

October 2005

Philomath Montessori School Newsletter



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

Classroom News

What a whirlwind the start of the school year is. There are so many adjustments to be made by all concerned. That statement may resonate most of all with the parents of the new students. It is indeed a whole new life for these little ones. A new schedule to keep, new boots, jackets and character-free clothing to wear, new rules and expectations, new friends and new teachers begin the list. For our returning students there are all these new little ones to get to know. It's an adjustment for our second year students to realize they are no longer our neediest citizens! They are the ones we leave standing there mid-sentence while we rush off to re-direct a younger student. Our oldest kids, the first-graders are finding that they have new heights to strive for now. The look on their faces when they do something they did not know they were capable of is a pure delight. We get to see that a lot.

The ebb and flow of our days is interesting to chart. As the assistant teacher, one day will find the children being largely self-managing and the next day I hardly have time to record the work being chosen because the kids have so many needs! I never know what kind of day it will be, only that it will not be boring!

The days spent as the lesson teacher are more predictable. One of the benefits of having a great assistant is that the teacher can go about

her business, planning and presenting lessons to a group or an individual and know that the assistant is handling everything else. She knows who has gone to the bathroom, who failed to put away their underlay and who is ready to spiral out of control and needs to go outside to hammer on the stump or rake leaves! Having an alert assistant who knows when to intervene and when to observe is a great blessing to the whole class. I really appreciate the job Pauline does. She's really "got my back" as the kids say.



Cassidy, Meaghan, and Joanna jumping rope

Our study unit of Canada is finishing up although much work pertaining to the Inuit, the Arctic Circle and whales is still to be found on the shelf. Just because one unit has ended and another begun does not mean that children just stop being interested in all things Canadian and start being interested in all things Moroccan. So there is some overlap that goes on. Leslie has some beautiful art activities planned and I have told some stories about Moroccan culture. It is

interesting to note that drawing or painting human figures is forbidden in the Muslim religion. That void begs to be filled with other artistic ventures. So one finds that geometric design is extremely important in Moroccan art and it can be seen in the lovely mosaics throughout the cities. The children also seemed very interested in my story of arranged marriages and how they take place frequently in Moroccan families. The children lean forward and become very still when I say, "I'm going to tell you a story." It is probably the same for all of you at home. A story told is just so much more personal than a story read.

As we learn about Morocco, we will be counting to ten in Arabic, children who use pencils will have opportunity to form Arabic numerals. We will do mosaic collages with paper and wooden tiles. We will learn about the Berbers, Moroccan's indigenous people who have lived there for over 5,000 years and we will learn about Morocco of today and how it has been influenced by so many other cultures - French, Spanish, Arab, etc. We will learn about the desert, mountain and forest biomes. The older children will learn about the phases of the moon as Islam follows a lunar calendar and we will eat some pitas, dates and olives as these are important Moroccan foods that we can easily obtain. We also plan to make mint tea. Apparently nothing occurs socially in Morocco without many glasses of mint tea.

We have begun doing Walking on the Line. This is Montessori's traditional group movement activity. One sees this in every Montessori school worth its Pink Tower. We gather together and remove our shoes and socks. Then we space ourselves evenly over the blue ellipse on our floor. Then music or a drumbeat is played and according to the rhythm we walk, march, run, skip and gallop or dance. We explore all the ways our bodies can move and how they can be expressive. We practice curvy moves, straight moves, gentle or strong moves, we bend at this joint or that joint, we move down low or up high. When we were

dancing and moving to Native American (First Nations) music we did a lot of moving like animals. Walking on the Line is a lot of fun. We typically do it daily.

The children have developed much over these past few weeks since the start of school - toileting, sitting quietly at group, practicing many aspects of Grace and Courtesy, refraining from taking what is not ours, exercising restraint so our play is not too rough - many, many things. I am very pleased with the effort everyone is making. We hope you too have seen growth in your child. If there is any issue you would like to discuss with us, if you would like some feedback about how your child spends their time at school, just call us here or hand us a note and we'll be happy to get back to you. One of the most important elements in your child's success at school is that you, the parent, are confident and happy about where they are. We wish you and your family a beautiful autumn.



Jensen washing clothes

Overindulgence seems to be the hallmark of our times and we thought this article had some interesting points to make about the ultimate outcomes.

