place on Thursday, March 5. For those of you who have never attended such an event, here is the low-down.

This is an opportunity for you to interact with your child as he/she shows you their classroom and, hopefully, some of their work. You, the parent, get to follow your child about as they practice their activity. You may be surprised at the way they approach their work as we do things a little differently here. For instance, we try to carry things one at a time, which may look inefficient, but adds to the length of the preparatory phase, allowing the child to gather his/her psychic energies for the task at hand. Additionally, it gets them traversing the classroom, having purposeful physical activity and challenging their self-discipline to stay on task. I will be your host for this event. I fade into the background, but am present if needed by the children. You can help us keep the room manageable by limiting the number of family members you bring, particularly younger siblings who may require much guidance to keep them out of the materials, preventing the parents from focusing on their student. Please keep an eye on the clock and leave at your appointed time, making room for the families in the next time slot. Giving your child a ten and five minute heads-up is often helpful.

Words cannot express how grateful we are to all of you for the energy and time you extended to make our Auction so terrific and for the efforts you make every day to help us maintain our lovely little school and its activities. You folks are great people to work with and for.

Thank You's February 2009

While there was a lot of action around our annual fundraiser, there was also a lot of work being done for the classroom and school. **Phyllis Pearson** not only donated fabric squares and thread for our patchwork sewing activity, she also lent us her much-needed expertise. We had additional help from **Michele Mincinski and the McGaughys** who marked the lines for sewing. **Lua Siegal and Hong Moulton** prepared fabric squares for muslin and burlap sewing, **Janel Lawrence** cut paper into hamsas (a Jewish and Arabic symbol) and llama shapes, **Alissa** prepared sewing cards, cut collage shapes and brought in clay for a mosaic activity, **Anya Mae** cut out collage shapes and **Janel Lawrence and Kim Gratz** donated old black and white photos for a collage activity. **Heather Gerding and Gretchen Goode** both came in a couple of times to clean our classroom and so did **Kim Catton and Trina McGaughy**. Thank you all!



Ian Edwards labeled all the Square Chains!

There was a lot to do to get ready for our Open House. **Richard Gratz** brightened our garden

area by pruning our trees and shrubs, planting new flowers, and removing at least one full truck load of debris. Didn't realize how beautiful our garden could be in winter! **Sherri Mortensen** got a slew of posters up and around town with the help of **Melissa Cunningham, Kim Gratz, Doni Manning-Cyrus and Mel Norland**. **Jessica Neebe, Heather Gerding, Hong Moulton, and, Alissa Moses** came in as parent hosts to graciously greet and talk to interested families. Thank you all very much for your help!



Kallen is washing a chalkboard.

We feel VERY fortunate to be the recipient of a beautiful watercolor by **John Wilson**. "Irish Bend" is a painting he did of his favorite fishing spot. We already have a place picked out and hope to hang it this week. Thank you, John!

We also received many books as gifts from children on their birthdays. **Olivia Amoth** presented us with *What Lives in a Shell*, **Madison Foley** gave us *An Earthworm's Life*, and **Anna Wilson** -- *Buddy: The First Seeing Eye Dog*. Thank you very much. These books are great additions to our library.

Mel Norland created an incredible photo album and had it printed and bound as a book for our 2007- 2008 school year. Many of you have asked about getting a copy so I will put a signup soon. Many thanks for all your work, Mel.

Many thanks to **Kevin Albin** for taking care of our plumbing problem right away and to **Jon Moulton** for taking our guitar home over the holidays to clean and restring. He sent it back with another set of strings and a new tuning fork!



Joanna is doing three Cylinder Blocks together.

Parent Ed - February 2009

For some of you, the decision of where to send your child for the third or fourth year is often a financial one or because of transportation and time. We understand the importance of these factors and their impact on the whole family; however, we would like you to consider the bigger picture. Doni wrote this article a couple of years ago and I hope that you will not only read it, but reflect on the importance of our three-year curriculum to your child and to the whole school.

Montessori is a Three-Year Curriculum

The first year spent in a Montessori prepared environment is largely spent getting comfortable with having a place of one's own, separate from one's family. A child learns to initiate activity, to be responsible for one's own behavior and belongings, to support the needs of a larger group and to begin the long road towards functional and emotional independence. The second year usually brings great academic growth,

greater coordination and confidence and a heightened social drive. But what is the third year for? So much has already been accomplished by your child. Many parents begin to feel restless by this time and with our transitory, uniquely American psyche, we often feel ready to explore distant pastures, and to move on.

