

February 2006

Philomath Montessori School Newsletter



*For the Families and Friends of the Philomath
Montessori School*

Classroom News

What a year this is turning out to be. It has put stress on the staff, but the children? Not so much. If all these teacher absences had taken place in September or October, that would have been very messy. But by December, the children, almost without exception had come to a level of self-control and self-direction that allowed them to continue business as usual. That is the difference between external discipline and internal discipline. In the beginning, the discipline does come from the teachers. We are consistent about certain things like walking, speaking softly indoors, replacing work in good condition, not interrupting others in concentration, etc. It needs to be that way at first. But through much repetition and absolute or near absolute consistency, the discipline becomes intrinsic. In a class that is self-managing, or "normalized," the teacher can step out of the room to attend to something in the office, use the restroom or simply sit down and observe and things go on pretty much as if she were still present. So except for a very few specific individuals, no "testing" of the substitute was needed. The children assumed that the house rules still applied and they went on with their socializing and activity as they always do for the most part. Everyone did their best.

Our unit on China has been very rewarding. We have learned to count to ten in Chinese. I believe I was the first to master that, but definitely not the first to know all the words to our Chinese song Fong Swei (After School). Several of the older students guided me through that and still need to. Of course, being such an ancient and philosophical culture, we had lots of lovely folktales and stories to read that the older kids got a great deal out of. The younger ones seemed very interested in learning about the wildlife of China, particularly that of the mountain and grassland biomes. We also studied clumps of grass to identify its parts; roots, rhizome, blades, nodes, internodes and inflorescence. Who knew? Using chopsticks has proven to be as tricky for the children as it is for me, but we will not be deterred!



Anya Mae

Leslie has created a plethora of lovely art activities for us to do. There are tangrams, which are a Chinese art form in which animals and figures are created from geometric shapes,

stenciling, also a traditional art of the Orient and Chinese ideograms painted with ink and high quality, authentic Chinese brushes.

A few children who write stories have written them in a Chinese approach, right to left, top to bottom, in columns. Talk about learning new tricks! And on that subject, I have been amazed at the ease in which some of the kids have learned the names of so many Asian countries. The Africa map required a much more labor-intensive approach. For them and for me, too. We are still very much focused on China and Asia right now. I, for one, am determined to learn all those "stan" countries—Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kirghizstan, etc. But at some point we will switch to the Ukraine and will celebrate Easter like they do in the old country.

Getting back to the subject of discipline and self-control, I see that it is really lacking after school in the hallway. The full day kids have been working on maintaining an indoor voice and walking in the hall and Pauline and I have lead that effort, but the half-day kids act as if they have been shot out of a cannon! I really must appeal to the parents to turn this around. The way I addressed it with the full days is to bring them back in to class after school if they were not behaving appropriately after dismissal, but I think that would be too traumatic for the little ones. So it's up to you, moms and dads. If your little one shows you day after day that they will run in the hallway, then you might take them by the hand and lead them outside. Then say, "Now you can run!" If they habitually shout their greeting to you or to their friends, get real close, get down low and say, "Tell me that quietly." Then they shout it again, of course, because modulating one's voice is not so easy. So you say, "You are still shouting, whisper like I am whispering to you." And finally, "Yes, that's right. That is a quiet voice!" These techniques will also work with younger siblings if done consistently. They can really add to the chaos, as you know. It will take all of us working together to achieve a level of hallway decorum that is appropriate for a school

and church. We would really appreciate any help you can give us in this regard.

Another way parents can help us have a good school day is to monitor the gear your child has at school. Some children have so many coats they can't possibly manage them. Others have no coat at all. I feel it is very important to provide outdoor free play as often as possible in the winter. Many days go by without our playing outside at all as the weather is just too dreary. When we get a stretch of more welcoming weather whether for a few days or for ten minutes, I want to take advantage of it. So we need our coats and boots every day. These little trips outdoors allow children to run, shout, play games and be together in another way, returning to the indoors feeling satisfied and ready to use their "walking feet" once more.

On a personal note, I want to express my appreciation to everyone who has wished me well regarding my upcoming surgery on my knee. I will be having my anterior cruciate ligament replaced and my miniscus "trimmed up". It is outpatient surgery, I will be back to work in two weeks wearing some kind of brace. My mother is coming here for the surgery, my brother and husband have committed to indentured servitude and I will have the freezer stocked. So don't worry about me. I'm all set. Wishing you all the best,

doni



Dahlia, Austin and Anya Mae busy with projects

Attitude

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company...a church...a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past...we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude...I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our attitudes.

Charles Swindoll

When I read Charles Swindoll's quote on the CMS staff bulletin board, I immediately took it down and xeroxed it. I knew it was something I needed to read every morning. What a valuable gift to possess a frame of mind that can transcend the frustration, the anger, the pain, the embarrassment, the discomfort to a plane that confronts the problem and works toward its solution.

