
Philomath Montessori School

February 2011

For the Families and Friends of the Philomath Montessori School



Classroom News

As we progress through the school year, the growth of the children becomes apparent. We now see children working to improve the lot of their classroom family. This is a pattern we see repeated in Montessori classrooms the world over. At first, children work only to develop themselves. They strew flower petals on the floor and sweep them up because it is satisfying a deep need within to do so. As a child ages and becomes more aware, more empathetic, more responsible, he or she may notice that the floor needs sweeping and take the initiative to do just that.



Zaiya poses for the camera while she traces her sandpaper letters.

We are blessed with a nice young man who regularly sweeps our floors after lunch. This sort of care of the environment is beginning to take place in our classroom more and more. It is usually a third or fourth year student who feels such ownership of the environment and possesses the confidence and competence to carry out this self-appointed task.



Our St. Lucia, Raine, and her starboy, Dhabih, serve buns for our celebration.

Another young lady in our class one day lamented the state of her art apron. It was covered in the chalk dust she had created as she drew and erased, drew and erased her chalkboard. I suggested that she wash it on the scrub board at the cloth washing table. She had done that activity before, but never with such a large garment (usually small

cloths) and never out of a sense of purpose other than self-improvement. Well, she did it and she loved it. The following week, she again washed her apron after soiling it.



Alleck builds the trinomial cube as Zach looks on. Ian works on a raft in the background.

Another change we see in children in their final year of mastery is the ability to create original work. All of the children do work they have seen someone else do before. Perhaps it was the teacher during a lesson or a fellow student doing his/her own work. An image of how the work ought to be done is given to the child very intentionally so that they have some sense as to how to proceed. As the child matures, however, he/she gains knowledge of what is possible in the classroom, what is permitted and what is useful. They then can put that information into a new order or purpose that is meaningful to them. Today, a boy wanted to make a rope. He had a specific need for a rope at home. I forget why. He went to the assistant teacher with his idea of how he could make a rope and gained her permission. He took a cutting activity that consists of cutting long strips of paper, saved the strips and glued them end-to-end. He was so satisfied with his home-made rope of paper. Just one problem. The rope was easily six or eight feet long and the drying rack where we place our art would not accommodate it. He

came to me with his dilemma. I suggested coiling the rope and securing it with a paper clip. Now it fit on the drying rack! He was so pleased with his project! He didn't become excited, but rather calm and content. His imagining had become manifest. That is creativity. I'm sure you often experience this at home with your own child. The child certainly feels most comfortable at home and understands the limits of that environment. If materials are well-organized and approachable as they are in our classroom, creativity will blossom. It will blossom, that is, if the child's time and energy are not usurped by pre-packaged, ready-to-consume entertainment such as TV, videos, video games and the never-ending novelty of a parade of toys.



Eliason and Hazel work on a booklet while Raine looks on.

As you know, we are studying the Philippines. We have begun to think of this archipelago as a chain of mountains mostly hidden by ocean. The islands were formed by volcanic activity and so we are studying the parts of the volcano and looking at pictures of volcanic phenomena. We are learning of the fauna found in the tropical forests and grasslands which compose the country. The people of the Philippines are so connected to the ocean, relying on it for food and transportation. We are studying mollusks and echinoderms and learning about the qualities

of these classes of invertebrates. We have quite a collection of specimens!



Izel pairs together shades of colors.

We have heard stories of how people from many different cultures made their way to the Philippines over the centuries, turning it into the melting pot that it is. We read today that free, mandatory education is provided for children from the ages of 6-12 and beyond that, ones schooling is limited by the ability to pay for it. Many children work before or after school or in lieu of school after the age of 12. They help their families in their fishing, farming and marketing enterprises. They love to play and thoroughly enjoy themselves despite a lack of toys. We saw today a photo of kids making a sandcastle, a flip-flop their only tool. We read that they can make kites from plastic grocery bags! Many rural children live in a group home Monday through Friday, work and attend school in the city, then return to their families for the weekend. Now don't go getting any ideas!