The third year spent in a Montessori classroom, however, is truly a fleeting and valuable opportunity for children. As an elder in the classroom, one has the chance to continue to build on the intellectual work of the past year in a way that simply is not possible in any other setting. We have the materials, the cosmic curriculum that is not available in other schools, the familiarity to know each child's needs and the training that is proven to help children live up to their potential. Here, the child can follow through on the work he has only begun.



Kaidyn is doing a Cylinder Block.

The greatest advantage, however, to completing this program and graduating as a full participant in our school is a spiritual one. A child who is so accomplished, such a master of her environment, has much to give back to her school community. The needs of the younger, less-experienced students provide an opportunity for the older child to serve and to begin the habit of service. It is tremendously empowering to see oneself as the expert with gifts he can bestow on others. Seeing less-accomplished friends turn to you as a resource shines a light on how blessed,

how masterful you really are and that is a boon to your sense of self-respect. These experiences of service and satisfaction cannot be duplicated in any other environment and set one up to live one's life with confidence.

On a larger scale, we must look at what we leave in our wake should we decide to leave our Montessori school prematurely. When this occurs on a wide-spread scale, the children left behind are left without role models to inspire them. There is no one to do the highest level of work. There are no older children with polished manners to emulate. And there are no student teachers to encourage and aid the younger kids in the way that only they can. Without our third-year students, we are no longer a true Montessori school. The children themselves, prepared as they have been for the last two years are really an integral part of our prepared environment. Without these "tribal elders" and their wisdom, we are only an exceptional preschool. With them, we can be a microcosm of a wonderful society.



Dodie Wilson and Heather Gerding enjoy some of the awesome food provided by GTF.

For the Love of Learning

Our Love of Learning fundraiser took another leap this year and brought in a veritable crowd!! We nearly doubled our bidders! Kudos to **Dodie Wilson and Michele Mincinski** for their starring roles as co-chairs of our auction and evening of family fun. They did an outstanding job!



Doni, Leslie and Students perform for the crowd.

Soliciting donations this year took an extra ounce (no pound!) of patience and persistence. A big thank you to those who took to the streets to fill our auction tables with fabulous items! Leading the way were our auction co-chairs and their mates: **Dodie and John Wilson, Michele Mincinski and Ric Vega**. They garnered lots of support from **Deb Alba, Kim Catton, Leslie Cohen, Heather Gerding, Gretchen Goode, Barbara and Don Hinds-Cook, Hattie Muir, Doni-Manning Cyrus, Alissa Moses, Hong Moulton, Jessica Neebe, and Mel Norland**.

Then there were the basket parties to put it all together. There were three parties with **Anna Matsuba and Hattie Muir** hosting the first two. Thank you for the wonderful food and warm setting. The parties included **Deb Alba, Melissa Cunningham, Jen (Hattie's friend), Kim Gratz, Gretchen Goode, Janel Lawrence, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Alissa Moses, Hong Moulton, and Dodie Wilson**. **Heather Gerding** provided child care for our last basket party enabling us to get done quickly. Thank you all for your beautiful work!

Getting the word out was a much bigger job this year since we went public. **Michele Mincinski** created and printed up the lovely invitations and posters. **Gretchen Goode and Hattie Muir** spearheaded the job of getting the posters up with lots of help from **Dodie Wilson, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Barbara Hinds-Cook, Kim**

Gratz, Mel Norland, and Sherri Mortensen. **Daniel Cunningham** drafted and sent out the press releases for radio and newspapers. We had a page 2 article in the *GT* and **Doni** did an interview on the *KGAL*!! **Kim Gratz** was able to get our message up on the Philomath Fire Dept sign and **Trina McGaughy** got us on the City of Philomath sign. Thanks to **Dodie Wilson** and **Alissa Moses** for struggling to get those letters up in the cold!



Leslie visits with Kay Bomber and Jeremy Donaldson.

The luscious outlay of food was definitely one of the highlights of the evening. Special thanks go to our awesome chef, **JC Mersman** and to **Gathering Together Farms** for the use of their facilities. **JC** had an incredible great crew working with him in the kitchen - **Hattie Muir, Keith Moses, Matt Hulstrunk, and Shawn Foley.** Then during the evening of the auction, **Kim Catton, Melissa Cunningham, Kim Gratz, Janel Lawrence, Alissa Moses, Karen Patrick, and Stephanie Scott (of Gathering Together Farms).** Then providing those yummy desserts were our bakers (I heard they had a party of their own that Friday night in the *GTF* kitchen!): **Deb and Dave Alba, Kim and Brad Catton, Melissa Cunningham, Kathy and Jeremy Donaldson, Kim Gratz, Carol Hulstrunk, Janel Lawrence, and Dodie Wilson.** Thank you very much.

