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# Philomath Montessori School

## May 2007



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

### Classroom News

My goodness, is it May already? How did that happen? At times, (like in December, just before Winter Break) it seems the school year drags on forever. At other times, like now, it seems it has raced by. Today, our class had worked from 9:30 (when we ended Morning Group) until about 11:15 and it looked as if we needed a bit of re-grouping, centering, calming, redirection, whatever you want to call it. Spirits were high and purposeful work seemed scarce. I didn't want to go outdoors as there was a real squall a-blowin'. I didn't want to do Walking on the Line as there was a lot of complex and lovely work on rugs all over our Line. So I called "Listen!" and invited everyone to group. We counted how many months had passed since the school year began. We didn't even count August or May and still it had been eight months we'd all been together! I challenged the children to volunteer to demonstrate various acts of Grace and Courtesy. People offered to show behaviors they felt they had mastered. Someone showed us how to close a door quietly. Another showed us how to open the door for someone else if they were on the same side of the door as yourself, and also how to open it wide for someone you noticed approaching from the other side just as you were closing the door. One child

demonstrated how to ask someone if you might play with him or her and another showed us how to welcome that person into your activity. We modeled conflict resolution (or "What to Do if You Have Upset Feelings" as I often call it). I even called on some folks who weren't raising their hands, but who, I was sure, could model these skills. Everyone rose beautifully to the occasion and maybe realized, as I did, just how far we all have come. Then we went back to our work for the remainder of the morning.



**Jonathon perusing a book**

As we see this school year coming to an end, it is inevitable that we see new opportunities ahead of us. Some children will have finished their time with us and will be going on to new schools. I feel so proud of these children as they graduate. I know that any teacher would love to have one of our former students in his/her class. I know that our children leave us well-prepared for the academic and social rigors of their new setting. I feel excited for the new experiences that lay ahead of them. I hope that we, the

adults in these children's lives, project confidence and joy when we speak of upcoming changes and challenges. Surely, there will be challenges, but we must know we can meet them with equanimity. As I told one young friend, who was showing signs of doubt regarding her new placement, "You are like an astronaut, going up into the unknown. If you did not go, you would never make any new discoveries." After all, the riskiest thing one can do is to take no risks at all. So take heart, astronauts! Godspeed on your mission and do let us know what you find "Out There"!



**Reilly preparing her hoop for sewing**

As for all of you who will be returning to us next year, do not fear the Summer Break! Perhaps you are dreading the unscheduled hours, days and weeks that lay ahead for your child this summer. Perhaps some of you recognize them as the blessing that they are. Living as we do in a culture that admires activity and hates sloth, it is too easy to shun idleness in favor of swimming lessons, play dates, soccer, math camp, violin lessons, church camp, pottery class, YMCA day camp, parks and rec activities, etc. Some planned activities, in moderation, are desirable to be sure. But if one has multiple children and they have multiple appointments and the adults have multiple appointments it becomes very easy to spend the whole summer in the mini-van eating string cheese and juice boxes in the car seat. And what have we lost? We may have lost time for evening walks with the dog, time for a board

game on the porch, time to write a play and act it out for the neighbors. We may lose time to really explore our own back yard and all the wonderful playthings that Nature has placed there for us. We may not discover our own favorite, secret nooks in the garden or internalize the smells of rain and freshly cut grass. We may not develop that sense of attachment to the natural world so necessary for our planet's survival. We may have lost the opportunity to become really good and bored enough to get into our imaginations and create all kinds of excitement in our own minds.

And here is another caution. We may have enough information, easily accessed (via the Internet in particular) to finally kill off that pesky sense of wonder. Try this. When your child asks you a question, "What do bears eat?" "What do germs look like?" "What do people wear in China?" "How do bees make honey?" Instead of immediately ferreting out that information with text and pictures from this or that website, say "I wonder what bears eat, too. What do you think they might eat? Let's think about it and talk about what we imagined at dinner tonight!" Yes, its true, your child may come up with some completely inaccurate ideas about the gustatory habits of the ursine. They can sort that out later. Maybe in a week or two you might visit the zoo or read a book or visit a website about bears.



