



Chaffee County Montessori School

JANUARY 2011

Happy New Year and welcome to 2011! I hope you have had a restful and blessed holiday season. Doug and I had a wonderful trip to Seattle. Liza asked about each of you and appreciated all the kind wishes you sent. She's having a great time in her work there, but misses all of the kiddos here and wanted to know what each of them were up to this year.

I hope you will take some time to read the article by Dr. Steven Hughes (page 3-4) and then schedule an observation in each of our classes to see firsthand the ways the Montessori Method is working its magic with your children.

Ms. Claudia

JANUARY 2011 HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesda	Wednes	Thursd	Friday	Saturda
9	10 <i>School Begins Again!</i>	11	12	13	14	15
16	17 <i>No School: MLK Day</i>	18	19	20 <i>After School Social</i>	21	22
23	24	25	26	27 <i>PTSA Mtg. 5pm</i>	28	29
30	31	Please be sure to attend the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) meeting on January 27 at 5pm. It is very important to have your input and ideas!				

COMPLIMENTS...

In the elementary class, at least once a week we share compliments with each other. It could be noticing work completed with good effort, noticing how someone helped a classmate or cared for our classroom or just someone being a good friend. This month, Stacey Joslin wanted send a couple of compliments and suggested starting a Compliment Section in each monthly newsletter. We thought it was a great idea! We hope you'll pass it on by sending your compliments for the newsletter to Megan Juba (meganjuba@yahoo.com) by the 20th of the month for publication in the following month's newsletter. (Feel free to send other information or suggestions to Megan, as well....)

To: Jennifer Orr From: Stacey Joslin

Thank you for the great food and for watching the kids so much! The food was perfect and well timed since Bryan was getting tired of cooking.

To: Megan Juba From: Stacey Joslin

Thank you so much for the incredible soup! How kind of you to think of us. My husband absolutely LOVED it too!

To: Claudia Mann From: Stacey Joslin

You make the best lasagna I have ever had! Wow!

PRIMARY NEWS

Ms. Michelle

Greetings and Happy New Year! I hope everyone enjoyed their holiday break and are refreshed and ready for a great new year. We will definitely miss our Ms. Nancy as she has decided to retire and to enjoy her life to the fullest! We wish her the best of luck in all that she pursues. Ms. Menessah will be joining our primary learning community and we are excited to have her as part of our team. We are looking forward to guiding and nurturing your child through the rest of this school year.

I thought this might be a good time to review some of our procedures in our January newsletter. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call the school (719-539-4887) or me at any time. My cell number is 620-640-8207 and I can also be reached at 719-395-5896.

Arrival/Dismissal

Drop off and pick up is at the playground gate. There will be a teacher at the gate entrance from 8:15-8:30. The children will have a short amount of time to play before entering the classroom between 8:30-8:45. The gate will be locked at 8:45, so if your child is late, you will have to ring the bell. Dismissal for half-day students is 1:00 p.m. and full-day students will be dismissed at 3:30 p.m. You will need to sign-out when you pick up your child at these times. A written note is required if anyone other than a parent or guardian is picking up your child. We are required to check a photo ID of any person that is unfamiliar.

Inside Shoes

We ask that each child have a pair of comfortable slip-on shoes to wear solely in the classroom. This eliminates any wet or soiled shoes on the carpet where a majority of our work is conducted.

Breakfast and lunch

It is important that your child have a good healthy breakfast before coming to school. Our program is long and challenging and we want each child to find daily success.



“The greatest sign of success for a teacher... is to be able to say, “The children are now working as if I did not exist.””

Dr. Maria Montessori

Lunch takes place in our classroom from 11:20 to approximately 12:00 noon. Ms. Leslie serves us wonderful healthy lunches and the lunch forms are sent out each month and need to be returned ASAP so she can plan accordingly. However, if you plan to pack your child a lunch, please remember the following:

- Please keep it healthy and small (a child's stomach is as large as his/her fist).
- Please limit the choices to no more than 3 or 4 items.
- Please pack a drink (no soft drinks) or your child may have water from the classroom
- Please label your lunch boxes and containers
- Please do not pack utensils – we have silverware in the classroom.
- Please no candy.

Snack

Snack is provided in the morning and afternoon for the children. A family provides these snacks for the month for the primary and elementary children. This is greatly appreciated and it is a

wonderful time for the children is re-energize and to socialize during this time. The children can also have a small snack if they work in the practical life area while doing food preparation or cutting/slicing work which might consist of carrots, celery, bananas, cheese, apples, and oranges.

Water Bottles

We ask that each child have a water bottle – one that your child can open and close and refill independently when necessary. This will stay at school during the week and be sent home on Fridays to be sanitized. Please return them on Mondays. The water bottle will be used in the classroom and on the playground to reduce the use of paper cups.