It is my hope that in working and living with children, we can help them to develop this frame of mind -- an attitude that can handle whatever comes along and that evens welcomes the challenge of problems. Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish in *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk* offer some suggestions for helping children deal with their feelings:

LISTEN WITH FULL ATTENTION. Sometimes silence and your full attention can be more valuable than words.

ACKNOWLEDGE WITH A WORD -- "Oh...Mmm...I see..." Words like these coupled with a caring attitude can often help a child explore his own thoughts and feelings and come up with his own solutions. Words of advice or blame often get in the way of working towards a solution.

GIVE THE FEELING A NAME. It is often comforting to a child to have someone acknowledge his inner experience.

GIVE HER WISHES IN A FANTASY. "I wish you could go to every birthday party!" It can be

comforting to a child to know that someone else understands her disappointment.

In a later chapter they deal with encouraging autonomy:

LET CHILDREN MAKE CHOICES. Children need the experience of making decisions. It also gives them some control over their lives.

SHOW RESPECT FOR A CHILD'S STRUGGLE. When a child's struggle is respected, he gathers courage to see the job through.

DON'T ASK TOO MANY QUESTIONS. Give them the space to talk about what they want to share when they want to.

Caution: One common parental inquiry that seems to be experienced a pressure is "Did you have fun today?" What a demand to make upon a child! Not only did he have to go to the party (school, play, camp, dance) but the expectations that he should enjoy himself. If he didn't, he has his own disappointment to cope with plus that of his parents. He feels he's let them down by not having good time.

DON'T RUSH TO ANSWER QUESTIONS. By giving our children immediate answers, we do them no favor. It's as if we're doing their mental exercise for them. It's much more helpful to children to have their questions turned back to them for further examination: "You wonder about that." "What do you think?"

ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO USE SOURCES OUTSIDE THE HOME. One way to lessen a child's feelings of dependency on his family is to show him that there is a larger community out there with valuable resources waiting to be tapped. The world is not an alien place. There is help to be had when you need it.

DON'T TAKE AWAY HOPE. Much of the pleasure of life lies in the dreaming, fantasizing, anticipating, planning. By preparing children for the possibility of disappointment, we can deprive them of important experiences. *

Children need our support and our example to face their problems with courage and wisdom.

* The indented paragraphs are almost verbatim from *How To Talk So Kid Will Listen And Listen So Kids Will Talk*. It's a wonderful resource for parents and teachers alike. **I strongly recommend this book!**

OUR WINTER FUNDRAISER

A Splendid Evening

This year's Silent/Live Auction and Family Fun Evening was a stunner – beautiful tables full of tempting items, great entertainment for both the children and the adults, a dazzling array of food, and best of all, lots of non-PhMS families to bid on items! So far we have grossed over \$5300! A veritable leap!

Christi and Carol were absolutely superb as our auction chairs and they had an outstanding team of parents behind them.

Kudos to **Beth and Dodie** for the food - so impressive and scrumptious. They persuaded a long list of restaurants and caterers to donate wonderful platters of appetizers. A host of parents baked some fabulous desserts: **Doni, Janel, Jessica Neebe, Dodie, Leslie, Melissa, Jin, Dawnelle, Kay, Sherri, and Beth.**

Jessica Neebe designed the auction's very uptown and eye-catching invitations, cards, and bidding information sheets. **Jessica Bonds** stored all the donations and hosted the basket party which included **Kathy, Christi, Carol, and Alissa.** Many thanks for putting together an array of appealing combinations.

The Setup committee responsible for turning the cafeteria into an elegant setting was **Jessica Neebe, Carol, Christi, Janel, Kay, Dodie, Beth, Kathy, and Debbie.** Again, **Overall** generously provided all the tablecloths and **Valerie Coomes of Gorilla Grams and Balloon Decor** provided the many decorations. A special thank you to **Kathy** for creating a stunning display for our school – something that we will be using at many future events!

John, Christi, and Carol handled all the registration table duties, which were many, with charm and deftness. A special thank you to **Paul Shih of Total Merchant Services of Oregon**, who made it possible for us to take charge cards for our fundraiser. He graciously waived a hefty fee.

Judith, once again, put together a delightful and exciting children's program with the help of **Jeremy and Jonathan** for the cake walk, the folks from **Peak Elite Gymnastics**, and magician **Craig Anderson**. Many thanks to our child care providers: **Emily Gholson, Kelsey Suski, Rhea Fulton, Ashley Straub, Kaylie Wait, and Rachel Hawkins.** Special thanks to **Emily** and

Kelsey, former PhMS students, who donated their time. And **Jeremy** did it again – composed another Montessori class song and put together another amazing CD with **Doni!** Just call him Mr. Fabulous!