**It's a Brazilian Carnavale!**

In the meantime, however, your child will be using mental muscles that I fear go too often unused in this day and age - those of wonder,

imagination, convergent and divergent thinking, deductive reasoning and flights of fancy. We can always easily find information. However, if we are not challenged to do so, we may not fully develop the mental skills our forbears had in spades. I think it was Einstein who said "Imagination is more important than information." Or was it inspiration? Either way, people tend to place too much importance on obtaining information, which is really a fairly simple skill. Education, when done well, encompasses much more.



**Jacob putting the finishing touches on his collage.**

So feel free to bow out of the Activity Olympics, wish the other mothers and fathers well as they scramble about getting to this or that on time and spend an hour and a half making, eating and cleaning up scrambled eggs and toast with your little ones instead. And if the kids tell you they're bored, just remind them that an intelligent mind need never suffer boredom. Have a great summer.

## **A Fun Family Event for a Good Cause**

Some of you may know that Cassidy Donaldson (PhMS alumnus and Jack's older sister) started a project when she was a 1<sup>st</sup>-grader at PhMS to raise money for villagers in Darfur,

Sudan. She and her many helpers use scrap leather and fur from Soft Star Shoes to make toys for cats and then sell them, each for the price of providing a goat to a family in Darfur via the British-based charity KIDS FOR KIDS. Their hard work has resulted in over \$4000 raised to date!

Last December Cassidy traveled to London to participate in the KIDS FOR KIDS Charity Christmas Concert and to meet Patricia Parker MBE, the organization's founder and chairwoman. And now Patricia is coming to Corvallis to visit Cassidy and friends, and to build awareness and support for KIDS FOR KIDS in the US.

So...a group of folks, including some PhMS parents, is putting together a Benefit Concert to coincide with Patricia's visit to Corvallis. It will be a family-friendly event with a variety of music and dance types (including Jeremy whose Silent Auction Montessori CDs you may know), Darfur-related craft and learning activities, and a huge raffle. See below for Show details.

We would love to have more help getting raffle items and sponsorships, putting posters up, preparing and volunteering on the day of the event. Please contact Kathy Donaldson 715-8306 or Beth Jordan 757-2364 to get involved. And tell your friends to attend.

**We hope to see you at the Show!**

## **Thank You!**

**Thank You's - May 2007**

Looking back over this past school year - all the projects that have been undertaken and completed, the steadfast and caring maintenance of the classroom and school yard, and the wonderful events that brought our school fun and funds, we are both awed and very grateful. We know how busy your lives are already, so we are very thankful for all that you have done for the school this past year.



**Frank and Phaedra working with the Living/Non-living cards.**

Just in the past couple of months, we have received lots of help from **Michele Mincinski**, who has been maintaining our tasting bottles ( a very popular activity) every week, trimming new laminated vocabulary cards, and cleaning our classroom shelves and materials. We were so fortunate to have **Jin Kim and Leo's** help in giving us a direct connection to Korea. They taught us words and phrases and sent in many artifacts and pictures. **Jin** prepared sewing cards with traditional Korean patterns and a fan activity using Korea's national symbol and best of all, she prepared and brought in a Korean dessert and also some dried fish and seaweed. To our surprise most of the children loved these foods. The bowls of seaweed and dried fish were totally gone by the end of our short celebration!

**Kay Bomber** also trimmed some new laminated materials, **Janel Lawrence** prepared sewing cards, **Melissa Schreiber** made us two sets of beautiful journals with hand-sewn bindings, the **Moses Family** did some gardening work, and **Beth Jordan** built a lovely trellis for one of our garden beds and then planted peas. She also started peas in pots for extras - we'll soon be picking peas! **Beth** is also helping us nurse our orchid back to health and supplied us with jugs of fertilizer ready to go. **John Miedema** repaired a loose railing for our steps to our outdoor area - a pain-

in-the-neck epoxy job. **Lanny McGaughy** repaired one of our floor tables and also changed the bulbs for at least 6 of our light fixtures. With our 12-foot ceilings and our short ladder, it was no piece of cake. I was holding my breath much of the time. He is a very gallant soul - refusing to give up on one very stubborn fixture. Our rooms have never been so lit up!

