

*Inspiring a Healthy Spirit, a Strong Character, and a Clear Intellect*



# BLUEBIRD BULLETIN

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## Join us for Back-to-School Night and Class Orientations

Back to School Night will be held Thursday, September 6, at 5:15 PM and is designed to help you get acquainted with the school, life in the classroom, and what to expect this year.

We will meet on the Primary playground behind Jean and Maryhelen's classroom. Bring a blanket to sit on. Parents and Teachers of Montessori (PTM) will provide snacks and drinks. When you arrive, be sure to check in and get your name tag.

The night will start with an informal gathering. At **5:30 PM** the official program will begin with a welcome by Head of School Maura Joyce followed by an introduction to MIR staff, Board of

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**PLEASE NOTE: School will close at 5 PM on Thursday for Back-to-School Night. Childcare is not offered after 5 PM that day.**



## Welcome Back!

by MAURA JOYCE, HEAD OF SCHOOL

*"The most effective kind of education is that a child should play amongst lovely things."—Plato*

This week 330 students walked through the doors at Montessori in Redlands to begin the 37th year of our school! Our biggest enrollment yet, it was a busy, busy start! Still, walking around I observed that the classrooms were calm and peaceful as children settled into their environments, which will serve as their home away from home this school year. During our first week, the staff and students celebrated Maria Montessori's birthday by talking to the students about her life and work and singing "Happy Birthday." Honoring the woman who created such a wonderful way to educate children seemed like a good way to kick-off the year.

This summer I had the privilege of working with close to 100 Montessori school administrators from around the country. Some of them were my colleagues and we were gathering to exchange ideas and learn about children and family issues on a global level, and

what we can do locally to better the lives of children and families in our own community. Some of these administrators were my students as I led a 4-day course in strategic planning. In meeting with all of these administrators and hearing about these other schools that are doing wonderful work, I was reminded of just how unique the Montessori in Redlands community is, and how lucky my child and I are to be here.

In the Montessori world, MIR is considered a large school. With The Grove School, our charter school neighbors, we are a community of more than 500 students ages 18 months to 18 years. Most Montessori schools are much smaller, with about 100 students in Primary and Elementary programs only. We are fortunate to own our property and have facilities that were built specifically for our

*(Continued on page 4)*



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

### By Jennifer Burrows, PTM President

Welcome back to all of our MIR families! And a very special welcome to our new students and their families!

The Parents and Teachers of Montessori (PTM) support parents and teachers and keep the MIR community informed of and involved in school events. Your 2012-2013 PTM Board is:

- Jennifer Burrows, President
- Kathleen Liess, Vice President
- Vanessa Causley, Secretary
- Carmen Levesque, Treasurer
- Jean Bonner-Drinkwine, Teacher Liaison

PTM functions like the PTA at other schools. We are dedicated to building a stronger school community, fostering communication, and promoting parental involvement. PTM sponsors parent education events to promote awareness of Montessori practice and philosophy, parenting, and other topics. We also organize and sponsor fun events such as Camp Montessori and two carnivals each year.

PTM meets monthly to create a network of parent support, organize our activities, and plan events. **All parents are welcome and encouraged to attend meetings.**

### We Want You: Be a Room Representative

Meet other parents and get involved with your child's class by becoming a PTM room representative! Room reps act as liaisons between MIR and class parents. Responsibilities include attending monthly meetings, helping organize and run PTM and school events, and communicating important information back to class parents.

We need two "room reps" for each class. **Notify your child's teacher if you are interested.** Some people have already nominated themselves for this important role. Thank you. However, we are still seeking interest as some of the classrooms do not have representatives.

A Room Rep Orientation will be held on Thursday, September 20 at 6 PM. New Room Reps will receive an invitation in their parent folders with details.

### Bluebird T-Shirts

MIR Bluebird T-Shirts are available for purchase in the office for \$8. These are offered in black, pink, or gray and come in a range of sizes.

