



Philomath Montessori School

February 2015

As I write this, it is the week leading up to the Love of Learning Annual Fundraiser, or “the Auction,” as we and the children tend to speak of it. It is much on their minds. As I hung on the wall some artifacts from China, which we are currently studying, several children asked, “Is that for the Auction?”

I think we are pretty well-prepared for our performance. When I was in training, we were told to never have children of this age group perform. Too much stress and pressure. I see that point. I also know that it is the surest way to have parents show up to an event, so there you go. We haven’t put the screws to them too much, I believe. Although we have had our issues. A few of our children take exception to being given direction from time to time and then have nothing to offer but grouchy faces and sour dispositions. I tell them, “People do not want to pay \$12 to look at grouchy faces!” We also have had to work hard on our projection. If I think they aren’t loud enough, I cup my ear with my hand and that is the signal to increase the volume. But I really think I could go through the entire performance with my hand to my ear! When they make an effort to sing out, it really makes a difference, but somehow I haven’t been able to convey that they should be projecting throughout the entire song. Moving fluidly from verse to verse is also a challenge. They want to go into more choruses of “Puff the magic dragon, etc.” when I want them to sing the next verse. I created some pictorial cue cards which I hope will help them remember the lyrics. Our biggest train wrecks are when we are not singing in unison. That is really ugly! Then we have to stop and begin again, which

would look really unprofessional! Let’s hope it doesn’t come to that!

Pauline is outdoors right now presenting to some of the oldest children a timeline of eras from the beginning of time to the present. She prepared a really long rope with the years marked off in hundreds of millions and she is placing signs along its length to mark the names of the eras. I would love to go out and watch the show, but I am minding those children who chose to stay indoors due to lack of interest as well as those sent back indoors due to lack of interest which showed up only after the lesson began. In preparation for this lesson, I presented the Wooden Hierarchical Materials to this group yesterday. In that lesson we are introduced to the quantities 10,000, 100,000 and 1,000,000 and their written symbols. I told the children that there are many adults who cannot comprehend the idea of a million and how much that really is, but we get to see it right here in our own classroom. At lunch today, I asked Pauline how many millions were in a billion and she answered that there were one thousand millions in a billion. Wow! And there are actual billionaires in the world! It’s inconceivable!



Speaking of inconceivable concepts, there have been so many interesting conversations floating around the classroom on some very elevated topics. Kids have been talking about evolution and wondering how, if the first people in the world were in Africa and most likely of dark pigmentation, did there come to be people of paler complexion. I joined in and contributed the idea that this change happened over very long periods of time and over many, many generations. That led to a discussion of race and genetics and what happens when people who have similar skin tones have a child and what kind of skin that child would have versus the offspring of a couple of differing skin tones. And there has been a lot of talk of marriage here! And it isn't even spring! I overhear who is going to marry whom, how someone is going to marry this one first and then that one later, how boys can marry boys and girls can marry girls....it is rich! Spoken language in the air is the most important language material that we have to offer here and we certainly have an abundance of it!



And now it is in Chinese! Mandarin Chinese, actually. As we study China, it is overwhelming to know what to share. China has such a long history and rich culture that there is so much to choose from. We are blessed with several families with Chinese or Taiwanese heritage and they have been generous in sharing their beautiful artifacts, their knowledge and their language. We have been saying our hellos and good-byes in Mandarin, counting to ten and also singing a children's song. I have a language lesson with Joy

Ueng coming up next week and I hope I will find that I haven't massacred the language too badly before I can be corrected. And speaking of correction, I hardly know what to do when I learn a word one way on Google Translate, another way from a Chinese speaking parent and yet another way from a Chinese speaking child! Apparently Mandarin is largely a matter of opinion!

As we learn about China, we are exploring its primary traditional religions – Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. I have been greatly helped by a book provided by our library mom, Rachel Brinker. It is "What I Believe" by Alan Brown and Andrew Langley and it has really helped my understanding of the various world religions, which have always fascinated and confounded me. I really benefit from reading children's books on complex topics. They appeal to my short attention span and need for simplification. Hmm, that probably does not reflect well on my overall intellect....

During our Chinese study, Leslie will be providing some relevant art activities for us. We have a scroll upon which to practice making Chinese characters that uses only water and a brush. Then one can watch the letters evaporate. We will also touch on the foodways of China, its extremely diverse yet threatened animal species, its many biomes, the cultivation of rice, Chinese New Year and zodiacal signs, traditional dress, architecture (I am so drawn to the traditional Chinese courtyard), the Great Wall, porcelain and mythical dragons. We learned about the 5 main types of dragons in Chinese culture today – wood, water, fire, metal and earth dragons - each with their own personalities and domains. This sparked the children's imaginations something fierce. They wanted to know what other kinds of dragons there might be – Sand? Rock? Ice? People? Flower? Electricity? My favorite suggestion was that of a Bathtub Dragon! As if bath time weren't challenging enough, now we have to worry about Bathtub Dragons! Clearly, China will provide great depths to explore. I'm sure we will come to the end of our designated time (March 18,

when we switch to Egypt) before we run out of content.