Doni and Ezra put away the letters from his story.

Coming up on February 24, we will have our Children's Open House. For those of you who have never attended one, this is a favorite of the children. There is a sign-up sheet in the hallway and each child signs up for a $\frac{1}{2}$ hour time slot. This is done because we can't all fit in the classroom at once. Come at your allotted time and depart when the time has elapsed, making room for the next wave of families. Parents accompany their child through the room as he/she shows how various pieces of work are done. It is interactive, unlike observation, and talking and participation are encouraged. You may be surprised by how your child goes about a task. Some actions may seem inefficient and you may wonder about them, but trust your child. We DO place our rug far from the pink tower stand and carry the cubes one at a time! That give us more opportunity to walk and more time to hold the cubes in our grasp, allowing our brains to create neural pathways devoted to dimension as we do so. We DO "save" a table by placing our chair at a right angle to it. We DO carry items one at a time.



Cian cracks walnuts for snacks.

It creates a lot of back and forth, but prevents a lot of spills and breakage and increases the length of concentration and focus. We certainly do have our own ways of doing things and we're so happy to get to share them with you! Be sure to sign up for two time slots if you have two kids. Some moms and dads split up the kids, each shadowing one child for 15 minutes, then spending the last 15 with the other child. If you have younger children at home, we recommend finding someone to care for them so that you are free to focus on your student instead of spending the evening keeping the youngest one out of all the tempting materials. I will be hosting this first evening. There will be another later in the year and Pauline will be in attendance at that time. I am looking forward to seeing you all there!

For the Love of Learning - Another Encore!

Once again our parents and their families and friends pooled their talents, resources and energy to put on another great auction fundraiser and an evening of family fun. This year the climax was the selling off of the last raffle tickets and the drawing for **Brian**

Irwin's gorgeous, handmade guitar. It's a daunting task for me to even begin to thank all of you. **Clara Bozevich** tops the list as our auction chair - a supreme organizer with an attention to detail that is just really intimidating. She labored continuously before and during the auction to make sure everything went off like clockwork and it did... now she is already getting things in order for next year!

And then, of course, there is **Brian Irwin**, who devoted 196 hours of labor to create a guitar that is a work of art. His generosity and talent are truly exceptional. Special thanks to **Troubadour Music** and **Gracewinds** for providing venues to purchase tickets and to all of you who sold tickets - it seems that almost every family and staff member sold or bought tickets! A deep bow to **Rory Plaire** who won the guitar and then gave it to our school. Wow.



Audrey Irwin nobly took on the ever-challenging solicitations with aplomb making appeals to many businesses herself. She received a lot of support from a great crew of parents and staff: **Kerry Boysen, Clara Bozevich and Bill Brock, Leslie Cohen, Gretchen Goode, Kim Gratz, Defina**

Hernandez, Barbara and Don Hinds-Cook, Andrea Myhre, Carol and Matt Hulstrunk, Brian Irwin, Beth Jordan, Janel Lawrence, Janelle and Stony Lohr, Doni Manning-Cyrus, JC Mersman and Hattie Muir, Alissa Moses, Mel Norland, Phyllis Pearson, Lua Siegel and Rory Plaire, and Liesl Tavano. Before and still hard at work, **Stony Lohr** has been doing the very valuable behind-the-scenes work of creating software and inputting all the details about our solicitations - something that we'll be using for many years to come. Thank you all for making the calls and visits and then persistently chasing down the donations - ever harder with the ailing economy. You brought in some really incredible items this year!



Maggie Rose greets the crowd

Though we had a late start on getting sponsors in a fragile year for local businesses, we still managed to get four sponsors: **Barker-Uerlings, Corvallis Sport and Spine, Mario and Alma Pastega Family Foundation, and Dickerhoof Properties.** Our fundraiser was also generously underwritten by the **Boys and Girls Club of Corvallis, Paul Shih of Total Merchant Services, and Service Linens.** To show these worthy businesses our appreciation and our support, **Janelle Lohr** again took on the project of putting together an auction pamphlet featuring our sponsors and Ric

Vega put on a slideshow that provided yet another venue to showcase their services.



