

# Philomath Montessori School

*September 2016*



## *Welcome to the New School Year!*

Hi, everyone! I hope you are all enjoying a delightful summer. I have had so much fun! Visiting my mom on Decatur Island in the San Juans, lake swimming, concerts in the park, a jaunt up to Spokane to visit my BFF, where I tried my hand at stand-up comedy at an open mic night (crushed it!) and even painted 4 rooms in my house. It has flown by, but just try to complain to a civilian about the end of summer break when they haven't had ten weeks off work. You get the disgusted "cry me a river" look complete with the "you gotta be kidding me" head tilt.

We are admitting 7 new children into our flock this year. I know they and their families will be warmly welcomed by our returning families. Allow me to make some introductions:

3-year-old Cassidy Arzner and her parents Kristen and Nick are joining us. If you have dined at Block

15 or quaffed a brew at Les Caves, you are already familiar with the Arzners' work as they are the proprietors of these establishments. The Arzners enjoy travel and fitness when they can squeeze it in. Cassidy is into Legos and blocks and if you ask her stuffed animals, they will tell you that she is a sparkling conversationalist.



Cassidy drawing

Mackay Foster will be 3 in February and he enjoys puzzles, reading and drawing. He is not flying solo. He also brings his parents with him. Kai is a project manager/analyst and seems very domestic as well, listing gardening, canning and baking among her hobbies. Mackay's dad, Andrew, is an Assistant Director in video production who enjoys politics. I think that may be the first time anyone included that among their interests on their family questionnaire. He also likes to run and bike. He seems very well-rounded!



Mackay working with spooning

We welcome Nayla Hallman! She is 2 years old and she and her parents enjoy bike rides and farmers' markets when they are having a family outing. She has a lot of individual interests as well, such as watering plants and stringing beads. Her folks are Sandie and Jeff. Sandie is an engineer and Jeff has the challenges of a small business owner working from home. They live at CoHo, a very supportive community and learned about our school from the Lohrs.



Nayla observing Walking on the Line

Nora Petersen will turn 3 in October and she loves it when her mom and dad take her to OMSI or the Gilbert Children's Museum. Her mother, Karen, is a homemaker who enjoys exercising and gardening and her dad, Chris, is an archivist who actually likes yard work as well as hiking and swimming. They have a pug named Winston who was a sweet little cuddler at Nora's home visit.



Nora looking at cards with Doni

Nico Siler and her parents Elizabeth Grant and Jeff Siler will be part of our community this year, too. Nico likes to pretend to go to work like Mommy and Daddy do! As a family, they like to hike, go to the aquarium and work in the garden. Mommy is "Liz" of Liz Grant Designs jewelry and Daddy is a Research and Development Manager at Trimble Navigation. We are so glad you are here, guys! And I loved meeting your shepherd mix, Rosalyn, who was so, so snuggly!



Nico pouring water

Isaac Veltri is here, too! This little guy is also 2 and is expecting a new sibling in October! That is such a blessing as Isaac prefers to be in the company of others, but in his "alone time" he likes to dig in the

dirt and pick up sticks and rocks. Isaac's mom, Rebecca is a physical therapist who likes to exercise and hike. Isaac's dad, Anthony is a USDA scientist. I can only wonder what a USDA scientist does in his free time as there were no interests listed for him! Perhaps that will leave him with lots of time to volunteer for PHMS.... He was a very active contestant in our New Parent Orientation Quiz-Off and I can tell you that he must have read his Parent Handbook thoroughly to come up with so many correct answers!



We are so happy to have Roen Oehler starting school this year. This friendly little guy will be 3 in September. At his home visit, he showed his flair for foraging and soup-making in his backyard play kitchen. Roen's dad, Les, is a sustainable jeweler who enjoys travel and foreign language and Roen's mom, Rachael, volunteers at the Benton County Museum helping with displays, archiving and storage. She is an artist in her spare time and likes to go camping.

