
Philomath Montessori School

March 2007



For the Families and Friends of the Philomath Montessori School

Classroom News

It seems a long while since I've written an article. A lot has happened. First of all, there was the Auction. The children really enjoyed participating in the process of making decorations for the event--that was a super suggestion. It seemed to me that they looked forward to the evening with great anticipation, eager to see all their handiwork in its setting. I'm not sure what impression our vocal performance made, but they enjoyed the rehearsal process and were presentable and well-behaved. I was proud.



Dahlia makes a tambourine.

Then there was our unit on Egypt. We learned to count to ten in Arabic--several of the children

could do it independently. Leslie provided some wonderful art opportunities with an Egyptian connection: one could make a collage with many golden-colored materials, draw on a pyramid or a Sphinx, paint on a cat, scratch a message onto a clay tablet or copy Arabic numerals. We all learned some interesting facts and fables about cats. The full-day children learned the five pillars of Islam and then were able, as a group, to convey them to the half-day kids. I don't know if the children shared this at home, but they were so excited to give to the needy when we had our canned food drive. They were so proud. The collection also gave us a nice opportunity to talk about food groups and nutrition. Thank you all for making that such a successful celebration. After the children silently trooped down to the collection site in the foyer we came back to class and danced with abandon to some lively Egyptian music featuring a dumbek. The dumbek is one of the Egyptian instruments Pauline introduced us to as well as the tambourine and the oud. We learned a lot about pyramids, of course, and some of us even built one with a new kit we acquired.

Now, on to Brazil! We will be painting anacondas, doing an art project using the colors of the Brazilian flag, making collages on cut-outs of tapirs and sloths, making hemp rope sculptures or baskets and creating costumes, masks and tambourines for our Carnivale celebration. We are already learning the names of many animals of the grassland, wetland and tropical forest biomes and learning about the indigenous Yanomamo people. We are shaking our hips to the samba beat as we walk on the line. We will learn numbers and phrases in Portuguese. Brazil is fun!



Jacob working with clay.

As it is getting on towards spring, despite the sleet that is falling today, we will be doing some planting. **Beth Jordan** is supplying us with some pea starts and even building a trellis to grow them on. The children are really aware of the changes outside. They notice and rejoice in the crocuses they can see, the primroses that **Keller's family** planted for us and the beginnings of tulips and hyacinths. There was a very productive full-day weeding party yesterday afternoon during which many treasures were found: a polished agate, many worms, a baby slug, even a bead! As we came in, someone suggested we all sit down right away and sing "Lots of Worms" so we did! Being around the wonder and innocence of the young child reminds me that there is always so much to celebrate each day. I often forget to stop and appreciate the simple tasks, the changing of the seasons, the satisfaction of sharing and helping. What a privilege to benefit from the wisdom of so many young teachers.

THIS JUST IN! I pulled a hip muscle yesterday dancing to samba music with your children. I guess this proves that Gloria Estefan was right all along...eventually...the rhythm is 'gonna getcha'!

Thank you--From the Heart

Our From the Heart auction fundraiser turned out to be another incredible success story. It

was an impressive display of auction items, food, and entertainment. This year's crowd was even bigger than last year with lots of non-PhMS families AND we grossed over \$7000 this year! Another leap!

Carol Hulstrunk and Christi McLaren did a fabulous job again as auction chairs. Assiduously attending to all the details, they started early and worked hard with that steadfast, upbeat spirit of theirs.

First, the core committee of our fundraiser -- they do what I find so hard to do - request donations. Starting months before the auction, these folks called and called again, visited and revisited a slew of businesses and were so successful! **Christi McLaren and Carol Hulstrunk** sent many letters to out-of-town businesses and organizations and of course, also made many direct solicitations. **John and Dodie Wilson** led the way again in direct solicitations with the help of **Jessica Neebe, Beth Jordan, Kay Bomber, Janel Lawrence, Melissa Schreiber, Tessa Hanover, Jessica Bonds, Alissa Moses, Barbara Hinds-Cook, and Doni.**



What a performance!

Special thanks to all of you who donated items as well: **Kay and Ed Bomber, Jessica Bonds, Leslie Cohen, Cassidy Donaldson, Matt and Carol Hulstrunk, Beth Jordan, Jin Kim and Hun Lee, the Lawrence- Foley family, Doni Manning-**

Cyrus, Christi McClaren, Keith Moses, Phyllis Pearson, and John and Dodie Wilson. Jonathan Jensen drove all the way to Salem to pick up a huge bundle of items that his mother, **Rebecca Jensen** donated.