Change of clothes

We ask each child have a change of clothes here at school. Please make sure all items are labeled with your child's name, and are appropriate for the season.

We appreciate your help in these areas and we look forward to working with you and your child.

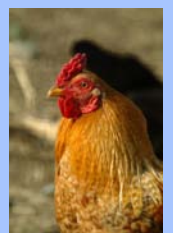


EGGS FOR SALE...most days

\$3.00 a dozen (Extra Large/Jumbo)

\$2.50 a dozen (Medium)

We also gladly collect egg cartons.



FAMILY MATTERS

Dr. Steven Hughes gives and Neuropsychologist's Perspective on Montessori

(a publication of Countryside Montessori School, Northbrook, Illinois) <http://www.goodatdoingthings.com/> October 2008 Vol. 13 No. 3a

Montessori education is a brain-based, developmental method that allows children to make creative choices in discovering people, places and knowledge of the world. It is hands-on learning, self-expression, and collaborative play in a beautifully crafted environment of respect, peace, and joy. It is also about brain development. A skillful Montessori teacher knows what stage a child is in their brain development and they are meeting it, and they are feeding it. The Montessori method is like education designed by a pediatric developmental neuropsychologist.

Montessori education is the original and, I think the best brain-based model of education. The body is rather interestingly mapped along the surface of the brain. It is not mapped on the brain in any way that matches the size of the area. It is not a one-to-one mapping. If you were to build a human based on what the brain thinks a human looks like the most striking feature would be the unusually large hands.

Why do young children, who are still developing the ability to understand language, spend so much time sitting and listening to teachers at a conventional school? Wouldn't it be nice to design an educational model around hands-on activity, physical manipulation, and engagement in the world? Maria Montessori did just that.

There is a model of the way the brain is organized and how it works which I refer to as the nuggets and networks system. Areas of the brain do not function in isolation, they communicate with other areas through networks of active fibers. Brains need healthy nuggets and healthy networks in order to function.

Nuggets can be defined as small, circumscribed areas of the brain that perform a specialized function is reading. Reading is a cognitive function that requires the coordinated use of more than one nugget. Reading does not happen in one spot in the brain; it's the coordination of multiple spots that cover things like letter and word recognition, phonological processing, and language comprehension. Somehow, Maria Montessori knew about these nuggets. The Montessori reading curriculum is astonishingly dead-on in helping developing brains condense the nuggets that perform these certain functions.

In the brain of a child with a learning disability, there is a nugget that is not formed. That nugget is necessary for a critical component of reading. If we can identify that a child has a nugget that is not firing correctly, or not at all, we can help that nugget form. One of the ways you do that is through a series of very circumscribed, specific, and repetitive tasks that are about training that little undeveloped nugget. You can actually do some significant remediation using that method.

Networks are the fibers underlying the surface of your brain, or your cortex. When you are confronted with a novel task, your brain needs help. Your brain then calls on all quarters to solve the problem. A healthy and well-developed network system helps bring all hands, or all neurons, on deck. There is a lot of general processing happening everywhere in a novel problem-solving brain.

In a Montessori classroom, a child will learn how to grip an object using the Bailey's two-point pencil grasp through doing cylinder work; the little handles attached to the cylinders require that sort of handling. When the child then moves on to writing, they know how to hold a pencil as a result of all the time they spent handling the cylinders. This is an example of how the networks in your brain function. The novel task of holding a pencil is supported by previous activities.

There are some things we know of that can help brains develop healthy and strong nuggets and networks. Repetition helps build better brains. Repetition is a big part of the Montessori environment.

Take, for example, the pink tower. The child's motor system is developing so that he or she can hold the top pieces of the tower high and still enough to place them on top of each other. It feels good to develop this mastery. We can also build better brains by providing our children with settings in which they feel secure. A child can sit in a quiet, beautiful spot in the classroom and look at a book in peace. Or they can take care of plants. They have the freedom to check to see if the plants need watering and the knowledge of how to care for another living thing.

Hands-on work can also enhance learning. There is research that directly compares the effects of observational vs. hands-on learning. You will not be surprised to hear that hands-on matters. In a Montessori classroom, children learn that tasks have a beginning part, a doing part, and a completion part. All of these practices of life activities are supporting the development of networks that will be utilized in practical daily tasks.

We know we can also build better brains through multisensory activities or through sensory specific activities. Maria Montessori observed that children are drawn to balancing on railings or tightrope walking on lines. She noticed that children are drawn to these sorts of things, so she understood there must be a sort of developmental need for them.

Maria Montessori wrote late in her career about characteristics that emerged everywhere in the world in children that come out of these Montessori environments. They had a love of order, of work, of silence, and of being alone. They had profound concentration abilities. They demonstrated appropriate obedience not obsequiousness. They showed independence and initiative, and they had spontaneous self-discipline. They were well-attached to reality, and they were joyful. *continued p4...*

...continued p3.