It is such an exciting time here, getting to know these new kids and seeing the incredible physical growth that has transpired in our returning kids! It's incredible how tall some of them have become! This is the jumping off point for a lifetime of learning and you know we take that responsibility seriously (but not too seriously!) I wish us all a satisfying and pleasant school year! Take care and

Best Regards,

Doni

## Why No Screentime?

Everyone who enrolls at Philomath Montessori is asked how much time their child spends per week viewing screens. Everyone who enrolls also gets a brief, but heartfelt plea to drastically limit or omit screens from their young child's life. This must seem naive, sweetly old-fashioned and downright unrealistic to some folks. Screens are everywhere. They've been designed so we can take them with us wherever we go and they promise intellectual stimulation for the young child. "Leapfrog pads encourage school readiness!" "Disney's 'Brave' has a positive role model for girls as the lead character!" "PBS has no corrupting commercial messages!" Well, some of the above claims may be true. What is also true is that screentime hampers healthy brain development in the child under the age of six. Here's how:

Screens, whether they are showing a thoughtfully chosen children's movie or an engaging educational game, rely on light and movement to create their magic. This very light and movement affects one area of the brain in particular – the cerebellum. The cerebellum is known as "The Little Brain." It is a very old part of the brain, evolution-wise, and one of the first to develop in early humanoids. It is also known as "The Reptilian Brain" as it is similar to the entire brain of snakes and such. It is located in the lower back area of the cranium, just above the brain stem.

As a child's brain develops, the areas of the brain are accessed and linked up through a process called myelination. Between every neuron of the immature brain, there is a gap called a synapse. Incoming data, perceived through the senses, travels through the brain and it must jump these synapses to travel from one neuron to the next. Each time that data or similar data is perceived, it travels the same path in the brain. Each time that path is blazed by incoming data and those same synapses are jumped, a slight coating is laid down over that synapse. If it happens often enough, it completely covers this gap creating a myelin sheath. The myelin sheath creates

perceptions can become integrated in the brain much faster than using a path that has not yet been myelinated.

If you were traveling somewhere, you would want to take the well-constructed path with no big gaps to fall through, wouldn't you? Well, your child's perceptions are no different. They do take that well-myelinated mental path through the brain and they tend to stop moving forward if the path becomes too incomplete, too rough, too..."gappy." So, if a young child spends a lot of time watching shows or movies or playing games on a screen, no matter the quality of these entertainments, the primitive, reptilian cerebellum is the area of the brain that gets the swift, sure superhighway laid down. And the subsequent information that your child is exposed to during his/her childhood tends to go there and stay there. It matters not that the higher-functioning areas of the brain such as the cerebrum house the areas pertaining to creative thought, problem solving, intellect, judgment, attention, abstraction and personality. This sophisticated cerebellum is deprived of the incoming sensorial perceptions which would stimulate and connect it! Because everything is hanging out in the comfortably broken-in cerebrum! So, you see, time spent with screens truly disables the most human and evolved areas of your child's brain.

Additionally, just about anything your child could be doing with his/her hands that engages the brain in concentration is really how they should be spending this valuable developmental period. AND any movie, show or game you may be dying to share with your kid is going to be appreciated on a much deeper level after the age of 6. The humor, the pathos, the meaning is better savored by a more sophisticated mental palate. I hope this article will encourage you to take a critical look at what you are offering your child, knowing that this precious period of young childhood will not come again.

Doni

## Friday Art Class

The first month of Art Fridays, we will be focusing on the use of paint and color. The children will begin by painting each side of their cloth bag using warm colors on one side and then cool colors on the other, combined with a bit of printmaking. These bags will stay in the classroom for the school year and they will use these to store ongoing projects such as weavings. We will also be painting papers to be used in collage throughout the year. For these papers, we will be using water colors and crayon resist.

## A New School Year!

Just a few of reminders to make it safe, sweet and wonderful...

