



BLUEBIRD BULLETIN

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MIR Presents Dr. Steven Hughes **School 2.0: Montessori and the Future of Education**



Montessori and Motivation: Independence, Repetition, Context

by MAURA JOYCE, HEAD OF SCHOOL

MIR is pleased to welcome back Dr. Steven Hughes as the featured speaker for our first Parent Education Night of the year. He will present on *School 2.0: Montessori and the Future of Education* on Monday, October 22, at 7 PM here at MIR.

Dr. Hughes is a board-certified pediatric neuropsychologist who has assisted children and adolescents with a wide range of learning, developmental, and medical disorders. He is a strong pro-

"The prize and the punishment are incentives toward unnatural or forced effort, and therefore we cannot speak of the natural development of the child in connection with them."—Maria Montessori

Motivation—it is an important engine for the functioning of our society. What motivates students, employees, or family members to work and contribute to the community or a cause has been of interest to educators, psychologists, and economic advisors for decades. Research in this area is prevalent and results are similar: rewards and punishments are limited in their effectiveness to motivate people. Whether you've read Jane Nelson's book on parenting (*Positive Discipline*) or Alfie Kohn's treatise on education (*Punished by Rewards*), or Dan Pink's work on business (*Drive*), each cites research that looks at what motivates human beings in their multiple roles.

I recently watched the animated fast-draw that Pink had done for his book *Drive*. It was not the first time I had seen

it but it resonated more intensely with me this time around. It is worth the 10 minutes if you have the time. The link is youtube.com/watch?v=u6XAPnuFjJc.

One of the reasons the video drew me in this time around, is that Pink's summary of a research study done at MIT relates to some of the brain research that Dr. Steven Hughes has shared with the international Montessori community over the years. **Dr. Hughes joins us this month for our first Parent Education event, which is not to be missed.** The study challenges the paradigms many of us grew up with, yielding results opposite to what we might think as parents, teachers, and business owners.



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A little bird told me...PTM News and Notes

By Jennifer Burrows, PTM President

Thank you to all the attendees and volunteers who made Back to School Night a huge success! As always, it was a great kick-off to the new school year. The next school event will be Parent Education Night and Annual Fund Kick-off celebration on **Monday, October 22 at 7 PM**. Dr. Steven Hughes, a pediatric neuropsychologist, will be presenting *School 2.0: Montessori and the Future of Education*.

Meet Your 2012-2013 PTM Room Reps

Your room representative is your liaison with the school, sharing important information about school activities and providing your feedback back to the school. Thank you to all the room reps who volunteered for these important positions.

Class	Representative(s)	Class	Representative(s)
Aedín	Coral Pham	Nikki	Lori Digulla and Olivia Montaghani
Christine	Christie Pleiss	Sara	Gabby Symmes and Charity Plaxton-Hennings
Liana	Jill Scholz	Emily and Teesie	Kym Howo and Heather Florida
Jean and Maryhelen	Allison Pate-Smart, Vanessa Leslie, and Joanne Parkinson	Kelly	Tara McFann
Kara and Marie	JJ Cadkin and Leann Pulido	Nicole	Rika Minami and Rachel Mickelson
Maria	Holly Stillings and Flor Urrea-Krahn	Margaretann	Molly Hopkins

PTM Family Skate Night

Please join us for a night of skating and fun on Friday, October 19 at CalSkate in Grand Terrace from 5–7 PM.

Tickets are available in the office up until 4 PM on October 19 for \$6 each, or get them at the door for \$8. The prices include skate rentals.

MIR has the rink booked as a private skating event. This event is open to all MIR, Farm, and Grove students as well as any friend and family they would like to bring as their guests. CalSkate will not charge an entrance fee for those children or adults not skating. They do have skates available for toddlers as small as size 9 (3-4 year olds). They also have skating supports (that look something like walkers) to help beginning skaters keep their balance. We look forward to seeing all the kids and families enjoying some social time together!

Prize Deadline has Passed but You May Still Order from Innisbrook

Thank you to all who have already placed Innisbrook orders. Your order will be delivered to your child's classroom. The deadline for earning prizes has passed, but you and your family can still place orders and benefit the PTM. Order online at innisbrook.com using school code 102074. Orders placed online will be shipped directly to your home.