Wild Hog in the Woods kept our spirits high and our feet tapping. During the live auction, **Doni** entertained and boosted the bidding ever higher with our own **Dawnelle** assisting her.

Now the silent heroes of the evening were the solicitors. Starting months before the auction, these folks called and visited a slew of businesses and were they successful! When **Carol and Christi** listed the solicitors there was WOW! next to **John and Dodie's** names and they were supported by a large crew: **Carol, Christi, Jessica Neebe, Beth, Janel, Melissa, Tessa, Jessica Bonds, Kay, Judith, Alissa, Kathy, and Doni.** Many thanks to all of you who donated auction items as well. A big thank you to all of you.

Cheerfully and quickly sweeping up at the end was **Hun, Beth, Christi, Carol, Matt, and Allan.** We are very grateful to **Philomath School District** for permitting us to use their beautiful facility and **Marjorie** for interrupting her weekend to unlock and lock doors for us.

It was an awesome night -- we all knew by the first half hour what a success the evening would be. Christi and Carol are to be congratulated for an incredible evening and their studious attention to all the details. Thank you all for the immense energy and effort you put into this event.



Amelia and Shaden smiling for the camera

Thank You from Philomath Montessori School!



We'd also like to thank the many local businesses and neighbors whose generous donations of goods and services helped make our Silent Auction so successful! Thank you very much!

Airrie Winery
 Debbie & Meaghan Alba
 Albertson's
 All About Kids
 Alpine Bakery
 American Dream Pizza
 Animal Crackers Pet Supply
 Aomatsu Restaurant
 ArtCentric
 Avalon Cinema
 Big River Restaurant
 Big Winds Windsurfing
 Jessica Bonds
 Book Bin
 Borders
 Bursts Candies
 Chinook Winds Casino
 Tracie & Richard Choi
 Cirello's Pizza
 Cloud Run Farm
 Leslie Cohen
 Corvallis Brewing Supply
 Corvallis Sew and Vacuum
 Country Vitamins
 Creative Crafts
 Creekside Coffee
 Kelly Crosby, LMT
 Dairy Queen
 Jeremy & Kathy Donaldson
 Kathryn & Charles
 Donaldson

Robert Easton
 Ed's Couch Country
 Ed & Kay Bomber
 El Sol De Mexico
 Enchanted Forest
 Evergreen Indian
 Restaurant
 Every Buddies Puzzles
 (www.kidpuzzles.com)
 Figaro's Pizza
 First Alternative Co-op
 Footwise
 Forest Temple
 Fox and Firkin
 Francesco's
 Fred Meyer
 Furniture Restoration Center
 of Oregon
 Gables Restaurant
 Garland Nursery
 Gathering Together Farm
 Gilbert House
 Golden Crane
 Golf City
 Gracewinds Music
 Grassroots Bookstore
 Great Harvest
 Richard Gretz Jewelers
 Sue Hardin, Kindermusik
 Harry & Annette Fresh Fish
 Heritage House Parts
 High Desert Museum
 Highland Bowl

Hise Studios
 Meredith Howell
 Inkwell
 Inn at Spanish Head
 Inside Out Gardens
 Intaba's Restaurant
 Iovino's Ristorante
 Jannilou Creations
 Japanese Garden
 Java Connection
 Rebecca Jensen
 Jerry's Home Center
 Faith Junghans
 KGAL/KSHO
 Jin Kim and Hun Lee
 LaMancha Ranch & Orchard
 Lane Ice Center
 La Roca
 Janel Lawrence
 Le Bistro Restaurant
 Le Patissier
 Live, Laugh, Love
 Photography by April
 Betty Malone
 Mary's Peak True Value
 Mary's River Acupuncture
 Sarah & Andrew Meigs
 Michael's Landing
 Restaurant
 Miller Paint Company
 Mo's Restaurant
 Keith Moses
 Mount Hood Railroad

Cher Moyer, LMT
 Natalia and Cristoforos
 Nearly Normal's
 Jennifer Neebe
 Jessica Neebe
 New Morning Bakery
 Noah's Bagels
 Northwest Center for Health
 and Healing
 Oasis Restaurant
 Old World Deli
 Oregon Coast Aquarium
 Oregon House
 Oregon Museum of Science
 and Industry
 Oregon Zoo
 OSU Athletic Department
 Pacific Northwest Quilters
 Papa's Pizza
 Paperworks
 Paul's Place
 Pegasus Gallery
 Playing House
 Pleu's TKD, Karate for Kids
 Portland Children's Museum
 Pura Vida Surf Shop
 Quiltwork Patches
 Allan Rack
 The Retreat Spa
 Robnett's Hardware
 Robson-Andrzejczak family
 Safeway
 Sahalie Wine Center