Our Chinese New Year celebration is shaping up nicely, too. Joy Ueng is bringing us some vegetarian dumplings and Lin Li is providing egg rolls. We will eat first thing in the morning while the treats are still warm and fresh. We will sing our song in Chinese (“After School”) and then we will go out for a parade around the block or yard with all of our percussion instruments and the dragon puppets some of the kids have made. All this racket and commotion will be sure to frighten away Nian, a mythical beast who eats up the crops, livestock and even people! Nian hates noise and the color red. Fortunately a lot of us will wear red that day. We will send the kids home with haw flake candy provided by the Emschwiler/Wu family and lucky red envelopes containing coins that are a gift to the class from the Uengs! Very exciting! Our celebrations are usually pretty low-key, but this one has developed its own momentum!



As I finish this article it is the Monday after “The Auction.” What a wonderful night! I had a great time and so did the kids, evidently. When asked what their favorite part of the night was, we got the following responses: Jai- performing, the gym, the magic show; Kaden – performing on the stage; Jacoby – the gym and the magician; Sariah – the gym and the magic show; Yasmina – the

magician; Lilian- the band; Zaynab – the magician and the face painting; Juniper – the singing; Jaxson – everything; Corvus – playing tag; Ren – playing; James – going to the auction; Mia – cupcakes; Eric - everything; Auni – chocolate cupcakes; Ilana – the gym and magic show; Hugo – singing and playing. Harper said, “When we were singing at the auction, my mommy cried happy tears.” Pauline said that Harper’s mommy was not the only parent crying such tears. I was so pleased and proud of the kids. Several were expressing trepidation about performing at all, but they did agree to stand up on stage with us. All the kids followed directions beautifully and there were no sourpusses in sight!



Meanwhile, life in the classroom goes on. It is so affirming to be part of a system that provides cultural, emotional and physical education along with academic rigor in an atmosphere of choice, where it is a pleasure to learn, where knowledge and new skills are not forced upon children, but rather graciously offered. I have heard it said that the greatest gift of Montessori is that children’s souls, quirks and personalities are honored while at the same time they are educated in living harmoniously with others. I only wish that all children could receive such an education.

Best regards

Doni

Laying Laurels on the Love of Learning

With an appealing new venue, an intro to an awesome band and some real crowd-pleasing food, **Rachel Splan and Jasmin Woodside** put their spirited signature on this year's auction. Compliments abounded from all corners during the evening and after. It was smoother and more delightful than ever! As always, it took a cadre of committed and devoted volunteers and generous donors to make it happen.

Joan Demarest again generously provided the centerpiece of our raffle – many thanks to **Becca Gose** for landing the prize for us and to **Shawnde Bausch** for putting together an amazing package to sweeten the deal. **Janelle Lohr** did a fantastic job of coordinating the sale of the raffle tickets and promoting during the auction as the irresistible Raffle Queen!



Solicitations, the underpinning of the whole auction, demands a legion of volunteers and gratefully, they came forward: **Shawnde Bausch, Jenny Braxton, Leslie Cohen, Maya Emshwiller, Becca Gose, Meagan Johanson, Amber and Chris Kenoyer, Janelle and Stony Lohr, Katy and Jeff Mabeck, Matt and Sarah MacClary, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Jessica Neebe, Allan Rack, Liesl Ralston, Rachel Splan, Joy Ueng, Brendan and Amy Ward, Julie Wiethorn, and Jasmin Woodside.** With special thanks to **Becca** for soliciting and putting together

those big packages for Portland and Ashland! And then there are our generous community of donors – the many businesses, organizations and individuals who have supported us enthusiastically. They are listed on our website. Please be sure to let them know when you see them that we truly appreciate their generosity.