Ben and Maggie wait for their cue

Turning all those donations into bundles that would tempt us into bidding -- sometimes way beyond our means -- were the basket partiers. **Carol Hulstrunk, Kerry Boysen, and Clara Bozevich** were the basket party queens and they were host to a bevy of wonder worker bees: **Debbie Alba, Amber Grapoli, Kim Gratz, Barbara Hinds-Cook, Audrey Irwin, Janel Lawrence, Janelle Lohr, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Alissa Moses, Hattie Muir, Andrea Myhre, and Liesl Ralston.** Some - like **Carol Bozevich, Kim Gratz, Carol Hulstrunk, Audrey Irwin, Janel Lawrence and Janelle Lohr** - attended more than one or all three!!



Raine, Eliason and Isabella ready to sing

This year, **Kerry Boysen**, handled the part of the fundraiser that really sets us apart from the others - the children's program. She added a new twist with **Kidspirit** who brought a crew to do gymnastics with the kids all

evening. **Curt Nelson** again delighted them with his Slightly Illusional thing, **Kathleen Lloyd** charmed them with her stories, and **Leslie Cohen** put together the art activities to engage them the rest of the evening. The famed **Jenni Neville** of Papa's Pizza was around pretty much all Saturday to oversee childcare during setup and for the children's program. **Natalie Sullivan**, a PhMS alumnus, brought 10 of her friends with her to help in the children's area. **Dawn Azinger and Christian Petrovich** volunteered to help Kerry oversee the children's program all evening with additional help from **Janel Lawrence, Doug Boysen and Aurora Jensen.** **Kerry and Doug Boysen** generously donated the pizzas and **Nutcakes** treated them with cupcakes! As you can see, the children were well supervised, entertained, nourished and indulged.



Hattie and Delphia get the food ready to go

And then there's that all-important aspect of any festive occasion - FOOD! We are SO lucky to have **JC and Hattie!!** They provided us with beautiful, luscious food to lure us across and around the room from table to table and back again. Thank you, **JC and Hattie** and to your crew: **Andrea Myhre, Kim Gratz, and Delfina Hernandez.** Special thanks goes to **Gathering Together Farms**

for the use of their wonderful facilities. Many thanks to **Francesca's Gelato** and to **Rocket Queen Cupcakes** for supplying wonderful sweets for our palate. **Rocket Queen** donated a portion of their proceeds to our fundraiser and **Francesca's** donated all of theirs!!



Gelato from Francesca's

We had professional help this year getting the word out. **Nina Erlich-Williams** wrote and sent out press releases and public service announcements to all the local venues and it resulted in a special story in the *GT!* She also made sure we were on the *GT* calendars and in *FYI*. She also wrote our Good Words thank you for the *GT* and worked on a follow-up story. **Michelle Mincinski** got us on the city schedule for the Harrison St. banner and **Janelle Iverson**, the U of O Communications senior who has been helping us with PR, put the news out on our Facebook and Twitter.

Setup went astonishingly quickly thanks to Clara's ingenious system and an efficient group of volunteers: **Kerry Boysen, Clara and Bill Brock, Melissa Cunningham, Nina Erlich-Williams, Kim Gratz, Carol Hulstrunk, Barbara and Don Hinds-Cook and family, Delfina Hernandez, Audrey Irwin, Janel Lawrence, Ruby Moon, Janel and Stony Lohr, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Alissa Moses, JC Mersman, Hattie Muir,**

Andrea Myhre, Mel Norland, Phyllis Pearson, and Allan Rack.



Ezra and Alleck—ready to sing!