Our stellar Food Committee did a splendid job again. **Beth Jordan, Dodie Wilson, and Monica Skinner** provided all of us with a sumptuous array of food for the evening. They were able to persuade over a dozen restaurants and caterers to donate food and refreshments. **Mel Norland and Karen Patrick** helped with the food set-up and **Doni with her brother, Cal Manning and sister, Monique Martin** kept the food hot and the platters and containers replenished. Many thanks also to **Leslie Cohen, Barbara Hinds-Cook, Beth Jordan, Jin Kim, Janel Lawrence, and Dodie Wilson** for baking wonderful desserts to serve at the auction and **Kay Bomber, Leslie Cohen, Barbara Hinds-Cook, and Doni Manning -Cyrus** for baking cupcakes for the children.



Children enjoy the Magic Show.

Jessica Neebe again designed the auction's very uptown and eye-catching formal and informal invitations, bidding information sheets, and thank you cards. So far **John Wilson, Janel Lawrence, Jessica Neebe, and Melissa Schreiber** have volunteered to write thank you cards.



Bidding women.

Jessica Bonds stored all the donations again and hosted the basket party which included **Janel Lawrence, Christi McClaren, Alissa Moses, Sherri Mortensen, and Monica Skinner. John Wilson** got together with **Carol and Christi** for the wrap-up basket party two days before the auction. **Matt Hulstrunk** not only provided a place for the basket party, but also pizza for all the workers and their very understanding and undemanding children. Thank you very much!

The cafeteria became an enticing and inviting setting thanks to the talents of **Carol Hulstrunk, Christi McClaren, Jessica Neebe, Jessica Bonds, Janel Lawrence, Kay and Ed Bomber, Alissa Moses. Service Linens** generously provided all the tablecloths and **Special Occasions** provided the balloons.

Carol Hulstrunk and Christi McClaren put together a fun and exciting evening of entertainment for the children with the help of magician **Curt Nelson**, storyteller **Kathleen Lloyd**, and musicians **Paul Cooke and Jamie Erway**. Many thanks to **Julia and Savannah Neuman** who took care of the daunting child care area--finding child care providers and successfully managing and tracking the flow of children from one area to another. Thank you to the child care providers from the **Nazarene School**, to our **Leslie** for putting together an art activity for the children's area, to **Matt Hulstrunk** for bringing in paper airplanes and to

Tessa Hanover for providing all the dress-up props.

We are very grateful to **John Wilson, Kay Bomber, and Kathy Donaldson** who greeted and familiarized everyone with the auction process at the registration table. And special thanks to **John Wilson, Trina and Lanny McGaughy, Melissa Schreiber, and Phyllis Pearson** who handled the intense checkout table with skill and charm. **Paul Shih of Total Merchant Services of Oregon** again made it possible for us to take charge cards for our fundraiser. He graciously waived the hefty fees. Thank you so much, Paul! And thank you, **Jessica Bonds**, for connecting us to Paul!

Special thanks to **Jeremy Donaldson**, who did it again - composed another fun Montessori class song and put together another CD with **Doni**. Both **Jeremy and Doni** are amazing! Thank you for all the time you gave to make this happen and sharing your talent with us. And what a great performance by **Jeremy, Doni, and our Philomath Montessori children!**

A big thank you to **Brian Thorness**, the awesome auctioneer. He was an attention-getter! And a special thank you to **Trina and Lanny McGaughy** for convincing him to come! Thankfully, **Wild Hog in the Woods** was there again to keep our spirits high and our feet tapping.



Wild Hog in the Woods.

With heavy eyelids but big smiles, **Ed Bomber, Hun Lee, Christi McLaren and Kuriakose Panose, Carol and Matt Hulstrunk, Beth and Rob Jordan, Dodie and John Wilson, Doni, her brother, Cal, and sister, Monique, and Allan** swept and mopped and cleaned and sorted and emptied. 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.



Checking out the silent auction items.

Thank you all for the immense energy and effort you lavished on this event. You've boosted our morale and our curriculum with funds to purchase new materials for the classroom and enabled us to continue to broaden our school community by offering scholarships.

Failure Is a Better Teacher than Success

By John Long

One hundred years ago, Dr. Montessori did not anticipate the advent of computers or the internet though she was certainly attuned to technological development and the impact it had on the culture. Post Oak and most other Montessori schools do not introduce computers into the classroom until the child is 9-years old,

not because Montessori was a technophobe (she most definitely was not), but because the young child learns best through experience in the concrete, tactile reality of the three-dimensional world rather than through two-dimensional simulation of an electronic virtual reality. Consider the child's experience of a cube. Does she learn more by seeing a flat screen image of a cube (actually a two dimensional hexagon), or by lifting a polished wooden block that is 10cm on a side and weighs 50 grams? After observing the way young children learn, Dr. Montessori told us, "Never give more to the mind than you give to the hand."

