

Philomath Montessori School

March 2016

As you may know, our school hosted a student teacher from the Montessori Institute Northwest in Portland. Amy was with us day in and day out for two weeks. She was given observation tasks to focus on, but was also directed to present lessons to small and large groups. Our kids loved working with her and her small groups always attracted quite an audience. They were disappointed when they arrived on Monday and she was no longer with us. She will return, however, after Spring Break and will be even more hands-on, presenting lessons to individual children and tracking their progress.



June, Yasmin & Sariah enjoying each others' company outside

It was gratifying to get her feedback on our group. She has been observing, as part of her teacher-training, in a plethora of Montessori environments and it is wonderful to hear how favorably we compare. She was particularly struck by how encouraging our third-year students are towards each other. "That's a really good 8!" "Did you see So-and-So's writing? It's really good!" "I

love you!" "Thank you for helping." It is good for us teachers, in the trenches, to be reminded of all the positive transactions that occur in any given day here. It is so easy to become fixated on what is lacking, what is sub-par, what has not yet come to fruition. Amy reminded us that there is a very low level of competition here between our students. That is built-in to a Montessori classroom in that we usually have only one of each type of work and so there is no "racing" or trying to best someone in an activity. This limitation allows the children's natural propensity for mutual support to come to the surface instead of one-upmanship, which is probably a societal construct and not innate in individuals. Another skill that the children are all developing and that the classroom staff may take for granted is that of independence. Amy was taken with how even the littlest of our kids know now how to prepare a snack for themselves, following reservation of the snack table and handwashing.



Harper tracing a metal inset

We are still working harder than we would like to on proper handwashing procedure. If you aren't sure what that is, please take a moment to look at the signage in our boys' and girls' restrooms. We find that the most common foible made is that children will soap their hands (taking way too much soap!) before wetting them. The second is that the soap is immediately rinsed away. In fact, before the soap is rinsed down the drain, some twenty seconds (enough time to sing "Happy Birthday" twice) should be spent rubbing the fronts and backs of hands, between the fingers, under the fingernails and around the wrists. If parents and children could work on this process at home, too, then not only would our handwashing be more effective and help us all to stay healthier, but the children could spare us the "you've got to be kidding me" looks when we intervene and re-instruct their technique. Now, don't get me wrong. I am no one's germaphobe. I believe that children who are exposed to other kids, pets and good old-fashioned dirt grow up to have fewer contagious illnesses (eventually) and are far less prone to allergies and asthma than those who live in environments that are wiped down daily with antiseptic. Good handwashing, however, and keeping our fingers out of our various orifices should be part of our social contract when we are at school and washing up before preparing or enjoying food is just good sense.



Jaxson enjoying the stamp game

We have really been enjoying our study of Indonesia here at school. We have been fortunate to have the loan of the Kenoyer's artifacts, especially a

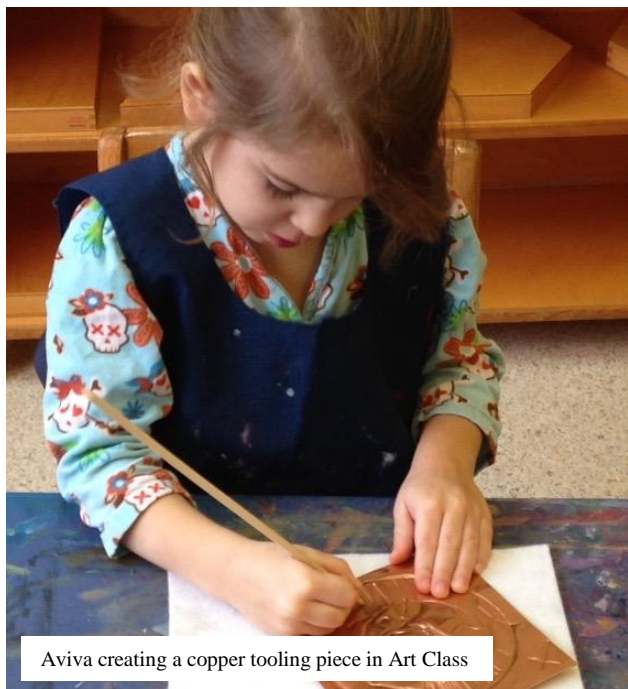
mask that is hung by our front door that is protecting us from evil. The study of Indonesia's exotic wildlife has introduced us to some wonderful animals. My favorite is the tiny tarsier: big-eyed, squirrel-sized, nocturnal primates that are so cute I can understand why foolhardy folks would want to keep them as pets! We have also had presentations on the gamelan orchestras, Balinese dancing and shadow puppetry of Indonesia, the oldest and most-attended puppetry style in all of history. The Indonesians also have forms of transportation that one doesn't see here and some of them look very daring and exciting. And, of course, with 14,000 islands in the archipelago, it's always good to have a boat!