Fridays in October: Drop off Your BoxTops

Saving Box Tops is one of the simplest ways to raise funds for MIR. Box Tops are located on many of the items you may use every day—and each one earns 10 cents for the school. To make it easy to drop off Box Tops, every Friday in October Elementary students will collect the coupons when you drop off your child.

Halloween Carnival Volunteers Needed

The PTM Halloween Carnival will take place Friday, Oct. 26, 5-8 PM. Volunteering is an easy way to fulfill your volunteer hours!



Kids love when their parent helps in their class booth. To volunteer, contact your room rep or look for a sign up sheet in your child's classroom. If you are not able to come or volunteer, please help by donating food. Each class has a sign-up sheet for food donations. Setup for the carnival will begin Thursday evening, 6-7:30 PM and continue Friday, 9 AM-12 PM and 3-5 PM.

Your help is greatly needed for a successful event. We hope to see you there!

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Report from the Board Defining Our Mission

by MAURA JOYCE, HEAD OF SCHOOL

One of the jobs of the Board of Trustees at Montessori in Redlands is to move the school forward in its mission. For many years, the MIR mission statement read as follows:

Montessori in Redlands' mission is to guide children in reaching their full potential. Our role is to provide carefully prepared environments in which the academic, social, and spiritual needs of the children are fulfilled. Through purposeful activity, the children are free to follow their inner rhythms, enhancing a limitless capacity for exploration and learning. With this experience, they become individuals who are responsible, caring and respectful.

It is a statement that served our school well and one that outlines many of the things we do. However, it is a mouthful! In 2009 and 2010, the Long Range Planning (LRP) committee of the Board of Trustees embarked on a process to identify the *strategic vision* of MIR. This involved input from the community via meetings and surveys, collecting the voice of the parents, students, staff, Board, and some alumni parents too. The result of this was the *Living the Montessori Journey* document which outlines the school's core values which drive all decisions about the future of our school. Our core values address many of the points made in our mission statement above. And once the work of the strategic vision was completed, the LRP committee realized that our mission statement was a bit redundant.

Last year we began to look at re-writing our mission statement so that it fit in well with our core values and strategic vision. While we were at it, we asked, "Wouldn't it be nice if it was shorter, more concise, *memorable*?" Writing a mission statement for an organization is a tricky thing. To really reflect on the school's mission we needed perspective of the variety of our programs, the growth of our school, *our reason for existing*, over a long period of time. Luckily for us, Aedin Artigue, MIR's Toddler teacher with over 30 years at the school, sits on our

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Curriculum Matters

By PETER DAVIDSON,
ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

The Joy of Discovery

"Education is not something which the teacher does. It is a natural process which develops spontaneously."—Maria Montessori

For September's Coffee, Tea and M.E. (Montessori Education) I set out a variety of classroom materials for the parents to try. The activities ranged from dusting a table, replacing cylinders of various dimensions in the correct holes in a wooden block, fetching vegetable cards by name, and identifying objects by their initial phonetic sounds, to the sandpaper letters, metal inset, and moveable alphabet. To the parents it must have seemed like a pretty random assortment of activities, until I explained a way in which they are all connected.

Often in Montessori a larger skill is broken down into smaller component skills. The activities in a Montessori classroom allow the child to gradually accumulate all of those component skills until the day when he or she puts them all together to discover the larger skill for him or herself. In this case the larger skill is *writing* and the component skills fall into two categories of component skills: preparation of the *hand*, and preparation of the *mind*.

Under preparation of the child's *hand* for writing, we have the many exercises of practical life such as washing, polishing and dusting, since they refine the child's arm to movement, from shoulder through fingers, to conform to a left-to-right/top-to-bottom motion. Sensorial exercises such as the cylinder block are topped with knobs of the same thickness as a pencil. While the child exercises visual discrimination of dimension, he is also exercising and strengthening his pencil grip by grasping the knob.



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MOTIVATION (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

However, looking at a Montessori environment, it makes perfect sense.

Drive identifies the three top human motivators: *autonomy*, the human need to direct one's own life; *mastery*, getting better and better at something that matters; and *purpose*, context for the work that is beyond oneself. In Montessori these three things are built into the classroom at every level. Our youngest students may not be conscious of what they are doing, but they are following their inner drive through the freedom they are given to engage in activity on their own within a community.

Maria Montessori's observations are validated by the MIT study. She saw the same things, although she called them by a different name:

Independence (autonomy): Montessori knew that children from a very young age have an inner drive to become independent. She designed environments that allow children freedom of movement and choice of work for them to engage in activity on their own. They are very driven to be able to "do it by myself!"