Leslie Cohen, Nina Erlich-Williams, and Mel Norland greeted and registered guests as they came in and checkout was deftly handled by **Gary Brown and Nancy Manning** (Doni's stepmom and her beau) and **Mel Norland**. Running to get items off the table and down to checkout were **Carol Hulstrunk, Beth Jordan, Carol Hulstrunk, Alissa Moses, Trevor Norland, Rory Plaire, and Lua Siegel**. Again, it seemed to run very efficiently without a hitch - Clara had a great system and a very competent crew.

During the auction we were rocked by **All Rights Reserved** and coaxed and captivated by auctioneer, **Kurt Cleveland** - they were so generous to come and share their time and talents with us. Thank you to **Brian Irwin** for coming in to rehearse with the children and then accompanying them with his guitar. After their performance, **Doni Manning-Cyrus** introduced our school affirming why we had all come together for the evening festivities and graciously thanked everyone. During the live auction, **Bill Brock and Brian Irwin** assisted **Kurt** while **Phyllis Pearson** tracked the winners.

There were many amazing family donations: the **Amoth family, Brock-Bozievich family, Kerry Boysen, Leslie Cohen, Melissa Cunningham, Ed Durrenberger, Jenna**

Hulstrunk, Susan Hyne, Jonathan Jensen, Lawrence-Foley family, Lohr family, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Michele Mincinski, Barry McLaren, JC Mersman, Jessica Neebe, Jenni Neville, Mel and Trevor Norland, Phyllis Pearson, Rory Plaire, Lois Olund, Liesl Ralston-Tavano, Lua Siegel, Mike and Diane Sterle, Steve Tavano, John and Dodie Wilson. Thank you also to **Ian Alba, Olivia Amoth, Joanna Catton, Anna Gratz, Eliason Hinds-Cook, Alan Hulstrunk, Dhabih Plaire** for the beautiful necklaces and embroidered dish towels.

Too numerous to name are the many local businesses and organizations who generously donated the items and services on our tables. We hope that you will all take note of who they are and support them as they have supported us. We plan to list them on our website.

At the end of the evening, a large committed group stayed behind to help with cleanup: **Dave and Debbie Alba, Kerry and Doug Boysen, Clara and Bill Brock, Barbara and Don Hinds-Cook, Kim Gratz, Audrey and Brian Irwin, Carol and Matt Hulstrunk, JC Mersman, Hattie Muir, Alissa Moses, Mel and Trevor Norland, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Ruby Moon, Rory Plaire, Natalie Sullivan and friends, Lua Siegel, and Allan Rack.**



Doni and Alissa lookin' cute

That is a scary, long list of thank yous!! Your generosity and energy is just prodigious. What an amazing group of people you are! I wish I had words that would adequately express our gratitude. THANK YOU VERY, VERY MUCH!!!

Thank You

Thank You - Feb 2011

Despite the huge effort directed towards the auction, the guitar raffle, and children's program, there was a lot happening at the school in many other areas and projects.

For the classroom, **Janel Lawrence** prepared sewing cards and **Beth Jordan** cut reindeer. **Bill Brock** created a beautiful crown for our St. Lucia Day celebration and **Barbara**

Hinds-Cook baked the traditional St. Lucia buns - the children loved it! **Barbara** also sent in a Swedish doll and **Alissa Moses** sent in some lovely Swedish artifacts including a candle carousel, a candelabra and a hand-carved box.

To help us get ready for our open we are grateful to **Dawn Azinger, Leslie Cohen, Kerry Boysen, Kim Gratz, Carol Hulstrunk, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Janel Lawrence, Janelle and Stony Lohr, Andrea Myhre, Mel Norland, Phyllis Pearson, Rory Plaire, and Lua Siegel** for posting fliers around town. **Liesl Ralston-Tavano and Cian** planted primroses to brighten up our garden area and **Barbara Hinds-Cook** cleaned our shelves and materials and the classroom itself. She took care everything she saw that needed to be done and even called in **Don** to spruce up our schoolyard! Then at our open house, **Janel Lawrence, Amber and Sean Grapoli, and Mel and Trevor Norland** came to host.