Our families again gave so many wonderful donations: **the Bausch family, the Braxtons, the Cattons, Leslie Cohen, Nicholas Giftai, the Hahns, the Kenoyers, Chris' parents, Stan and Leigh Kenoyer, Jonathan Jensen, the Johansons, Dennis Johanson of Mary's Peak Pottery, Doni Manning-Cyrus and Andy Cyrus, the Plaire-Siegel family, the Ralston-Tavanos, Allan Rack, Beth Runciman, the Ueng family, the Ward family, Elke Wiethorn, the Woodsides, Jaxson's grandmother, Darlene Giddings and the kids of PhMS.** Also families of our alumni: **Johnny and Julie Mathison, Kerry and Doug Boysen, Tracy and Richard Choi, Ed Durrenberger and Susan McClaren, the Gerding family, Janet and Paul Hochfeld, Kim and Richard Gratz, Janel Lawrence and Shawn Foley, Pat and Betty Malone, Lanny and Trina McGaughy, Ruby Moon, Nina and Sev Williams.**

All these donations then became the seed for a bloom of baskets. Thank you **Maya Emshwiller and Sarah MacClary** for hosting our basket parties and to our fantastic basket creators: **Jenny Braxton, Meagan Johanson, Amber Kenoyer, Janelle Lohr, Katy Mabeck, Liesl Ralston, Rachel Splan, Joy Ueng, Amy Ward, Elke Wiethorn, Beth Runciman, Rachel Brinker, Brendan Ward, and Jasmin Woodside.** You made some dazzling bidding items, everyone! **Chris Kenoyer** also made a primo pot of clam chowder for the basket party I attended – yum!!

Meagan Johanson and Katy Mabeck headed up the children's program this year and handily

conjured up a new magician and added face painting – both big hits with the kids! Thanks to **Matt MacClary** for pointing us to their friend **Beulah Crall**, a wonderful artist who gave selflessly of her time and talents to transform the children into otherworldly creatures! Big thanks to our own **Elke Wiethorn** for her beautiful face-painting skills as well. **OSU Kidspirit** came in to help us once again -- a powerhouse of volunteers that never fails to delight everyone. And they had a dedicated host of parents to help them oversee all the fun: **Jaime Hahn, Chris Kenoyer, Jeff Mabeck, Liesl Ralston, Leanne Miller and Kolby Walker**. Thanks to **Jenni Neville** for her expert supervision of the children, too. We are very grateful to **Nutcakes** for donating cupcakes, to **Cirello's** for giving us the gluten free pizzas and to **Special Occasions** for their donation of paper products.



We benefitted from some great PR work this year! **Shawnde Bausch** chaired this part of the auction getting our name out there through many flyers, press releases and sign boards. **Elke Wiethorn** designed a lovely eye-catching poster for our auction and **Bekki Levien**, an alumni parent, created a snazzy raffle flyer. With lots of color and huge hearts that were crafted by **Elke and Julie Wiethorn, Doni and Jaime Hahn's** Footwise window display used the children's handmade decorations to publicize our event to our downtown community. A special thank you to **Ruby Moon of the Golden Crane** for again selling our raffle tickets at her store, to **Shawnde and Paul Bausch** for all the website auction work (lots!) and **Janelle Lohr**

and **Jasmin Woodside** for keeping our Facebook page fresh with Love of Learning news.

Special thanks to **Joy Ueng** for putting in many hours securing another long list of underwriters to offset many of our expenses! They include **Barker-Uerlings Insurance, Philomath Family Medicine, Pioneer Telephone Cooperative, Corvallis Sport and Spine Physical Therapy, DeMoss-Durdan Funeral Home, E.D. Hughes Excavating, Inc., Gerding Builders, Korvis Automation, McGaughy's Farrier Service, Oregon Anesthesiology Group, Pediatric Dental Associates, and Public Good PR. Janelle Lohr, Meagan Johanson and Lin Li** put together a beautiful booklet featuring our sponsors and also our live auction items.

Each year setup gets easier, smoother and more dazzling. Many thanks to everyone who came out to help transform the PHS auditorium into a swanky stage for our auction event: **Shawnde Bausch**, who created all the snazzy displays for the live auction items, **Jenny Braxton, Meagan and Ryan Johanson, Amber and Chris Kenoyer, Lin Li, Guanyi Lu, Janelle Lohr, Damien Lynch, Katy Mabeck, Sarah MacClary, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Leanne Miller, Jessica Neebe, Rory Plaire, Allan Rack, Liesl Ralston, Rachel Splan, Joy Ueng, Brendan and Amy Ward and Jasmin Woodside. Brendan Ward** gets double kudos for creating and setting up the wonderful slide show, too.