Furthermore, contemporary brain research has demonstrated the truth in Dr. Montessori's dictum that a child constructs himself through his experiences in the environment. Dr. Bruce Perry, an internationally renowned neuroscientist and psychiatrist working in Houston, describes how this self-construction works: a child's experiences change the biology of the brain, reinforcing and strengthening certain neurons through usage while pruning others through disuse. In her book *Failure to Connect*, Dr. Jane Healey discusses the impact of "screen time" on the developing brain and recommends that we delay computer use until children are 9 or 10 years old, a recommendation consistent with our practice here at Post Oak and at many other Montessori schools.

And so it is perfectly understandable to me, though at the same time ironic, that Montessori graduates have been instrumental in the development of landmark internet resources that have helped to transform our culture. In the past we mentioned:

- Jeff Bezos who founded **Amazon.com**, one of the first major companies to sell goods over the internet, shaping the face of American commerce;
- Sergey Brin and Larry Page who founded **Google**, the search engine that made the

internet more accessible and therefore more useful to a broader public;

- Jimmy Wales who created **Wikipedia**, the multilingual, web-based encyclopedia that is written by reader-contributors and challenges many of the traditional assumptions about authorship, ownership and information itself.

In the November 6 issue of *The New Yorker* there is a profile of Will Wright, another former Montessori student and the developer of **SimCity**, which changed the concept of video games. SimCity is a simulation and city-building computer and video game. The game sparked a new paradigm in computer gaming by creating a game that could neither be won nor lost.



Amelia and Elliot label the North America Map.

As *The New Yorker* reports, "SimCity was slow to catch on, but seventeen years later the game has earned the company two hundred and thirty million dollars. A sizeable number of players who first became interested in the urban design as a result of the game have gone on to become architects and designers, making SimCity

arguably the single most influential work of urban-design theory ever created."

The article describes the impact of Montessori education on Will Wright:

"Wright flourished in the local Montessori school, with its emphasis on creativity, problem-solving, and self-motivation. 'Montessori taught me the joy of discovery,' Wright told me. 'It showed you can become interested in pretty complex theories, like Pythagorean theory, say, by playing with blocks. It's all about learning on your terms, rather than a teacher explaining stuff to you. SimCity comes right out of Montessori—if you give people this model for building cities, they will abstract from it principles of urban design.'"



Jordan and Harrison doing fractions.

Wright then compares his experience in Montessori to traditional education: "The problem with our education system is we've taken this kind of narrow, reductionist, Aristotelian approach to what learning is," he told me. "It's not designed for experimenting with complex systems and navigating your way through them in an intuitive way, which is what games teach. It's not really designed for failure, which is also something also something games teach. I mean, I think that failure is a better teacher than success. Trial and error, reverse-engineering stuff in your mind—all the ways that kids interact with games—that's the kind of thinking schools should be teaching. And I would argue that as the world becomes more

complex, and as outcomes become less about success or failure, games are better at preparing you. The education system is going to realize this sooner or later."

I am sometimes asked if after 100 years Montessori education has kept up with the times. What I see is far more dynamic than simply "keeping up." I see Montessori adults who are shaping our times, transforming the way we do business, the way we play, the way we seek information. They are transforming the very media that are reshaping our culture—proof that Montessori prepares children for a lifetime of creative engagement.

Copyright John Long and the Post Oak School

John Long holds an AMI elementary diploma and is currently the Head of School at The Post Oak School in Houston, Texas.

Thank You's

Many months, projects, and activities have passed through the classroom since our last newsletter, and with them many more hours of help and work. We are grateful to **Jin Kim** for preparing paper for many different drawing and painting activities--Kathakali paper, shamrocks, masks, snowmen, Egyptian cats and tapirs, **Sherri Mortensen** for preparing sewing cards and Celtic window frames, **Monica Skinner** for preparing sewing cards and mending an apron, **Michelle Mincinski** for trimming and cutting new laminated language and geography materials and typing the parent article for this newsletter, **Trina McGaughy** for cutting stair paper and muslin, **Lanny McGaughy** for cutting number roll paper and drawing paper, **Alissa Moses** for cutting frames for leaf collages, **Janel Lawrence** for preparing sewing cards, **Melissa Schreiber** for cutting felt for button sewing and preparing beautiful hand-sewn journals.

Trevor and Mel Norland pruned our trees and plants and weeded and planted primroses in our garden area, **Tessa Hanover** fixed our gate latch on the north side of the yard and repaired a picnic table, and **John Miedema** took care of the gate on the south side. Thank you so much for taking care of our outdoor area - an important extension of our classroom.