Other parents who have come in to clean our materials and shelves are **Delfina Hernandez, Alisaa Moses, Gretchen Goode, and Andrea Myhre**. Thank you very much - it's no small job!

Out of our Recruitment Committee came the Coat and Boot Drive idea - **Doni** counted at least 14 large bags that she delivered to **Vina Moses**! They were very grateful. Thank you for all your donations. A big thank you to **Janelle Iverson** for writing and sending out the press releases and public service announcements for our coat and boot drive. The announcement appeared twice in the *GT*! **Doni Manning-Cyrus** was the point person for getting all the logistical details in place from planning to implementation to delivery. Many thanks to **Pastor Bill Seagren and the College United Methodist Church and Ruby**

Moon of Golden Crane for providing us with convenient venues to collect the donated coats and boots. There were also many of you who helped us post fliers for the drive: **Dawn Azinger, Leslie Cohen, Kerry Boysen, Kim Gratz, Carol Hulstrunk, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Janel Lawrence, Janelle and Stony Lohr, Andrea Myhre, Mel Norland, Phyllis Pearson, Rory Plaire, and Lua Siegel.** Thank you all for the splendid effort!

In the past month, **Cian Tavano** gifted our class with one of our all-time favorite books (the one we have is falling apart): *The Tenth Best Thing About Barney* - a sweet and touching book that explores death with the death of a pet cat. **Alayna Jordan** gave us Sanford Jones' CD, *Green is our Garden: Songs of Nature*. Sanford Jones is Montessori teacher and the founder of at least four schools and the composer and lyricist for some of our favorite songs including Valentine's Day Is All Year, Sunflower and Butterfly. The children have already been walking on the line to the music. Many thanks for these new gifts!

A week before payroll, I went to install our new QuickBooks and got an error message saying we didn't have enough memory for the new program. After talking to **Stony Lohr** about the soundness of buying RAM for a 4-5 year old computer, he saved the day by finding a used one that his company, **Alsea Geospatial**, is donating to us! A big thank you to Stony and to Alsea Geospatial!

Thank you all for everything you have done and are doing. I hope we didn't forget anyone!

Newsline

- We are having another **Open House** on Saturday, March 5 from 10am to 1pm. Please spread the word and invite any interested families that you know!
- Our school will be featured in the **Footwise display window** from March 8 to March 20! Doni and I will be setting up the window on the 8th, but we will need a couple of volunteers to take it down on March 21st between 3pm and 6pm.
- There is **no school** on Monday, March 14. It is our Professional Development Day. Doni and I will be attending the North American Montessori Teachers Association conference: *Nature and Human Development*
- **Spring Break** begins Monday, March 21. School resumes on Monday, April 4. Enjoy!
- We have our **last parent meeting** of the year on Thursday, April 14 from 6:00 - 7:00. (This date is different from the school calendar. We changed it so that Doni could be there.)
- We will be having our **Parent-Teacher conferences** in April. Our afternoon conferences will be on Monday, April 18 and Tuesday, April 19 and our evening conferences will be on Wednesday, April 27 and Thursday, April 28. If for any reason, you feel you need an earlier one, please let us know.
- Our second Children's Open House will be on Thursday, May 5 from 5:30 - 7:00.

Facebook and Twitter

Janelle Iverson has been incredibly generous to our school and patient with you-know-who. This past summer (I think that's when I did it!) I created a *group* Facebook page, but that isn't what we really want so Janelle created a Facebook page for us as a *nonprofit organization*. **That is the one you want to join or become a friend or fan of - the one that's designated as a "nonprofit organization". And please DO!!**

Sorry for all the confusion in the past. And if you tweet our Twitter name is @PH_MONTESSORI

Montessori For the Kindergarten Year

Every year at re-enrollment time, in thousands of Montessori schools all over North America, parents of four- and almost-five-year-old children are trying to decide whether or not they should keep their sons and daughters in Montessori for kindergarten or send them off to the local public schools.