### Bring in Your BoxTops

PTM collects BoxTops for Education. They are the little pink coupons worth 10¢ each to the school that you can find on General Mills cereals, Betty Crocker, Pillsbury, Huggies, Kleenex, Cottonelle, Ziploc, Saran Wrap, Viva, and lots of other products. PTM uses BoxTops to raise funds for MIR, and you can help us by saving these coupons and placing them in the designated Box Top collection boxes in each class or the office reception area and drop-off venues. This money is completely free and only requires the time it takes to save and collect. PTM coordinators donate their time to submit the coupons twice yearly.

If you have any questions regarding the Box Top program, please come by the PTM table at Back to School Night or ask your PTM Room Reps. Happy collecting, and thank you!

### Support the Innisbrook Gift Wrap Fundraiser

MIR families will again have the opportunity to participate in our Innisbrook gift wrap fundraiser, which runs September 7–September 28. Funds support PTM-sponsored events such as carnivals and Camp Montessori; sponsorship of guest speakers; and PTM donations to MIR such as new tricycles and playground improvements.

You are not required to participate, but we hope you consider doing so. Look for order forms in your parent folder. You may place your order online or bring in your form and we will place it for you. Items purchased will be delivered to your child's classroom. Out-of-town friends and family may order online at [innisbrook.com](http://innisbrook.com). Our school code is 102074.

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## Report from the Board

by PAMELA FORD, PRESIDENT

The school year begins again. Whether you have toddlers or teens there is a new energy in the air! The entire Montessori community, including the members of the Board of Trustees, are ready for the excitement of learning and growing in the Montessori world.

Your board met over the summer to discuss and reaffirm some of its goals for the year. We are proud to serve MIR, and we are pleased to introduce you to new members of the board.

Lorraine Slattery-Farrell is one of two new members. She may be familiar to some of you as a former assistant in Christine's Toddler class and as a former MIR parent. She brings those insights to the Board but she is also a specialist in Child Development and Education. Having earned her Bachelor's and Masters degrees in this field, she is now an Assistant Professor at Mt. San Jacinto College. Her students will work with children as educators and child care providers all over southern California.

We are also happy to welcome Treva Webster and her unique set of skills and insights. Treva is an assistant dean at Loma Linda University. She has skills and degrees in both nursing and business. She is already participating in Finance Committee meetings and sharing her welcome perspectives. Treva, too, is a mom who very conscientiously planned her children's education.

You will recognize other members of our board. Trevor Norton, a member of the Theatre Arts Department at the University of Redlands and an MIR parent, continues to contribute his sense of humor as well as his thoughtful ideas about how to do things. A lighting designer, he has both creative vision and the skills necessary to implement the vision physically. That's why he is the chair of the Facilities & Technology Committee.

Michele Vercoski is the mother of three MIR youngsters. As a practicing attorney, she leads a very active life yet dedicates time to the board, to MIR committees, and to the best possible future for the school. It's Michelle's eye for legal details that have been very helpful in board decision making.

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## Curriculum Matters

By PETER DAVIDSON,  
ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

### The Environment as Teacher

*"When I am working on a problem, I never think about beauty. I only think of how to solve the problem. But when I have finished, if the solution is not beautiful, I know it is wrong." R. Buckminster Fuller*

The week before school starts is one of the busiest weeks of the year for the staff at MIR. Every teacher and assistant works long and hard preparing each classroom environment to be the functional, attractive, and near-perfect place the children will utilize and enjoy the following week.

We must look strange and a bit obsessive as we scrub every shelf and table, repair any material that is broken or incomplete, and shop for plants and art to make the classrooms places of beauty and order. All of the effort seems worthwhile to us because we know first hand the importance of the classroom environment itself as a teacher to the child. Maria Montessori describes this phenomenon in her book *The Child in the Family*:

"It is possible to find graceful, tiny furniture, brightly colored and so light that the pieces turn over if the child bumps into them—a quality that also makes it possible for him to move them about with ease.

Spots show up clearly because of the light colors, and this makes it possible for the [child] to see his responsibility immediately, and to learn the simple remedy of soap and water.

Light furniture tends to exaggerate any abrupt movement by the noise it makes. As a result of this, the child develops an awareness of bodily movement.

One can also get tiny objects made of glass or porcelain. The child learns that if he lets them drop, they will break and be lost forever—from that point on, the child will exert every effort of will to walk steadily when he carries a fragile object.