Eric matching the sound cylinders

Our meditation corner has proven to be quite popular. We have read a couple of books on meditation for children, shown two ways to focus on one's breathing and created an inviting area with a special cushion, a bell that the meditator rings to signify the beginning and end of one's meditation and a beautiful, hour-glass-style, 3-minute egg timer. We began meditations without the timer and that worked fine, too. Then the timer arrived in the post and we added that element. Our only rules are that there is no talking in the meditation corner and no speaking to the meditator. One also must remain seated on one's bottom. (If you are curled up, napping, it's not a meditation!) It has been surprising to me to see children earnestly sitting, shoes off, sometimes eyes closed for periods of time. Some kids like it especially and will do it 2-3 times in a

morning. One child tattled, “So-and-So says he is going to sit in the meditation corner all morning!” I said, “I would really like to see that. That would be amazing!” I have read that the benefits of meditation are many – stress reduction, immunity enhancement, amelioration of aging issues , increased attention span, improvement of interpersonal connections, life-appreciation is enhanced, metabolism and weight loss are increased, blood pressure is lowered, serotonin levels are increased which improves mood and behavior, etc. If you have any interest in bringing meditation into your home, I encourage you to try it. If you do it, your child will, most likely, do it, too. And there’s nothing wrong with starting with 1,2 or 3 minutes of practice. That’s a great beginning! There’s lots of support on-line, so go for it!



Aviva creating a copper tooling piece in Art Class

We have shared a book on Hinduism with the older kids and will be speaking to them about the 5 tenets of Islam and some of its customs as well. We will also read a book on Buddhism. We have been reading Indonesian folktales in the afternoon. I love folktales for kids over 5 or so. They reveal many spiritual beliefs from other cultures. They

impart moral lessons which, presented in any other way, would seem preachy. We are reading one now with a lazy, lying sister and a helpful and truthful sister. I wonder who will come out on top? Another was a cautionary tale about immodesty and bragging. One warned against the boorish habit of garrulousness and that it is often wiser to listen rather than speak. Many of the tales are similar to Aesop’s fables and also some Native American folktales. There is so much to them that I would recommend reading them repeatedly from age 5-10 as there is always another level of understanding and reflection to be gained from them.



Theo tracing the greenboards

I just want to end with kudos to the kids for their singing at the Love of Learning Annual Fundraiser. I was proud of them, not only for their fine vocal performance, but more for the way they took direction and paid attention. I think, too, that this was the first year in which no one had a last-minute case of stage fright and had to be swooshed away! I complimented the kids on their poise, performance and professionalism! And I cannot adequately express the gratitude I feel for all of you who worked so hard on our fundraiser! Many thanks!

Best regards,

Doni

All for the Love of Learning...

An auction fundraiser like ours is a huge endeavor, especially for such a small school. So we are so grateful that our group manages to not only pull it off, but in a big and an amazing way. Our awesome auction co-chairs, **Jasmin Woodside and Joy Ueng** took several tough challenges (no raffle, new venue, and a last-minute charge card switch), and met them with the kind of fresh ideas that deftly turned our auction fundraiser into another success story. It was a beautiful event filled with our dearest friends and family members – many of whom contributed much to back up our hardworking troupe of parent volunteers.



Children's performance at the LOL Event

It all began with some serious planning by **Jasmin and Joy** last spring through summer and then on to solicitations – the bedrock of our fundraiser. Thank you very much for all your calls and visits to solicit our donors! Almost everyone went out and garnered donations from around the community, but there were some super solicitors that I wanted to give special thanks – because it's the kind of thing that most of us don't like to do! So special thanks to **Yalda Asmatey, Karin Bolender, Jenny Braxton, Meagan Johanson, Amber Kenoyer, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Leanne Miller, Liesl Rolston, Jon Stoll, Joy Ueng, Julie Wiethorn, Dave Williams, and Jasmin Woodside** for putting in that extra effort! And we deeply appreciate our very generous community of donors – the many

businesses and organizations, and individuals who have supported us enthusiastically over the years. Please be sure to let them know when you see them that we truly appreciate their generosity.