The advantages of using the local schools often seem obvious; the advantages of staying in Montessori are sometimes not at all clear. When parents can use the local schools for free, why would they want to invest thousands of dollars in another year's tuition? It's a fair question, and it deserves a careful answer. Obviously, there is no one right answer for every child. Often the decision depends on where each family places its priorities and how strongly parents sense that one school or another more closely matches their hopes and dreams for their children. Naturally, to some degree the answer is also often connected to the question of family income as well. We are amazed, however, at how often families with very modest means place such a high priority on their children's education that they are willing to find the tuition dollars needed to keep them in Montessori.

So here are a few answers to some of the questions parents often ask about Montessori for the kindergarten-age child.

Q. What would be the most important advantages of keeping my five-year-old in Montessori?

Montessori is an approach to working with children that is carefully based on what we've learned about children's cognitive, neurological, and emotional development from several decades of research. Although sometimes misunderstood, the Montessori approach has often been acclaimed as the most developmentally appropriate model currently available by many experts on early childhood and elementary educations

One important difference between what Montessori offers the five-year-old and what is offered by many of today's kindergarten programs has to do with how it helps the young child learn how to learn.

Over recent years educational research has increasingly shown that students in many schools don't really understand most of what they are being taught. Howard Gardner, Harvard Psychologist and author of the best-selling book, *The Unschooled Mind*, goes so far as to suggest that, "Many schools have fallen into a pattern of giving kids exercises and drills that result in their getting answers on tests that look like understanding. Most students, from as young as those in kindergarten to students in some of the finest colleges in America, do not understand what they've studied, in the most basic sense of the term. They lack the capacity to take knowledge learned in one setting and apply it appropriately in a different setting. Study after study has found that, by and large, even the best students in the best schools can't do that." ("On Teaching for Understanding: A Conversation with Howard Gardner: by Ron Brandt, *Educational Leadership Magazine*, ASCD, 1994.)

Montessori is focused on teaching for understanding. In a primary classroom, three- and four-year-olds receive the benefit of two years of sensorial preparation for academic skills by working with the concrete Montessori learning materials. This concrete sensorial experience gradually allows the child to form a mental picture of concepts, such as: *How big is a thousand? How many hundreds make up a thousand? and What is really going on when we borrow or carry numbers in mathematical operations?*

The value of the sensorial experiences that the younger children have had in Montessori has often been underestimated by both parents and educators. Research is very clear that young children learn by observing and manipulating their environment—not through textbooks and workbook exercises.

The Montessori materials give the child a concrete sensorial impression of abstract concepts, such as long division, that become the foundation for a lifetime of understanding.

Because Montessori teachers are well trained in child development, they normally know how to present information in developmentally appropriate ways. In many American schools, children do exercises and fill in workbook pages with little understanding. There is a great deal of rote learning. Superficially, it may seem that these children are learning the material. However, all too often, a few months down the road, little of what they “learned” will be retained, and it will be rare for the children to be able to use their knowledge and skills in new situations.

Learning to be organized and learning to be focused is as important as any academic work. Doing worksheets quickly can be impressive to parents, but there is rarely any deep learning going on. More and more educational researchers are beginning to focus on whether students, young or old, really understand or have simply memorized correct answers.

Q. In a class with such a wide age range of children, won't my five-year-old spend the year taking care of younger children instead of doing his own work?

The five-year-olds in Montessori classes often help the younger children with their work, actually teaching lessons or correcting errors. Anyone who has ever had to teach a skill to someone else may recall that the very process of explaining a new concept or helping someone practice a new skill leads the teacher to learn as much, if not more, than the pupil. When one child tutors another, the tutor often learns more from the experience than the person being tutored. Experiences that aid in the development of independence and autonomy are often very limited in traditional schools.