Mel Norland, headed up the Children's Program, which was stellar. The children were happily and safely engaged and entertained all evening. Many thanks to **Melissa Cunningham,**

Heather Gerding, Gretchen Goode, Keith Moses, Nathan and Caitlin (Mel's babysitters), Greta and Camille Miedema for their help as well as the **Philomath High School volunteers from Mike Crocker's class.**

Setup was round the clock from 9am to 6pm and it looked like they put that much work into it! The room looked fabulous. Thank you, **Dodie and John Wilson, Michele Mincinski, Ric Vega, Debbie Alba, Daniel and Melissa Cunningham, Heather Gerding, Gretchen Goode, Barbara and Don Hinds-Cook, Jonathan Jensen and Jessica Neebe, Janel Lawrence, and Hattie Muir.** Thanks also to **Karen Patrick** for stepping up to print up our badges, too.

Leslie, Hasina, and Naomi Cohen graciously greeted and took care of our onslaught of guests at the Registration Table. **Trina McGaughy and Heather Gerding** did the nerve-racking job of the cash register and credit card machine while **Aaron Amoth, Brad and Kim Catton, Janel Lawrence, Lanny McGaughy, and Trevor Norland** raced around gathering the auction items as each table closed. Thank you all!



The children enjoy the performance by Curt Nelson of Slightly Illusional.

Very special thank you's to our entertainers: **Wild Hog in the Woods, Warren and Hasina Cohen** and our **PhMS prodigies, Curt Nelson of Slightly Illusional, and Kathleen Lloyd,** our storyteller. And, of course, a big applause for **Doni Manning-Cyrus,** the auctioneer who knows how to entertain us, too!

And then when the party was over, the cleanup crew came in for the big job. Many thanks to **Heather Gerding, Jonathan Jensen, Jessica Neebe, Althea, Barbara and Don Hinds-Cook, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Trina and Lanny McGaughy, Keith Moses, Trevor and Mel Norland, Carson and Steve Smith, Sam Stout, Dodie and John Wilson, and Allan Rack** for staying late to clear, sweep and mop it all up!

Special thanks also to the wonderful community members who contributed so generously: **Paul Shih of Total Merchant Services, Clemens Primary School, especially Marge, Service Linens,** and the many local businesses who donated goods and services.

Our families also gave very generously to our auction, too. A big thank you to the **Albas, the Albins, the Alan and Diane Amoth, the Amoth-Goode family, Leslie and Naomi Cohen, the Cunninghams, the Lawrence-Foley family, Gregory and Judy Gerding, the Gerdings, the Gratz family, the Hinds-Cook family, the Hulstrunks, the Manning-Cyrus family, the Mersman-Muir family, the Miedemas, the Moses family, the Neebe-Jensen Family, Curtis and Melinda Norland, Phyllis Pearson, Michael Sterle (Anna Gratz's grandfather), Allan Rack, and the Wilsons.**



Carol Hulstrunk, Janel Lawrence and former student Elliott look over the items.

A special thank you to **Janel Lawrence**, who was already doing so much for our auction. At our request, she put together some stunning note cards from photos taken by children in our class. And thank you to the children and their families for the photos: **Olivia Amoth, James**

Cunningham, Jack Donaldson, Ava Gerding, Anna Gratz, Madison Foley, Jordan Mortensen (alumni), Taylor Mortensen, Keller Norland, and Anna Wilson.

WOW! It's staggering to look at how much work, energy, and goodwill goes into a fundraiser like this. We are deeply grateful. Because of you, we can continue to offer our Tuition Assistance Program and a classroom that we hope incites the love of learning.

Newsline

- There will be a **Children's Open House** on Thursday, March 5 from 5:00 - 6:30 -- a special evening for the children and another rare opportunity to be in the classroom with your child!
- **Observations** will begin in February and **Parent/Teacher Conferences** will be in March. There are sign-up sheets for both near the door.
- On Thursday, March 12, **Connie Wymore** will be coming in to do **Hearing and Vision Screening**. Forms and more info will be in your boxes about a week before.
- **Spring Break** begins Monday, March 23. School resumes on Monday, April 6. Enjoy!
- We have our **last parent meeting** of the year on Thursday, April 16 from 6:00 - 7:00. Then **CARDV's Plain Talk** will be coming in for a presentation to our families after our meeting. Child care available for children 2 ½ and older. Then on Monday, April 20, they will be giving a presentation to our full day class from 1:15 - 1:45. From 1:45 - 2:30 they will be available to talk to the children individually.
- Our parent evening night will be on Thursday, April 30 from 6:00 - 7:30. The topic will be **Discipline in the Home**.