- **Extra Clothes** – please send in an extra set of clothes (tags labeled with your child’s initials). Also rain gear and rubber boots for that upcoming Oregon weather.
- **Emergency packs** – please be sure to send your child in with a gallon-size Ziploc bag full of nutritious, non-perishable food by the end of the first week of school.
- **Please be on time** – we open the doors at 8:50 and will begin circle time at 9:10. You don’t want your child to miss those wonderful stories, lessons and games that we do first thing in the morning! It’s also a great message to your child that being on time is important.
- **Hallway decorum** – please remember to walk in the building and use quiet voices. There will be a staff member in the hallway time at pick up to remind students of what our expectations are for hallway decorum. We hope you will do all you can to support us – holding your child’s hand while walking in the building or if necessary, picking her up and carrying her. Thanks!
- **Birthdays** – please call us a week or two ahead of your child’s birthday celebration so we can put it on the calendar and plan for it. We welcome ½ birthday celebrations, but please - only true May and June birthdays in May and June. Every year we seem to have an onslaught of birthday celebrations during those two months.
- **After-school play** – please remember that using the safety rules that we use at school keeps everyone safe and happy. Children all feel safer when parents set boundaries and consistently adhere to them.

## Newsline

- ✓ Thursday, September 15 is our **first parent meeting of the year**. It will be from 6:00 – 7:30. We will provide free child care for all children – the only requirement is that they are potty-trained. **Another parent meeting** follows on Thursday, October 13. Please put these dates on your calendar!
- ✓ **Thistledown Studios** will be coming to take class picture and individual photos of the children on Thursday, September 29 at 9am – so please be on time!
- ✓ Our **Parent Orientation/Workshop** will be Thursday, October 6 at 6pm. **Doni and Jessica** will be presenting in *Hands on in the Casa*.
- ✓ Be sure to save the date for our big annual fundraiser! **The Love of Learning Auction** will be Saturday, February 11.
- ✓ If your child is a **returning student**, your child's current forms are in your box for you to review and update. It is very important for us to have current information on the emergency form, immunization records, medical school form and your registration form. **Please update information, sign again (Child Care Division requires it) and date. Thanks.**
- ✓ During the year, we may see **fliers and brochures** on the bulletin board from various individuals and groups offering services that may be appropriate for your families. However, **it should not be taken as a recommendation** as we cannot investigate every source for quality.

## Thank You

### Summer Yard Work

- Weeding & harvesting: **The Meyer, Hart, & the Rolston/Tavano Families**
- Mowing & trimming the yard: **The Wu/Emshwiller & Deatherage Families**

### Parent Work Day!! So much accomplished in one day – inside and out!!

- Hard-working volunteers: **Kristen & Nick Arzner, Audrey & James Deatherage, Kai and Andrew Foster, Julie Wiethorn, Sandie Cheung-Hallman, Jeff Hallman, Karin Bolender, Sean Cummings, Lin Li, Guanyi Lu, Jamie Meyer, Jacob Nielson, Karen & Chris Petersen, Liz Grant, Jeff Siler, Joy Ueng,**

**Rebecca & Anthony Veltri, Brendan Ward, Jasmin Woodside, Maya Emshwiller, and Jonathan Jensen**

### **Classroom and Take Home Projects**

- Wash and iron boot bags: **Amy Ward**
- Wash laundry: **Jasmin Woodside**
- Prepare beginning of the year classroom art & math materials: **Karen Petersen, Jamie Meyer, the Hallman family, and Julie Wiethorn**
- Refinish classroom tables: **Brendan Ward**

### **Year Round Jobs**

- Library Parent: **Jamie Meyer**
- Marketing Parent: **Karen Petersen**
- Art Parents: **Karin Bolender**
- Volunteer Coordinator: **Karen Petersen**
- Outdoor Maintenance Parent: **Wu/Emshwiller family**
- Newsletter Designer: **Lin Li**
- Montessori Services Coordinator: **Audrey Deatherage**
- School Chronicler: **Elke Wiethorn**
- Meeting Secretary: **Karin Feldman**

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