Repetition (mastery): Montessori also observed children repeating and repeating certain activities, no matter

how much they may have struggled with them, to perfect their movements or get it right. They naturally moved towards mastery as long as the activity involved their hands and they were allowed to repeat it.

Context (purpose): As the children got older, Montessori realized they were interested in the "big picture" first, before investigating the details. Montessori Elementary lessons include etymology, practical uses, history, and relevance before demonstrating a skill. Montessori children never ask the question, "Why do I have to learn this?" They want to "dive in" because they know how this skill or knowledge helped others before them, helps them in their life going forward, and how it could help others.

Pink's book spoke to economists and people in the business world, but he felt that those of us in education had a lot to learn from this information on motivation. Thanks, Dan, but Maria had you beat and we are on it!

What motivates students will be only one point that Steven Hughes will touch upon in his presentation, *School 2.0: Montessori and the Future of Education*. Please join us on Monday, October 22 in the main building at 7 PM.

MIR Kicks Off Annual Fund Campaign

MIR is a private, *non-profit* school that strives to keep tuition as low as possible to keep our programs affordable without sacrificing value. It has grown and prospered not by charging high tuition rates, but with the support of dedicated parents, teachers, and friends of the school, like you.

This unique, quality education does not come cheaply. We sustain and improve our programs through a successful Annual Fund. Each year we ask families, alumni, and friends to give generously to the MIR Annual Fund campaign.

Whether through professional development, campus improvements, or financial aid, Annual Fund dollars allow MIR to keep going and growing. When you participate in the Annual Fund, you are supporting today's students and helping to grow an even stronger future for new generations of Montessori children.

On Monday, October 22 immediately following our Parent Education Night, join MIR for a reception to celebrate the work of MIR students and learn how you can support their education through the Annual Fund.

Penny Davis to Begin New Parenting Class

Raising children is hard. Before we become parents, we have a clear idea of all the things we won't do, and of all the things we'll do "right." If we do all of the "right" things, the theory goes, our children will rarely misbehave.

Then we have actual children.

If you're finding parenting to be more challenging than you expected,

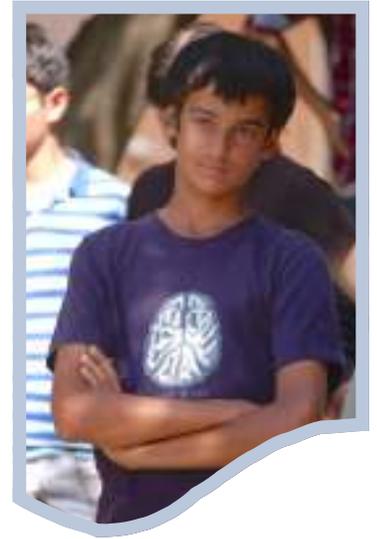
sign up for the fall 2012 *Positive Discipline* parenting class with Penny Davis. The class offers a friendly, supportive environment in which to share your setbacks and successes and to learn new ways to tackle your challenges.

Classes will be held Tuesdays, October 9–November 20, 6:30–8:30 PM in the MIR Yoga Room. Register in the office. Space is limited to 30 people/15 couples. The cost is \$125 per person/\$200 per couple. Check is due at sign-up and payable to MIR.

Thank you to PTM for generously covering the cost of books.



MIR SCRAPBOOK



Parent Work Day: It's a Family Affair



6th year students work hard to bring in the buyers to their yard sale.



CURRICULUM MATTERS *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 3)

In the metal inset work, the child fills in a geometric shape with a color pencil, but in a certain way—with one continuous line, staying within the shape and moving up and down—exactly as he will when writing with a pencil. When his two fingers trace the shape of each of the sandpaper letters, he is directly preparing his hand to make that same



shape later with a pencil or piece of chalk.

But what about the child's mind? What's the use of preparing her to express herself in writing if she doesn't have thoughts and ideas to express, and the sounds and words with which to express them? That is where enrichment of vocabulary comes in. She will also need to learn to distinguish the phonetic sounds of the English language by playing sound games with phonetic objects with the teacher ("Can you show me the object that starts with the sound 's-s-s'? Yes, sock *does* start with the sound s-s-s-s."), and to associate each of those sounds with its cursive symbol with the sandpaper letters.