Q. Isn't it better for children to attend schools with children from their own neighborhoods?

Once upon a time, people bought homes and raised their families in the same neighborhood. There was a real sense of community. Today, the average family will move two or three times before their children go to college. The relationship that once bound families living in the same neighborhood together into a community have grown weak in many parts of the country.

In many Montessori schools, families who live in different neighborhoods but who share similar values have come together to create and enjoy the extended community of their school.

Children growing up in Montessori schools over the last fifty years often speak of how closely knit their friendships were with their schoolmates and their families.

Q. Since most children will eventually have to go to the neighborhood schools, wouldn't it be better for them to make the transition to kindergarten rather than in first grade?

The American Montessori Society tells of one father who wrote, "We considered the school years ahead. We realized a child usually does his best if he has good learning habits, a sound basis in numbers and math, and the ability to read. We realized that he has had an excellent two-year start in his Montessori school. If he were to transfer now to the local kindergarten program, he would probably go no further than he is now; whereas, if he stays in Montessori, he will reap the benefits of his past work under the enthusiastic guidance of teachers who will share his joy in learning."

Many families are aware that by the end of the kindergarten year, Montessori students will often have developed academic skills that may be beyond those of children enrolled in most American kindergarten programs; however, parents should remember that academic progress is not our ultimate goal.

Our real hope is that children will have an incredible sense of self-confidence,

enthusiasm for learning, and will feel closely bonded to their teachers and classmates. We want much more than competency in the basic skills; we want children to enjoy school and feel good about themselves as students.

Once children have developed a high degree of self-confidence, independence, an enthusiasm for the learning process, they normally can adapt to all sorts of new situations. While there are wonderful and exciting reasons to consider keeping a child in Montessori through elementary school and beyond, by the time they are in first grade, they will typically be able to go off to their new school with a vibrant curiosity and excitement about making new friends and learning new things.

Q. If I keep my child in Montessori for kindergarten, won't he/she be bored in a traditional first-grade program?

Montessori Children, by the end of age five, are usually curious, self-confident learners who look forward to going to school. They are normally engaged, enthusiastic learners who honestly want to learn and ask excellent questions.

What teacher wouldn't want a room filled with children like that? Well, truthfully, over the years we've found some who consider these children "disruptive".

Remember that Montessori children are real human beings, and not all children who attend Montessori fit the idealized description; however, enough do that the generalization is often fairly accurate.

Montessori children by age six have spent three or four years in a school where they

were treated with honesty and respect. While there were clear expectations and ground rules within that framework, their opinions and questions were taken quite seriously. Unfortunately, there are still some teachers and schools where children who ask questions are seen as challenging authority. You can imagine an independent Montessori child asking his new teacher, "*But why do I have to ask each time I need to use the bathroom? or Why do I have to stop my work right now?*"

So the honest answer is that it depends on the teacher and school.

From an academic viewpoint, Montessori children will generally be doing very well by the end of kindergarten, although, once again, that is not our ultimate objective. The program offers them enriched lessons in math, reading, language, and a wide range of lessons in science, geography, and other cultural areas. If they are ready, they will normally develop excellent skills and become quite "culturally literate."

When one of these children enters a traditional first grade, they may have already mastered the skills that their new school considers first-grade curriculum. Some Montessori children are still more advanced. Some non-Montessori elementary schools are willing and able to adapt their curriculum to meet the needs of individual students who are ready for accelerated work, but check that this will occur daily rather than occasionally.

The key concept in Montessori is the child's interest and readiness for advanced work. If a child is not developmentally ready to go on, she is not left behind or made to feel like a failure. Our goal is not to ensure that our

children develop at a pre-determined rate but to ensure that whatever they do, they do well. Most Montessori children master a tremendous amount of information and skills. Even in the rare case where one of our children may not have made as much progress as we would have wished, she will usually be moving along steadily at her own pace and will feel good about herself as a learner.