**Spoiled Mess Solved with a Little Cleanup
By Stephanie Dunnewind
The Seattle Times**

The best-intentioned parents might be raising spoiled kids. Too often, experts say, parents are spoiling kids not just with toys and gadgets, but by failing to set limits, not requiring chores and smoothing all frustrations to keep kids happy.

“Parents think they overindulge out of kindness, but they’re training kids to be helpless and irresponsible.” Said Connie Dawson, co-author of the new book, “How Much is Enough?: Everything You Need to Know to Steer Clear of Overindulgence and Raise Likeable, Responsible and Respectful Children.”

It looks good and it feels good at the time, but over the long haul, overindulgence undermines a child’s confidence and competence,” she said.

Two-thirds of parents say their children are spoiled, according to a 2001 Time/CNN survey. And it’s worse than even a decade ago, 80 percent of those surveyed agreed.

“Clearly, parents are more indulgent than the previous generation,” said Dan Kindlon, author of “Too Much of a Good Thing: Raising Children of Character in an Indulgent Age.”

“Sure, kids in the ‘50s were spoiled compared to their parents, but we’ve taken it up another step,” he said. “A lot of parents now have gone off the deep end.”

While parents uniformly agree that self-control and self-discipline are important for children to learn, only a third said they’ve successfully imparted these qualities, according to a 2002 survey by Public Agenda.

Likewise, just over a third said they’ve taught children to be independent and do for themselves, despite the three-quarters who say those traits are “absolutely essential.”

Parents who overindulge ultimately fail at the most important task of parenting: helping their child grow up.

Really, kids want to grow toward competence,” said Dawson, a Kirkland, Wash.-based therapist. “What they need are adults to help them get there.”

Dawson and her co-authors studied adults who were overindulged as children and discovered three main ways of overindulging:

Giving too much. “With a constant barrage of too many and too much, children often experience a sense

of scarcity because they fail to learn the vital skill of ascertaining what is enough.”

Over-nurturing. “There is no such thing as too much love. But true love does not hover or intrude or deprive a child of the opportunity to reach out, to learn new skills, to feel the thrill of achievement, or to experience consequences.”

Too little structure. “Soft structure is giving children too much freedom and license. Firm structure includes establishing and enforcing rules, creating firm boundaries, monitoring children’s safety, teaching children skills for living and insisting they do chores.”

Whining and demanding might be the most obvious traits of overindulged kids, but as they grow up, they might:

- lack life and self-care skills
- have an overblown sense of entitlement
- have trouble learning how to delay gratification
- expect to be constant center of attention
- be reluctant to take personal responsibility
- have difficulty knowing what’s normal or enough
- have an unrealistic sense of their strengths and weaknesses.

Kindlon’s research, which included surveys of 1,078 parents and 654 teenagers, found teens who described themselves as “spoiled” were twice as likely to have used drugs. “Very spoiled” teens were at higher risk for behavioral problems such as underachieving at school, cheating on tests and skipping school.

“Most people are not consciously setting their children up for failure as adults, but parents aren’t recognizing the long-term consequences,” said Elizabeth Crary, a Seattle parent educator and author of “Dealing With Disappointment: Helping Kids Cope When Things Don’t Go Their Way” and “Pick up your Socks...and Other Skills Growing Children Need!”

Consistently protecting children from any discomfort denies them the opportunity to develop skills for dealing with disappointment and frustration, she said.

“It’s less painful to learn those skills when kids are 3 or 5 than as young adults,” she said.

Experts blame the current trend of overindulgence on guilt and fatigue from parents’ long work hours, ubiquitous advertising campaigns targeted at kids, and baby boomers’ reluctance to say “no”.

“Our kids are so precious to us,” said Kindlon, a professor of psychology at Harvard University and father of two. “We use kids as antidepressants – and we don’t want to jeopardize our prescription.”

Though they might tell themselves they’re justified in pampering kids, overindulging parents opt for the easy path, experts say.

“Being too tired is the biggest obstacle to being a good parent,” Kindlon said. “You can pick up their toys in five minutes or tell the kids to do it for 15 minutes. The first is easier for you, but is it the right thing for them?”

It’s often educators who end up calling “Whoa.” Teachers increasingly report dealing with overentitled children who feel they can break the rules that apply to everyone else,” Dawson said.