Our families also generously donated wonderful items and services: **Amy Bassett and Dave Williams, Karin Bolender, Regina Berman (Jovi's grandmother), Leslie Cohen, Audrey and James Deatherage, Maya Emshwiller and Zhaohui Wu, Nico Giftai, Elke Wiethorn, Jonathan Jensen and Jessica Neebe, Dennis Johanson (Kaden's grandfather) of Mary's Peak**

Pottery, Doni Manning-Cyrus, McClary family, Allan Rack, Liesl and Steve Rolston-Tavano, Beth Runciman, Siegel-Plaire family, and Ward family. And our alumni families: **Kevin and Kati Albin, Richard and Tracy Choi, Ed Durrenberger and Susan McLaren, Joan Extrom, Lori and Alex Gholson, Jean Goul and Ken Corbin, Jaime and Rich Hahn, Janet and Paul Hochfeld, Grace Jarvis (Megan and Jake's grandmother), Gretchen Landis, Lohr family, and Ruby Moon.**

Then came the basket parties! A special thank you to **Meagan Johanson and Katy Mabeck** for hosting these fun and very productive parties and for storing the completed baskets until auction day. And kudos to our basket creators: **Audrey Deatherage, Maya Emshwiller, Karin Feldman, Amber Kenoyer, Lin Li, Janelle and Raine Lohr, Katy Mabeck, Sarah MacClary, Jessica Neebe, Skye Nielson, Beth Runciman, Rachel Splan, Joy Ueng, Amy Ward, Esme Weil, Elke Wiethorn and Jasmin Woodside** for packaging up so many enticing combinations! Amber came again with a pot of **Chris Kenoyer's** knock-out clam chowder at the party I attended. Thanks, **Chris!!**

In another arena, **Liesl Rolston and Skye Nielson** deftly headed up our children's program drafting a whole new crew of volunteers for our children's

program and then rounding out the evening for them with a magician, face painting, arts and crafts, pizza, cupcakes and even a quiet corner for those who wanted a little less action. Many thanks to the **Corvallis Park and Recreation's Youth Volunteer Corps and Lil' Kickers** for giving their evening to delight and entertain the kids, to **Nutcakes** for donating those luscious cupcakes, to **Ceasar's and Cibelli's** for donating pizzas and to a host of vigilant parents who made sure everyone had a fun and safe evening: **Maya and Zhaohui Emshwiller-Wu, Sarah MacClary, Leanne Miller and Darlene Giddings (Jaxson and Addy's grandmother), Lua Siegel, and Dave and Amy Bassett-Williams**. And a special thank you to **Jacob Nielson** for picking up and delivering all the pizzas!

A big thank you to **Leanne Miller** for securing our generous sponsors who help offset our many expenses. They include **Auto Tech Automotive Service, Barker-Uerlings Insurance, Philomath Family Medicine, Pioneer Telephone Cooperative, DeMoss-Durdan Funeral Home, E.D. Hughes Excavating, Korvis Automation, McGaughy's Farrier Service, Oregon Anesthesiology Group, Pediatric Dental Associates, and Public Good PR**.

We are very grateful to **Stuart Feldman** for all the website work for the auction, to **Dave Williams** for putting together the cool auction pamphlet, to the **First Alternative Coop** for printing the color handbills and our black and white signs, to **Brendan Ward** for the wonderful slideshow, and to **Janelle Lohr and Jessica Neebe** for keeping our Facebook page updated with the latest auction news.

Jon Stoll took on the daunting task of rounding up and creating live auction packages -- he really came through for us! Thank you to **Karin Bolender and Lua Siegel** for making the beautiful live auction displays. **Brian Thorsness** came again to drive our auction to ever greater heights with the help of **Bil Burton**, his ring man. And to add to all the excitement, **Jasmin and Joy** came up with the Golden Tickets idea and then recruited lovely **Serena Kapuler** to sell them at the auction. And then there was the Balloon Pop that promised their

buyers a surprise basket and the chance for a big one! A big thank you to **Jasmin Woodside** for creating all the baskets and to **Yalda Asmatey, Jenny Braxton, Katy Mabeck and Jaime Meyer** -- our lovely Balloon Pop vendors!

Then came auction day and the setup that transformed the auditorium into a festive stage for our Love of Learning fundraiser. It's always fun to watch how a room can turn from plain to dazzling in a couple of hours. Many thanks to all of you who played a role: **Audrey Deatherage (lead), Amber and Chris Kenoyer (lead), Yalda Asmatey, Karin Bolender, Rachel Brinker, Beth Runciman, Meagan and Ryan Johanson, Lin Li and Guanyi Lu, Katy Mabeck, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Jacob and Skye Nielson, Allan Rack, and Liesl Rolston**. Many thanks also to **Sarah MacClary, Julie Wiethorn and Zhaohui Wu** for ferrying baskets, tables, decorations, etc. for setup. How smart to have lead people!!

Warmly welcoming everyone at the door this year was **Leslie and Warren Cohen** -- couldn't be nicer! At the other end, **Leanne Miller, Beth Runciman, and Julie Wiethorn** managed the mad rush at checkout. **Leanne** also brought four wonderful women from her office -- **Selena Clifton, Kailey Hector, Stephanie Painter, and Ann Watkins** -- who were a tremendous help! Our runners included **Beth Runciman (lead), Audrey Deatherage, Ryan Johanson, Matt MacClary, Allan and David Rack, Lua Siegel, Joy Ueng, and Amy Ward**. Many thanks to all of you. This was probably the most stressful part of the auction!