These two pathways of preparation, one for the hand and one for the mind, come together when the child is introduced to forming words with the cutout letters of the moveable alphabet. Having acquired all of the smaller component skills in earlier work, in essence *the child discovers writing for himself*. Soon thereafter he will begin spontaneously reading back what he has just composed, and *add a second great discovery to the first*.

Of course, for some children this discovery does not come along as smoothly and easily as for others. If her teacher finds that he has encountered some learning obstacle, she can be there to help him more directly until he

overcomes it. Then, again, she will step back and let him put the skills together for himself. Although it can be tempting to do so, we try never to take away from the child's own sense of discovery, since nothing else compares to that, in terms of joy and satisfaction.

This is what separates Montessori from almost everything else out there. Rather than directly teaching the children everything, we prepare the children indirectly, so they can teach themselves.

If you would like to make some of your own discoveries with the Montessori materials, come to the next Coffee, Tea and M.E. on October 19. We will be using the sensorial materials to see what we can teach ourselves. How many ways can you build the pink tower? How many and what kinds of triangles can you combine to make a rectangle, a trapezoid or a hexagon? What other fraction pieces fit into 1/3? It's never too late to make discoveries, is it?

If you're ready for in-depth discovery, join us for *Journey and Discovery* on Saturday, November 3.

PTM NEWS AND NOTES *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 2)

Whether you have five Box Tops or 500, this is an easy way to support MIR. There are containers in each classroom and at the office year round. The funds collected through the box top program benefit PTM projects including carnivals, camp Montessori and parent education evenings.

For more information on the Box Tops for Education program, contact Annie Rumary (annie@onpressprinting.com) or visit boxtops4education.com.

Don't Get Caught Without Your Bluebird Shirt

Thanks for showing off your school spirit on Bluebird Day! MIR students, staff, and families are encouraged to wear their Bluebird t-shirts as a show of school spirit and just for fun. T-shirts are available in the office for \$8. Some sizes are on order, so please be patient. **Take a picture of your child anywhere in the world** (or just at home), and submit it to Lisa Kensok (lisa.kensok@montessoriinredlands.org) for publishing in the *Bluebird Bulletin*.

Next PTM Meeting

The next PTM meeting is October 22 at 6 PM right before Parent Ed Night. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Rediscovering Montessori: A Parent's Personal and Professional Experience

by DR. LEILA KHAZAENI, PEDIATRIC OPHTHAMOLOGIST AND MIR PARENT

Recently I had the wonderful opportunity and really a special privilege to give a presentation about eyes to one of the MIR Elementary classes. After describing the parts of the eye to the audience (47 or so 6-12 year olds), we broke up into 5 smaller groups and each group worked with an adult to dissect a cow's eye. We had a great time and the students seemed to like the dissection as well. (I had brought over 4 adults to help—fellow physicians and colleagues from work.)

I learned a lot that morning—not necessarily from the dissection, but from observing the differences between what I saw in the Montessori classroom and what I observed later that day at a more traditional school.

We were scheduled to repeat our presentation for a 2nd grade class of 20 students at a local private, traditional-style school. In this setting, the children were kept outside the classroom in a “recess” period while we set up the dissection stations and then as they came in we were instructed to “be careful and make sure they don't touch anything yet.” The teacher did most of the talking, introductions, and directing of the students. When the lesson was over, the students were sent outside while we cleaned up to help prepare them to transition to the next lesson.

These were bright, happy students—they were just having a very different educational experience than the students at MIR. We felt

more like we were presenting to 2nd graders whereas in the mixed-age environment at MIR, the experience was more like presenting to young adults. The students were mature, responsible, independent, self-aware, socially responsible individuals. As we put away our dissection supplies, the students were not distracted or disorganized – they very naturally went back to the work they had been doing before we arrived.

I am writing these thoughts because I feel so fortunate that my three children can be in a Montessori environment, where learning is more self-directed and natural. The experience also prompted feelings of guilt that over the past 6 years I have not attended *Journey and Discovery*. Between three

kids, two busy physician parents, and no family in the area to rely on for babysitting, we haven't been able to make those Saturdays happen! But seeing how the Montessori students worked made me remember how important it is to understand how they learn and what they do each day.

We are so proud and privileged to be a part of the MIR community. I recommend that all MIR parents attend *Journey and Discovery* if they have the opportunity to gain a real understanding of the differences between Montessori and the traditional education they grew up with.