Many thanks to **Johnny Mathison**, a risk management consultant, for coming to our board meeting to talk to our board about liability and safety issues. This summer **Johnny** will be assisting us again by reviewing our school emergency and safety procedures.

Our classroom was recently gifted with some new books: *Seeds* from **Sara Matsuba**, *The Bear That heard Crying* from **Anya Mae Panose** and *About Fish* from **Sydney Skinner**. Thank you very much! It's such a treat to share these new books.



**Keller exploring the Continent Globe**

This brings us to our Year-Round Volunteers -- the parents who have been working throughout the year with jobs that are of the backbone of the classroom and the school. **Janel Lawrence**, our Classroom Gift parent, has been diligently getting books to families and then to our classroom with photos and bookplates in place; **Barbara Hind-Cook**, our Library Parent, has been sending in a broad variety of handpicked books covering all our many interest areas as well just good story books; **Jin Kim and Sherri**

**Mortensen**, as our Art Parents (both artists), have been assisting Leslie all year with preparing many very appealing art activities; **Trina McGaughy** has been our Meeting Secretary – reliably taking minutes and getting them to us promptly; **Trevor and Mel Norland**, as our Outdoor Parents, have been doing the very demanding job of maintaining our school yard; **Dodie Wilson** has been our Marketing Parent – responsible for getting our flyers posted and keeping our brochures stocked around town; **Beth Jordan** is our school chronicler, and even though I took forever to get the photos to her and **Tessa Hanover**, they are putting their creative efforts together to get our school albums up-to-date; **Jessica Neebe** has been our Volunteer Coordinator, tracking hours and seeking help whenever we are in need; and last, but not least, **Karen Patrick**, our Newsletter Parent, has been proofreading and laying out our newsletters beautifully and quickly – her turnaround time has been amazing. Our mentor families are also year-round volunteers and we want to thank **Carol Hulstrunk, Jessica Neebe, and Melissa Schreiber** for helping our new families become a part of our community. They did a terrific job, didn't they?! Many thanks to all of you – we appreciate your work very much.



**Jason washing an underlay**

We would like to thank all of our Board Members at this time for their year-round work for our school, too. **Betty Malone**, our president, puts in many hours working with me on a myriad of administrative issues – I feel so fortunate that

she is willing to share her experience and wisdom; **Joan Extrom**, our secretary, oversees the taking of minutes and is responsible for archiving all our school documents; **Meredith Howell and Sha Sifford** have been working tirelessly and brilliantly in their roles as board members at our school and at the College of Philomath Community Corporation (CPCC) – without them, there would be little hope for a new school site; and **Lorri Hendon**, whose gentle wisdom has helped us find the right path every time. Sadly, we had to let go of a long-time board member and treasurer – **Dan Brown**. Dan and his wife, **Lisa**, have played an important part in our school for many years as marketing consultants, financial advisors, and constant supporters. Almost 30 years ago, I went to **Dan** for help in starting my school – little did I, or he, for that matter, know that we would work together again 20 years later when his first son entered. We are very, very grateful for all their work and support. **Ed Durrenberger** will be coming in to fill Dan's shoes as our new treasurer. His daughter, Barry McLaren, was a student from 1995 – 1998. We are looking forward to having Ed with us – he brings with him a lot of experience in finance as well as having fun.

A very special thank you to **Jessica Neebe and Tessa Hanover** for their work as board members of CPCC. **Jessica** has also been coming to our PhMS board meetings this year, taking minutes, and then getting the minutes to us promptly. **Kathy Donaldson** is another parent doing a lot of work behind the scenes as a board member of PASCA – Philomath Area Senior Citizens Association. One of her roles has been to publish their newsletter that comes out six times a year. Thank you for your work that supports our school in another very important way.

To **all of you**, many thanks for cheerfully taking care of our laundry, sending in tasty snacks, water and water bottles. We appreciate all the washing, folding, planning, shopping, and loving care that goes into these daily and weekly routines.

