

THE MESSENGER

February 2010

Directors' Notes

Friendship week is underway, and we are gearing up for the very exciting pajama day/pancake breakfast day on Friday. February 21st – 27th is Montessori Education week. We will be sending quotes home in children's lunch boxes from Maria Montessori. Her insight into children and their development is always inspiring.

Thanks to all the families that came to the Parent Education Evening in January, Montessori in the Home and Potty Training, and to the meeting about All-Day Montessori and Montessori Kindergarten. Both evenings were very successful, we appreciate your involvement in Woodland.

On February 26, school will be closed for our staff in-service day; the teachers will be visiting other Montessori schools or preschools in Madison, Milwaukee, and Fondulac. It is always enlightening to see what is going on in other schools. It is important for us to see how other places work with young children; we may see ways to improve our own classrooms and interactions with children. This is one way that we continue to develop as teachers; it is an ongoing process of building upon what we already know. We will be sharing our observations together at our March staff meeting.

Next Year we are excited to be able to offer all organic snack and organic milk in all the classrooms. Thank You to Devon Kinne and Christine Ellison for doing all the research and figuring out how we can make it work at Woodland. Healthy food is an important foundation for children's development.

Thanks to all the families that have turned in their re-enrollment forms, if you haven't turned yours in yet, please do so by Friday, February 12th. We will be offering available spots to children on our wait list beginning next week.

Thank you,
Heather and Jennifer

Parent Survey

Many Woodland parents and staff like to use electronic tools to communicate with one another. The Woodland website (www.woodland-montessori.org) provides information and allows for email communication.

This year Woodland developed two new formats: group email lists and a Shutterfly.com site.

The Parent Teacher Outreach Committee seeks your feedback about Woodland's communication approaches. Please complete the attached survey by February 24th. There are eleven questions which should take about 5 minutes for you to complete. Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback!

<http://twurl.nl/yql4mn>

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Parent Ed. Evening

Join us for the next Parent Education Evening during the week of March 15, 5:30pm-6:30pm. *Specific date will be announced next week; notification will go out via the Shutterfly calendar and the door signs.* Welcome to both Toddler and Preschool parents. Mary Anne will be presenting the theory and application of Montessori Math and David will be speaking on the importance of Sensorial learning.

Daycare will be provided by two Woodland staff members for any parents who want to attend the presentation.

Annual Auction

Woodland's Largest Fundraiser
Sat, April 17, 5:30-7:30pm
Held and supported by restaurant, Magnus.

Your fund-raising committee asks that each family generate (make or solicit) one donation per child enrolled at Woodland. Value of items should be \$15 or more.

First donations are in:

Studio You! (Paint Your Own Pottery)

Two Loaves of Artisan Bread made-to-order (Patrick McKenna)

Kittleson Swim School

**Massage gift certificate from Michelle Gillette
EVP Coffee**

Tickets to attend are \$15 and include food and entertainment. The silent auction will begin the week before at school.

Questions? Ideas? Tickets? Donations? Email Tonya (Evie's mom from Mary Ann and Pammy's class): tonyaak@hotmail.com

"If we agree in love, there is no disagreement that can do us any injury; but if we do not, no other agreement can do us any good." - Hosea Ballou

Calendar

February

- 8-12 Mon.-Fri. Preschool Friendship Week
- 12 Friday Pajama and Pancake Day
- 26 **Friday** **Teacher In-Service, school closed!**

March

- 5 Friday Parents' Night Out
- TBA: Week of the 15th Parent Ed. Evening
- 20 Friday Solstice Sing-A-Long 10 a.m.
- 29-April 5 **Spring Break-school closed!**

Announcements

- Thanks to John Meister (Elodie's Dad) for refurbishing the Woodland Montessori Sign in front of the School. It looks great!
- Thank you to John Tedesco for donating the new file cabinets in the office, helping us to organize and update the entire office. Thanks also to John for installing the cabinet in Mary Anne's room.
- Mark your calendars for Friday March 5th from 7-9pm for the annual Woodland Montessori Parents' Night Out. Find a babysitter and come and join other Woodland parents for an evening of socializing! Each family brings an appetizer, dessert or beverage to share.

A Montessorian Message

"National Montessori Ed. Week"

February is a great month at Woodland. It is the month we recognize Montessori during National Montessori Education week. This month I would like to really look at how we celebrate Montessori at a more personal level.

Celebrating Montessori, what does this mean? Everyone has their story about how they came to Montessori as a career, or as a school for their children. Parents and educators often discuss what in particular drew them in to the Montessori approach. I have heard "oh when I learned that they

actually bake muffins instead of play on Fisher Price kitchens, I was hooked” or “no, no it was when I read about the peace table and how it solves disputes in the classroom, that is when I knew that this was the type of environment I wanted my child in”, and let’s not forget the classic Montessori hook “I knew I loved Montessori when I saw the children in the classrooms *put their work away!*”

I think about how I fell in love with Montessori, and it was when Bernice gave me and my one year old daughter a tour of the school. I noticed how happy and busy every child was. How they freely moved about the room chatting with one another. It seemed that this engaging environment was set up perfectly to meet each child’s needs; and since their needs were met, the room was peaceful. How beautiful, I thought, these children are not forced to be quiet, or hold their bodies still.

Woodland was not mass producing children to behave how adults would like them to behave. I remember how painful it was for me as a child to *be quiet* or to *sit still*. I thought it was brilliant to take the natural child instincts of noise and movement and give them purpose. It was if the teacher was saying, *by all means make noise, but do it here with these lovely bells, and while you are at it see if you can not put them in order according to pitch. Move, move, move of course! Move by mopping up your spill, playing the bank game, or getting out your rug.* Noise has purpose, movement with purpose, it made so much sense.