Educators tell me that in 90 percent of discipline cases, the parents are on the child’s side against the school,” Kindlon noted. “I can tell you it didn’t use to be that way. Kids are not being held responsible at home.”

In many families, even basic kid chores are often waived. Three-quarters of 1,015 adults surveyed said children have fewer chores than their counterparts 10 or 15 years ago, according to the Time/CNN survey.

But experts say chores are essential for children whether its taking out the garbage or feeding a pet.

“It doesn’t matter so much what the child does,” Crary said. “What’s helpful is children feel they’re contributing to the welfare of the family in some manner.”

A long-term study of 84 children by a University of Minnesota professor, released in 2002, found that preschoolers who participated in household tasks were more likely to grow up to be successful as young adults.

One protective factor Kindlon found against dangerous teen behavior was whether teens were expected to keep their room clean. Though his research didn’t delve into why, he suspects it’s an indication that kids are supervised and expected to adhere to certain standards.

Teens who performed community service also displayed fewer problems, Kindlon said.

“Kids don’t do chores because they’re busy with homework and extracurricular activities, but what’s overlooked is that all these activities are geared to help them – to get into a good college, to get a good job. Giving back to other people helps kids not take themselves so seriously.”

Baby boomers especially shun the authority figure role, but Kindlon’s survey found teens who reported strict parents also said they had fun together.

Suggested Chores by Age

Older children can also continue those chores started at younger ages.

AGES 2-3

- Clear place at table after meals and put dishes on the counter.
- Put recycling items in their containers.

AGES 4-5

- Feed pets (when reminded).
- Get the mail.
- Put dirty clothes in hamper

AGES 6-7

- Water plants and flowers.
- Wash dog.
- Pull weeds.

AGES 8-9

- Clean sinks.
- Take out garbage, recycling.
- Sweep, mop or vacuum.

Ages 10-12

- Do laundry, with assistance.
- Wash the family car.

From “Setting Limits: How to Raise Responsible, Independent Children by Providing Clear Boundaries”, by Robert J. MacKenzie and “Pick Up Your Socks...and Other Skills Growing Children Need,” by Elizabeth Crary



Leo and Shaden doing the world map

Thank You – Fall 05

It’s been exciting to see us actually begin the construction phase for the College of Philomath building -- our school’s future site! Since mid-July work parties have been happening with regularity beginning with the siding removal. On September 16, at the United Way Day of Caring, **10 HP engineers** along with **Scott Ramsey, Sha Sifford, Se Hun Lee, Tessa Hanover, Meredith Howell,**

and **Allan Rack** came out to weatherize the exterior of the building, work on landscaping, and make a huge dent in the demolition of the bell tower preparing the way for its restoration. The **Philomath Fire Department** came out a couple days ahead of time to give the building a good wash down. **Scott, Sha, Meredith, and Allan** worked on repairing and sealing fire-damaged areas, putting in a new outdoor light, and tearing out false floors and ceilings for the new bell tower. **Hun** painted the lower perimeter of the building on his own -- I wanted to jump in and help him, but since I was wearing a rain jacket that **Tessa** had lent me.... **Tessa** worked with **Meredith** and me cleaning up the rock gardens and cutting back the unrelenting ivy. Then on October 8, another work party was created to take care of the floor and floor structure where Scott had discovered some dry rot damage. This became an urgent and critical job to get done. With the help of **Scott, Ed Hurff, Al Davis, Bryan Youker Pat Ramsey, Brad Parrish, and Doug King**, a new floor structure and floor was installed at the bottom of the tower. In between **Scott, his friends, his mom, Pat, and Ed Hurff**, removed the roofed area for the tower, kept it dry, and prepped the floor structure project. On October 10, **Ed Hurff, Meredith Howell, and Allan** worked with **Safeway Industries** to erect the scaffolding around the bell tower. Now actual construction of the new tower can commence!! Many thanks to all of you who have helped!!



Taylor on the playground

I want to give special thanks and recognition to **Meredith Howell, Sha Sifford, and Scott Ramsey**. All three have spent an enormous amount of time and energy working daily to make all of this happen -- hauling lumber, making calls to possible donors, writing hefty grants, attending workshops and seminars, organizing work parties, negotiating contracts, and on and on. We cannot thank them enough.