Welcoming everyone warmly at the door were **Gary and Nancy Brown (Doni's in-laws), Leslie Cohen, and Damian Lynch.** Gary and Nancy Brown also helped us at the checkout end along with **Jessica Neebe and her daughter, Aurora, and Julie Wiethorn.** A big crew of runners helped move the line more quickly this year: **Leslie Cohen, Andy Cyrus, Evan Cyrus** and his girlfriend, **Alyssa Critchfield (more of Doni's family), Stony and Janelle Lohr,** their friend, **Andy Olstad, Chris Kenoyer, Damien Lynch, Christi McLaren** (former PhMS parent), **Allan Rack, Beth Runciman,** and our alumni students -- **Shaden Jensen, Phaedra Hinds-Cook, Meagan McGaughy, and Anya Mae Panose.**



The Space Neighbors Trio (Rigel Woodside, Nick Rivard and John Navarro) were such a treat to listen to – who doesn't love jazz standards! Encore, please!! And we were very lucky to land **Brian Thorsness** as our auctioneer again. There's nothing like a pro to do that job. Many thanks to **Doni** for being a terrific emcee AND leading the children in song and verse. They were amazing, weren't they!! A big thank you to **Aurora Jensen** for capturing the night on film for us, too.

Also new to our event was **Café Yumm!** Their fare must have been good because it disappeared pretty quickly and all comments coming my way were very positive. We thank **Pacifica Coffee** for keeping everyone sufficiently caffeinated, **Great Harvest** for so many yummy desserts and **Valley Catering** for

those decadent brownies. A big thank you to **Joy Ueng and Leanne Miller** for tending the wonderful spread all evening.



Thankfully many energetic and cheerful hands were on board to clean up at the end. **Dave Alba, Shawnde Bausch, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Maya Emshwiller and Zhaohui Wu, Jonathan Jensen, Ryan and Meagan Johanson, Lin Li and Guanyi Lu, Stony and Janelle Lohr, Amber and Chris Kenoyer, Sarah MacClary, Allan Rack, Lua Siegel and Rory Plaire, Rachel Splan, Brendan Ward, Julie Wiethorn, Kolby Walker, and Jasmin Woodside** all pitched in to make fast work of it all.

Bringing it to a sweet ending will be our Thank You retinue headed up by **Leslie Cohen: Jenny Braxton, Amber Kenoyer, Liesl Ralston, Sarah MacClary and Doni Manning-Cyrus.**

Writing this always moves me -- how much work you all do, how much you give and give even more. You bring your friends, your family and implore our past families to join us. We have an extraordinary community of parents. Without it such a small school could not pull off such an amazing event. Your children are witness to your tireless work and generosity – shining examples of what they can become one day. Thank you.

Pauline

Friday Art Class

This last period we worked on the fabric collage auction wall hanging, as well as individual pieces to go home. We carded wool to make felted bowls. An interesting discussion happened as to what treasures these bowls could hold. Our ongoing journals have become circular with covers in water color and resist designs. These will be sewn together this week. It's fun to change the shape of the journal pages and work on designs in the round. We will continue with sewing and begin working on felt to create stuffed and embellished small sculptures.



Newsline

- **Montessori Education Week in Oregon** is February 22nd through 27th, 2015. The purpose is to raise public awareness about Montessori education and advocate for access to high quality education for all of Oregon's children. Montessori Education Week culminates in the Montessori in the Capitol, held on February 27th. From 9:30am until 1:00pm a model Montessori classroom will be set up in the Galleria of the Oregon State Capitol building in Salem, OR. Oregon's legislators, officials and the general public are invited to view a fully functioning primary level classroom, where children aged 3 to 6 will engage in their daily activities.
- We will be having our **Parent-Teacher conferences** in March and April. Signups for observations and conferences are up already. Please signup as soon as possible so that we can begin focused observations.
- Our first **Children's Open House** of the year will be on Thursday, March 5 from 5:30 – 7:00.
- We will be putting **ASQ-3 Questionnaire** in your family boxes on Monday, March 2. Please return it by March 12, earlier if possible. We would like to have the results ready in time for your spring Parent-Teacher conference. Thanks in advance!
- **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 -7:30.
- **Our second Children's Open House** will be on Thursday, May 7 from 5:30 – 7:00.

Thank You

Classroom Projects

- Trace & cut zodiac shapes: **Kim Catton**
- Trace & cut zodiac shapes: **Meagan Johanson**
- Trace & cut head & tail for dragons: **Meagan Johanson**

Outdoor Projects

- Built new potting table: **Brendan Ward**

Donations

- Small soaps: **Maya Emshwiller**
- Tulips: **The MacClary Family**
- Flowers for the classroom: **Gose/Lynch Family & Hahn Family**
- China artifacts for display: **Maya Emshwiller**

Classroom Cleaning

Li/Lu Family

Gift Books

- The Three Questions: **Gabriel Giftai**
- Prairie Storm: **Yasmina Braxton**

Our sincere and humble thanks for the many things you do for us and give to us!! We are so fortunate.