This is what I originally celebrated about the Montessori philosophy, but I soon realized that it went far deeper than that. It was out of respect for each child that Montessori learned that they need to move and make noise, and it is this concept of respect that I would like to explore fully and consider how this respect plays out in our own homes.

Let us consider for a minute what is truly at the base of this philosophy. At the center of her ideas is a profound respect for each child. The philosophy asks the teacher to really learn who the child is and relish him/her for it. The uniqueness of the child is discovered, respected, and encouraged.

This is never more important for me to remember as with my own child. It is often her uniqueness that I love her for, but it is also her differences that cause me the most anxiety. Many years ago, when my daughter was in Mary Anne’s Extended Day, I would wait at the bottom of the

stairs outside the office to pick her up at 2:30. Every day a neat little line of children would emerge from Betty’s door each carrying, in some orderly fashion, their papers, snow boots, lunch-box, coat, hat and mittens. The children would come greet their parents or find a space to wait on the stairs (the sitting side of course). It all seemed so organized and together. Then there would be a long pause to the parade of children, sometimes a few seconds, but more often a few minutes, and suddenly the door would slam open and my teary daughter would present herself: hat a strewn upon her tangled hair, one snow-boot, no lunch-box, and a trail of crumpled papers behind her. Mary Anne would be right there with clear statements like “your other boot is near the door in the classroom”, at which point my daughter would howl in frustration from not getting it right again. It was this moment every day that I asked myself “why can’t she be more like the other children, why is this so hard for her, why can’t she be more like everyone else?” It was after several months of this that I realized I had the same child in my classroom. Of course, it wasn’t the same child, but the child exhibited similar characteristics as my daughter, *organizationally challenged* let’s say, but this child did not frustrate me. In my classroom, always conscious of my Montessori training, I appreciated this child. I enjoyed finding playful ways to help him remember his hat or artwork. I found joy in this child’s differences and chuckled at his nature. I felt like a good Montessorian learning from him and altering the classroom to meet his needs. It suddenly dawned on me that I was not carrying out this basic Montessori principle in my own home; I was not relishing my daughter for her differences or for what makes her unique. I realized how this concept, so wonderful in theory, is far more difficult in practice with our own children.

This is how I would like each Woodland family to celebrate Montessori Education during this year’s anniversary. Understand what makes your child different and unique, and which of those things you love them for and which of those things cause you anxiety. While we celebrate the Montessori philosophy it is important to know that it is built upon the recognition of the uniqueness of the child.

Happy Birthday Montessori!
Erin

Preschool Daily Routine

- 7:30a-8:30a Early Arrival - On the playground when the weather is good, otherwise in **Classroom 1** (Betty's room) on rainy days or when the weather is cold.
- 8:30a Preschool classes start in the classrooms.
- 8:30a-10:30a Work time in the classrooms.
- 11:00a Some children have lunch, the children that don't have lunch are on the playground.
- 11:45a The children on the playground come in and eat lunch, the children that just finished lunch go outside on the playground.
- 12:00p Extended day children go inside with Bernice and eat lunch and then start their program.
- 12:30p Some children go home, nappers go inside and nap in **Classroom 4** (Kerry's downstairs North classroom), pre extended day children go into **Classroom 1** (Betty's room). Children in **Classroom 1** (Betty's room) are picked up on the stairs outside of the office at 12:30, Children in **Classroom 4** (Kerry's room) and **Classroom 2** (Mary Anne's room) are picked up in the North hallway outside of **Classroom 4**.
- 2:30p Another pick up time, Extended day and nappers are picked up in the North hallway outside of **Classroom 4** (Kerry's room). Pre extended day children are picked up on the stairs outside of **Classroom 1** (Betty's room) by the office.
- 2:30-5:30p After-school, some children are downstairs in **Classroom 4** (Kerry's room) with Cari B and Raquel and some children are upstairs with David in **Classroom 1**. All children are picked up in the North hallway outside of **Classroom 4** (Kerry's room).

Toddler House Daily Routine

- Winter Daily Routine
- 8:15a.m. – 9:10a.m.: - classroom work time
- 9:10a.m. - 9:15a.m.: use the potty
- 9:15a.m. – 9:35a.m.: snack time
- 9:35a.m. – 9:50a.m.: dress for outside
- 9:50a.m - 10:20a.m.: outside time
- 10:20a.m. - 10:30a.m.: inside and undress
- 10:30a.m. – 11:05a.m.: classroom work time
- 11:05a.m. – 11:25a.m.: line time
- 11:25a.m. - 11:30a.m.: use potty
- 11:30a.m. - 12:15p.m.: lunch time
- 12:15p.m.: morning program pick up
- 12:15p.m. - 2:15 p.m.: Nap time

Toddler 3 Daily Routine

- Winter Daily Routine
- 7:30a-8:20a Early Arrival - On the playground when the weather is good, otherwise in **Classroom 1** (Betty's room) on rainy days or when the weather is cold.
- 8:20a.m. – 9:30a.m.: - classroom work time/open snack time
- 9:30a.m. - 9:40a.m.: use the potty
- 9:40a.m. – 10:00a.m.: dress for outside
- 10:00a.m - 10:45a.m.: outside time
- 10:45a.m. – 10:55a.m.: inside and undress
- 10:55a.m. – 11:25a.m.: classroom work time
- 11:25a.m. – 11:45a.m.: line time
- 11:45a.m. - 11:45a.m.: use potty
- 11:45a.m. - 12:30p.m.: lunch time
- 12:30p.m.: morning program pick up
- 12:30p.m. - 2:30p.m.: Nap time
- 2:30p.m. – 4:30p.m.: open snack and Afterschool