I think we are starting to realize, at national and international organizational levels that we need to analyze and harness the forces that control what happens in schools, and we need to work to change society for the benefit of children.

In fall 2006, Angeline Lillard published a study in "Science," one of the most prestigious journals in the world which examined academic, social, and intellectual outcomes of children who were educated in a Montessori environment. She used a student sample from Milwaukee, where there is fantastic public Montessori involvement. Many people want to send their children to Milwaukee's Craig Montessori School. You have to enter a lottery to be accepted. Lillard was able to compare the children who won the lottery and went to the Montessori school with the children who applied but did not win the lottery, and ended up at other schools. This provided Lillard with a largely urban, lower-income, diverse study sample. It also gave her random assignment participants.

In her study, Lillard found that Montessori children demonstrated significantly stronger social cognition skills. They performed better in academics and were better able to put themselves into the shoes of somebody else in the understanding of what had gone on in a situation.

The general summary from Lillard's work is that in a real-world, public, inner-city Montessori school with an excellent implementation of the Montessori model, there were differences favoring the Montessori kids in executive functioning, decoding and early math, understanding of the mind, and appeals to social justice and social behavior by the end of kindergarten. Those advantages were present early on, and remained at grade 6.

People do not doubt that the Montessori method works for children of privilege. They are delighted to hear it works in inner-city public school systems, because most kids to conventional public school systems. There is no reason that schools in our culture have to be the way they are. It is about industrialization. It is about tradition. It is about inertia. Nobody who is a developmental psychologist, nobody who is a neuropsychologist would design a school today that would look like a conventional school does today. It is just habit.

At this point, in the history of the world, in the history of our civilization, what happens next will depend on how the earth and its inhabitants are regarded by those who stand to inherit it. I believe that if our children and grandchildren are to see the 22nd century, those who are running things now need the 21st century to value a civilization that holds peace and kindness, and justice and respect for the needs and welfare of others as core values. These values lay at the heart of Montessori education and I believe these values will support the value of our planet and our species.

Ed Note: This special edition of Family Matters gives an outsiders view of Montessori education. While not associated with Montessori, Dr. Hughes is uniquely positioned to have an opinion on it. If you are intrigued by his description of a Montessori classroom, we invite you to visit and see for yourself.

Article reprinted from AMI-USA News. Dr. Steven Hughes, PhD, L.P., is a pediatric neuropsychologist and Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology at the University of Minnesota Medical School, and a diplomate of the American Board of Pediatric Neuropsychology.

PRIMARY NEWS Ms. Claudia

This semester we will be welcoming Stephanie Leddington to the lead teacher position in the toddler class. Stephanie has Montessori certification for Primary and has been teaching toddlers in Australia for the last two years. She began her work in Montessori three years before that in China.

It was quite surprising that we would meet at just the time our toddler class needed a new teacher, but such is life! Stephanie's folks spend half their year in Buena Vista and learned of CCMS through the monthly articles I write for the Mountain Mail. Stephanie's mother phoned me to learn about the school and to say that her daughter would be visiting for nearly a month over the holidays. She hoped that they might visit. After attending our Holiday Tea, Stephanie and I spent several hours over several days discussing CCMS, the toddler program and her thoughts for short and long term development. She

observed in the class for an hour or so the last week of school and decided to join us.

Stephanie's two children will join our elementary class: Lily, a first year and Jack, a third. They spent some time with Mr. Doug and he won them over with the rock and mineral cabinet...no surprise there!

Stephanie will join us full time in February after she puts closure on their life in Australia. In the meantime, please come to meet her, Lily and Jack on Sunday, January 9 from 2-4 and introduce her to your children.

Rebecca Brown has graciously agreed to work with Ms. Tegan for the first four weeks and will spend time with Stephanie before she goes back to Australia so she can set up the program under her guidance. Of course, if you have any additional questions about the transition, please don't hesitate to call me.



"If help and salvation are to come, they can only come from the children, for the children are the makers of men."

Dr. Maria Montessori

ELEMENTARY NEWS

Mr. Doug

We're looking forward to the children coming back to school! The time after the holiday break is often the most focused and productive of the entire year. There will many new lessons, some new curriculum to be explored and preparation (read "inspiration") for our mock Geography Bee coming up in early February.

We want to thank everyone who came out for the Cultural Fair in December. The children not only enjoyed it and learned a tremendous amount about each country, but they also had a great time learning from their classmates. Both children and adults from outside the CCMS community shared glowing remarks about the poise and knowledge demonstrated by our students. The press we received in the Mountain Mail inspired a member of the Salida community to offer a demonstration of Japanese martial arts sometime this winter. The children have already asked to plan another cultural fair before the end of the year.