The **Space Neighbors** with our own **Rigel Woodside and Kolby Walker** (former and soon-to-rejoin-us PhMS parent!) soothed and entertained us with their jazz standards -- loved it!! Thank you to **Rigel, Kolby, John Navarro and Nick Rivard** for sharing their music and talent with us. Special thanks to **Doni** for being the lovely emcee that she is and leading (and rehearsing for weeks!) the children in their songs from around the world. And to our outstanding kids who bravely went on stage to give a heart-stopping performance. Wasn't it?!

One of the exciting new features at our auction this year was the Alumni Dessert Bake-off – an idea cooked up by **Amber Kenoyer, Rachel Splan, Shawnde Bausch and Joy Ueng. Raine Lohr (former student), Ashley Folgate (our lovely local librarian)** and I were the lucky judges! I can tell you that all of us had a really hard time scoring – they were all so scrumptious. It was also hard to limit ourselves to just a couple of nibbles of each. We are so grateful to our alumni for baking and creating such incredible desserts: **Shawnde Bausch, Nina Williams (3rd place winner!), Joan Extrom, Kim Gratz (1st place winner!), Ryan Johanson, Marilyn Lindsley (2nd place winner) and Katy Mabeck, Trina McGaughy, Mel Norland, Keller Norland, Robert Siegel, Rachel Splan, Steve Tavano, Elke Wiethorn, Julie Wiethorn, and Dave Williams.** We are *especially* grateful to **Meagan Johanson and Amber Kenoyer** who worked so hard to organize the contest and then later presented this beautiful array of desserts to our guests. Many thanks also to **Esme and Jake Weil** who kept the food tables amply supplied and looking good!

At the end, there were many cheerful, capable hands to help with cleanup at the end of the evening. A big thank you to **James Deatherage, Karin Feldman, Amber and Chris Kenoyer, Meagan and Ryan Johanson, Lin Li and Guanyi Lu, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Katy Mabeck, Allan and David Rack, Beth Runciman, Lua, Dhabih and Rory Siegel-Plaire, Joy Ueng, Jasmin and Rigel Woodside, and Zhaohui Wu.**

Finishing up on a sweet note will be our thank you note writers. A deep thank you to **Leslie Cohen, Sarah MacClary, Jessica Neebe, Skye Nielson and Esme Weil.** There are a LOT of wonderful donors to thank!

After writing this long list of thank yous it always gives me pause about how much it takes to put on such an event. Our small group of parents even though bolstered by a wonderful and loyal group of alumni still need to participate in *many* ways and take on *many* different roles to cover all the

bases. It takes an incredible amount of time and energy and lots of personal sacrifices. Thank you so much for being willing to give your all and more. We, the staff, the board, and the children, are so very grateful. You guys rock!!

Friday Art Class

We just finished a few weeks of working on painting and printmaking on gourds. These gourds were grown and gifted to us by an 80 year old couple living in Corvallis. These were wonderful shaped gourds to work on. This has overlapped with working on fabric designs for pillows using permanent markers and then spraying with rubbing alcohol to spread and blend the colors. This coming week they will stuff the pillows and we will probably take a little mini snooze with our pillows at the end of the day on Friday. Kaden's grandfather, Dennis, has volunteered to help with doing ceramics in the near future, which is very exciting. (The gourds were cut so that they each had a bowl with a lid)



Aayenda painting her gourd in Art Class



Gourds on display

Newsline

- We will be having our **Parent-Teacher conferences** in April and May. Signups for observations and conferences will be up soon if not 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 3 from 5:30 – 7:00. Please signup for one of the half-hour slots. If you have more than one currently enrolled child, please signup for two slots.
- We will be putting **ASQ-SE Questionnaires** in your family boxes on Monday, March 7. Please return it by March 18, 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 21. School resumes on **Tuesday**, April 5. Enjoy!
- From Friday, April 1 through Saturday, April 2, Doni, Jessica and Leslie will be attending a **North American Montessori Teachers Association Conference** in Portland – *A Montessori Integrated Approach to Science, Mathematics, Technology, and the Environment*. So there will be **no school on Monday, April 4** as it is our school's professional day.
- We have our **last parent meeting of the year** on Thursday, April 14 from 6:00 -7:30.
- **Our second Children's Open House** will be on Thursday, May 5 from 5:30 – 7:00.

Thank You

Classroom Projects

- Select, cut, label & mount geography photos: **Skye Nielson**
- Prepared 3rd level sewing cards: **Elke Wiethorn**
- Sewed floor mat for Deconomial Square: **Esme Weil**

Donations

- Yarn: **Meagan Johanson**
- Swedish items & artifacts: **The Miller Family**

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