Dan Brown, one of our board members, made a successful presentation to the **Mid-Willamette Wood Workers Guild** yesterday to persuade its members to recreate the 12 decorative corbels for the bell tower. It looks like **Curtis Johnson** will be making our corbels! Thank you, Dan!!

Back in the classroom, we have been receiving help from many of you. **Tessa** prepared sewing cards, **Michelle** laminated and trimmed new biome cards, **Jeremy** trimmed Biome pictures, and **Jessica Bonds** trimmed other laminated materials, **Jin and Sherri** cut out a variety of collage shapes. **Michelle** took our songbook and created two new ones -- one for the classroom and one for parents. She organized the song sheets and added a table of contents. **Melissa and Harrison** gave our garden beds a good weeding. Thank you all for your work!!

Leo's grandparents, who are visiting from Korea, gifted our community with a pair of exquisite wooden masks. **Clare** for her 5th birthday gave the class a bundle of lovely postcards from Sri Lanka, and our classroom received a basketful of volcanic rocks for **Jensen's** 5th. Thank you for your generous donations.

At our parent meeting, **Tessa** volunteered to be our school chronicler, **Rob**, our newsletter editor, and **Jessica Bonds**, our meeting secretary. These are all important jobs that we can't do without. Thank you very much!

To brighten the parent meeting, **Dawnelle** brought in a luscious banana bread for all of us to snack on. **Dahlia** shared an arrowhead and other Native American artifacts with our class during our Canada/Native American focus and **Kristen and Doni** wrote all the thank you notes for bell tower work parties. Thank you for all of these contributions.

We are very grateful for all that you do and share with our school. Thank you very much!



Celine tracing phonogram sandpaper letters

Newsline Fall 2005

- As we enter the fall/winter season, please remember that our school follows the Philomath School District on severe weather conditions. If they call off school, so do we. Please tune into your favorite local radio station for announcements. We will follow the same schedule as Philomath if there is a late start; however, no later than 10:30am.
- It's also time to think about changing the extra clothes from summer wear to winter warmth. If they have an accident, changing into short-sleeve shirts and shorts may be a little disagreeable.
- We have an Introduction to Montessori and a Montessori in the Home parent workshop planned for Thursday, October 20 from 6:30 - 8pm. Signup sheets will be on the wall. Free childcare will be available. Minimum signup is 10 participants.
- Signups for observations and parent-teacher conferences are in the hallway. Please be sure to signup for a time that is convenient for you. New parents, please remember that you may only observe through the one-way window of our classroom door. Your opportunity for an in-classroom observation will be in spring. So hold on!
- Hise Studio will be coming Tuesday, October 25 at 9:00 to take our class picture. Please be on time! It's a challenge to keep everyone in a holding pattern. If your child will not be attending school, please let us know before 9:00 that morning.
- There will be a lecture by Angeline Stoll Lillard on Wednesday, October 26 at 6:30 in Portland at the Oregon Health and Sciences University auditorium. It is sponsored by the Montessori Institute NW. Both Doni and I will be attending the lecture as well as a number of parents.
- There will be no school on Thursday, October 27 - professional development day.
- On Thursday, November 10, we will have a Parent Meeting from 6:30 - 8pm. Free childcare will be available in the nursery.
- There will be no school Wednesday, November 23 and Thursday, November 24 -- Thanksgiving holiday. School will resume on Monday, November 28.
- There will be no extended day on Tuesday, December 20. Winter break begins Wednesday, December 21. School will resume on Wednesday, January 4.
- There will be no school on Monday, January 16, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

- We will have a Children's Open House on Thursday, January 19 from 5:00 - 6:30. There will be a signup sheet in the hallway. This is your child's opportunity to spend time with you in the classroom showing you the activities that he/she enjoys.

Upcoming Events

Get ready for our Annual Silent Auction this February 4th!

Please take some time and check out our local business list for solicitations (posted on the wall in the hall). We also need people to sign up on the committee list itemizing food, entertainment and other necessary details needed to make this a successful and fun party. Please contact Christi McLaren (766-8029) or Carol Holstrunk (758-0344) if you have any questions or need support. Thanks so much!

Mark Your Calendars!

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 pre-school and kindergarten program.