Editor's note: Journey and Discovery will be held Saturday, November 3 from 8 AM–2 PM. More details will be available soon.

BOARD REPORT (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

Long Range Planning committee. Several new statements were submitted and tweaked by various members of the committee. We solicited input from staff and other Board members, as well as parents who were working on Board committees. Word-ing was changed, rearranged, omitted, and added. It took some time, but we got there.

This year the Board voted on and approved Montessori in Redlands' new mission statement, which we are incorporating into all of our material and on our website. It was Aedin who was able to articulate our mission so well. The Board thanks her and the Long Range Planning committee for their work on this. It is truly a statement that reflects why we are here and what we hope for the children who come through our doors. Oh, and we did get it down to just one sentence:

Montessori in Redlands is an environment where children begin a life journey of self-realization, love of learning, and global responsibility.

6th Year Pasta Lunch at Farm Artisan Foods

Thank you to everyone who stopped by the 6th year yard sale—it was a huge success. For their next fundraiser, the students will host a pasta lunch on Sunday, October 14 at Farm Artisan Foods (on State Street in Redlands). Lunch will be served between 11:30 AM and 2:30 PM.

Tickets must be purchased in advance from a 6th year student. Adult tickets are \$10; tickets for children 10 and under are \$5. Purchase tickets directly from a 6th year student. Leave a message in the office to be contacted by one to buy tickets. The fundraiser supports the students' trip to Washington, D.C.

SCHOOL 2.0 (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

ponent of Montessori education based both on his work and personal experiences. He is a dynamic speaker and this evening is sure to leave you with much to think about.

Dr. Hughes' talk will be followed by a lovely reception to kick-off MIR's Annual Fund campaign. Hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be provided, and the reception will feature a gallery of MIR student work.

Child care will be available for enrolled Primary and Elementary students. There is no cost for this event or the child care. Please RSVP by Monday, October 15.

Join the Fun at the Halloween Carnival

Friday, October 26, 5–8 PM. Costume parade starts at dusk.

Bring the entire family for a fun night of games, rides, and festivities at the annual **PTM Halloween Carnival!** Admission is free. A fall dinner of baked potatoes, chili, hot dogs and a beverage will be available to purchase for \$5.



Get Ready to ShakeOut!

Drop, cover, and hold on for 60 seconds on Thursday, October 18 at 10:18 AM with more than 8 million other people for the Great California ShakeOut earthquake drill. MIR students and staff will join The Grove School in extending the drill to include a practice evacuation for both schools to the soccer field. For more information about the Great ShakeOut or to register your participation, visit shakeout.org.

October 2012

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1 Elem. dance class	2 Lango classes	3 Kara/Marie's class trip to Riley's Apple Farm Elem. dance class Positive Discipline refresher class, 6:30 PM	4 Lango classes	5 BoxTop Friday
8 Staff in-service day. No school, no childcare.	9 Kelly's class trip to the landfill Lango classes Positive Discipline class, 6:30 pm	10 Elem. dance class  Picture Day for all classes	11 Lango classes	12 BoxTop Friday Running Club: Mt. SAC Invitational Sara's class trip to Plaxton Orchard Sunday —6th year pasta fundraiser lunch at Farm Artisan Foods, 11:30 AM-2:30 PM
15 Elem. dance class	16 Lango classes Positive Discipline class, 6:30 pm	17 Elem. dance class	18 Great California Shakeout, 10:18 AM Lango classes	19 BoxTop Friday Coffee, Tea, and M.E., 8:45 AM Bluebird Skate Night, 5-7 PM
22 All Toddlers: Field trip to the Pumpkin Patch Elem. dance class PTM Meeting, 6 PM Parent Ed Night, 7 PM	23 Nikki/Maria's class trip to Greenspot Farms Lango classes Positive Discipline class, 6:30 pm	24 Elem. dance class	25 Lango classes	26 BoxTop Friday Bluebird Assembly, 9:15 AM School closes at 5 PM HALLOWEEN CARNIVAL, 5-8 PM
29 Elem. dance class	30 Lango classes Positive Discipline class, 6:30 PM	31 Elem. dance class	1 Childcare reservations due for Veteran's Day Lango classes	2 Jean/MH class trip to Living Desert Saturday —Journey & Discovery, 8 AM-2 PM