Many thanks to **Trina and Lanny McGaughy**, **Hinds-Cook family**, **Michelle Mincinski**, and **Alissa Moses** for cleaning our materials and shelves - it's a big job!

Many children gifted our classroom with books for their birthdays - **Leo Lee** presented us with [Saving Strawberry Farm](#), **Sara Matsuba**, [Seeds, Reilly](#), [Rachel Carson: Preserving a Sense of Wonder](#), **Jenna**, [One Green Apple](#), **Jonathan**, [A Fruit is a Suitcase for Seeds](#), **Ian Edwards**, [My Picture Atlas](#), **Anna Wilson**, [About Birds](#), **Keller Norland**, [Horse and Pony Breeds](#), and most recently, **Amelia Wilson**, [Snowflake Bentley](#). Thank you for all the wonderful additions to our school library. These books will be enjoyed for many years. **Dahlia** gave us a CD of Native American music for her birthday and **Leo's family** sent in a beautiful poinsettia plant for the holidays.

We are very grateful to **Dodie Wilson** for handling our Montessori Services holiday order and a big thank you to all of you who ordered: **Jessica Bonds**, **Tessa Boorum**, **Heather Gardner**, **Carol Hulstrunk**, **Beth Jordan**, **Jin Kim**, **Michelle Mincinski**, **Trina McGaughy**, **Melissa Norland**, **Melissa Schreiber**, **Monica Skinner** and **Dodie Wilson**.

A very big thank you to **Jessica Bonds** for putting together the Toy Factory fundraiser. It brought in a \$115! We are hoping to make this an annual affair!



Auction items on display.

In early November, **Trina McGaughy** and **Monica Skinner** worked a shift at the Philomath Frolic and Rodeo Holiday Craft Fair for the Philomath Area Senior Citizens Association (PASCA) and **Carol Hulstrunk** baked and donated an apple pie. Thank you so much for your willingness to help our sister organizations out!

We had a very nice turnout at our school open house thanks to the work of many families. **Carol Hulstrunk**, **Jin Kim**, **John Miedema**, **Trina McGaughy**, **Dodie Willson**, and **Alissa Moses** posted flyers around Philomath and Corvallis. **Trina and Megan McGaughy**, **Jin and Leo Lee**, **Mel and Alec Norland**, **Christi and Anya Mae Panose** came in on Saturday to help us host our open house visitors. Many thanks for all your assistance and the great press. What an exceptional group of ambassadors we have for our school! Thanks also to **Allan** for putting our school banner up and **Lanny McGaughy** for attaching the open house banner at a moment's notice!

At the end of these thank you lists, I am always awed at how much work has been done and how much has been given. Thank you for your very generous support!!



Bidders had 9 tables of items to choose from!

Newsline

Late Winter 2007

- ❖ Classroom **Observations** will continue into March with **Parent/Teacher Conferences** beginning the first full week of March and will continue until spring break. Be sure to sign up soon if you haven't already.
- ❖ **Spring Break** begins Monday, March 26. School resumes on Monday, April 9. Enjoy!
- ❖ Our **last Parent Meeting** of the year will be on Thursday, April 19 at 6:00 P.M..
- ❖ A **Parent-as-Student night** will be held on Thursday, May 3 at 6:00 P.M.. We will need a minimum of 10 participants. This is a very informal information night for parents. You will be able to pull materials and activities off the shelf and explore them on your own or request a lesson like your child would receive. The public is invited as well.
- ❖ There will be another **Children's Open House** on Thursday, May 17 from 5:00-6:30 -- a special evening for the children and another rare opportunity to be in the classroom with your child!

- ❖ Since July 1, we have earned \$126.96 from **Escrip** and \$220.63 in scrip from the **First Alternative Co-op**!! Thanks so much for participating. If you would like more information on how to participate, call Karen Patrick (929-9350) about Escrip or Pauline about Co-op scrip.
- ❖ We have a date to do the **First Alternative Calzone Booth** for DaVinci Days!! It's Saturday, July 21. We'll be talking about this fundraiser at our next parent meeting.

Last (but not least!) words...

Philomath Montessori School Donors

Thank you to the following individuals for gifting the school with generous cash donations. Many were prompted by our auction invitation!

A.O. and Patricia Bowles
 Tracie and Richard Choi
 Willam and Barbara Cleek
 Anne Evans
 Alex and Lori Gholson
 Rodger and Lois Helvey
 Carolyn and Joe Hinds
 Lorri Hendon and Adel Faridani
 Keith and Judith Jayawickrama
 Joanne Jones
 Laurie and Matt Lehman
 Betty and Pat Malone
 Sarah and Andrew Meigs
 David and Theresa Schierman