Sam's Station
 Scandinavian Trading Co.
 Scarlet Ibis
 Melissa Schreiber
 Second Gance
 Shonnard's Nursery
 Soft Star Shoes
 Spice Island Catering
 Sunrise Sourdough Bakery
 Sunrise Tree Farm
 Sylvia Beach Hotel
 Tacos Uruapan
 Talisman Jewelers
 Target
 Thriftway
 The Thyme Garden
 Timberhill Athletic Club
 Timberhill Chiropractic
 The Toy Factory
 Troubadour Music Center
 University Hero
 Valley Catering
 Roxann Weger
 West Hills Animal Hospital
 John & Dodie Wilson
 Winco
 Woodstock's Pizza
 The Yoga Center
 Zoey's



Dylan, Adam, and Jensen playing on the pole steps!

THANK YOU!

Many thanks for all the wonderful work that you do to keep our classroom stocked with interesting and engaging activities. **Jessica Bonds, Jin, Melissa, Alissa and Colleen** prepared various kinds of sewing cards. **Sherri** cut heavy foil for embossing and appliqué patterns, and prepared fabric for burlap sewing. **Jessica** cut bead stair paper and **Jin** prepared paper for painting, **Marla** cut number roll paper, **Beth** prepared muslin sewing squares, **Debbie** repotted one of our classroom plants, and **Kristin and Jin** have been coming in on a regular basis to clean the classroom.. Thank you very much!

Since our last newsletter, our classroom has received many

books and other gifts. **Jenna** gifted us with Daniel and His Walking Stick, **Leo** with Families Around the World, One Child at a Time, **Joanna** with Little House on the Prarire, **Jonathan** with Georgia's Bones, **Ameila** with Cubs, Colts, and Calves and Kittens, and Our Living Forest, **Dylan** with Lands of Grass and It Could Still Be Water and **Elliot** with Living on the Plains, **Reilly** with Cubes in a Box puzzle, **Clare** with Ocean puzzle. One of our board members, **Betty Malone**, saw our list in the hallway and bought the book A Farm of Her Own for our school. **Harrison, Morgan and Kieran** have given our classroom beautiful bouquets of flowers not only on their birthdays, but also on special occasions and for reason at all! Fresh flowers are such a welcome addition to our environment.

Many thanks to all of you are participating in the scrip program at the **First Alternative Coop**. Last quarter brought in \$64.86!

Newsline Winter 2006

- There will be **no school** on Monday, March 13. Doni and I will be in Seattle for the North American Montessori Teacher Association conference.
- There will be a **brief parent meeting and then a presentation on the language area** in a Montessori classroom on Thursday, March 16 from 6:00 - 8:00.
- **Spring Break** begins Monday, March 21. **School resumes** on Monday, April 4. Enjoy!
- **Observations** will begin in March and **Parent/Teacher Conferences** in March and April. There will be sign-up sheets for both near the door.
- **Connie Wymore** will be coming to our school Monday, April 17 to do **hearing and vision screenings**. The paperwork will be in your boxes the week before.
- The **NW Montessori Institute** will be offering a **parenting class** on Saturday, May 6 from 10:00 - 3:00. More details in related newsletter article.
- There will be another **Children's Open House** on Thursday, May 11 from 5:00-6:30 -- a special evening for the children and another rare opportunity to be in the classroom with your child!
- Work on the **2006 Love of Learning Road Race** has begun! It is set for Saturday, May 20. Contact Kay or Ed Bomber if you will like to get involved.

Upcoming Events

Mark Your Calendars!

Portland Parenting Ed Series Coming to Our Area, May 6!

We finally came up with a plan for bringing Ginni Sackett, the director of teacher training at the NW Montessori Institute, to Philomath or Corvallis for a parenting class. She plans to combine the Parenting Education Series into a one-day class that she did in Portland. The topics include:

- Adult Life/Child Life: "Where Do the Children Play?"
- Helping Children Become Themselves: "The Child Who Is Not Yet There"
- Independence at Every Age: "Help Me Do It Myself"
- Real-Life Discipline: Prevent, Prepare, Respond"

The class will be on **Saturday, May 6 from 10:00 -3:00** with a one-hour lunch break. We have not yet picked a location. The cost will be \$50 per person and \$70 per parent couple if registered by April 28. After the 28th, it will be \$55 per person and \$85 per parent couple. Since we need a minimum number of 20 participants, we will be inviting the families from Corvallis Montessori and Sundborn Montessori Schools to join us.

We hope you'll be able to take advantage of this rare opportunity!

Would you like more information about Philomath Montessori School? You can always call the school at 929-2672. We'll be glad to send you a brochure about our program.