The environment itself will teach the child, if every little error he makes is manifest to him, without the intervention

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**WELCOME BACK (cont.)**

*(Continued from page 1)*

needs. Our beautiful setting is not common in the Montessori world. Several of the schools that I was advising were leasing space in strip malls or searching for their third or fourth location as they outgrew their last one or the landlord decided to occupy the space themselves. Many of my colleagues were in awe of our relationship with Grove, a charter adolescent program that is tuition-free for the students. This is by far the most unique part of our community, sharing the campus with a public Montessori school.

Flying back on the plane after 10 days of this work, I felt a tremendous amount of pride and appreciation for MIR. I was excited to start the new year, meet all the new faces, and continue to provide the environments and the support for the children to start their Montessori journey.

If you are new to the school, please introduce yourself to me. I may not know your names at first, because my brain will be busy learning all 330 children’s names, but I want to get to know all of you too!

**CURRICULUM MATTERS (cont.)**

*(Continued from page 3)*

of parent or teacher.

The aesthetics too...encourage attentiveness in the active child. For this reason everything ought to be attractive. Attractive objects invite the child to touch them and then to learn to use them.

He will be attracted to a brightly colored cloth and learn it is used to dust tables, or to the brush for his clothes, or to the soap with which he can wash his hands. In this fashion, beautiful things will attract him from every corner and instruct him practically by themselves.

Now it is no longer the teacher who says...‘Carl, brush yourself off,’ or ‘John, wash your hands.’

Any child who is self-sufficient, who can tie his shoes, dress or undress himself, reflects in his joy and sense of achievement the image of human dignity, which is derived from a sense of independence.”

This was one of Dr. Montessori’s first discoveries: that the environment itself could be recruited as a teacher to the child. Without adult correction, the children begin to correct themselves. Without even adult suggestion, children who are shown *how* will naturally want to care for things, for each other, and for themselves.

Each summer I have a meeting with parents of our newest toddlers and Primary students. We look at a film to-

**Scrip Available at the MIR Office**

The Grove School will now be selling scrip on the MIR campus each Wednesday morning. Scrip will be sold in front of the office from 8:00-9:15 a.m. It is also available at The Farm School on Friday mornings 7:30-8:30 a.m. and at the Grove farmer’s market on the first Saturday of the month from 8 AM-12 PM.

“Scrip” is a fundraising program that benefits The Grove School programs. Scrip is simply a word that means “substitute money.” Scrip comprises gift cards and certificates from national and local retailers. They’re the same gift cards and certificates that you buy at the store. Participating retailers sell these gift certificates and cards to The Grove School at a discount. You buy and redeem them for full face value and The Grove School keeps the difference as revenue.

Many popular local retailers participate in our scrip program including Krikorian Theatres, ARCO, Shell, Stater Bros, Vons, Albertsons, Gerrards, JCPenney, The Gap, Pizza Hut, Red Lobster and many, many others. The program allows you to use your regular household shopping dollars to support the school at no extra cost to you or the school.

gether called “Edison’s Day.” For those of you who have not seen it, it’s a day in the life of a 2-year-old named Edison growing up in a pretty idealized Montessori home. Parents are always struck by this little person’s competence, independence, self-confidence, and dignity. It seems almost miraculous. Then we discuss as a group the characteristics of his home environment that make this miracle possible. We begin to recognize small changes we could make in our own homes to allow our own children to become the competent, independent, self-confident, and dignified people they were meant to be. And we begin to see the environment as a teacher.



# A Few Guidelines to Ensure a Smooth Year

We are looking forward to a wonderful year partnering with you to help your child reach their full potential. Be sure to observe the following rules to ensure a smooth year, and read your Parent Handbook for more information about policies and procedures for the school.

**Please drive no more than 5 mph in the parking lot.**

Small children have a habit of darting into the middle of the lot faster than their parents can catch them (amazing how fast those little legs can move). Be on the lookout and drive slowly!

**Remember to sign your child in and out.** This is required by state licensing regulations but more importantly it is crucial in an emergency, as the sign-in sheets are used to help track all children. We also need you to be accurate about what time you sign your child in and out. Because this information is so important, you will be charged \$9.50 for each time you do not sign your child in or out.

**Bring medications to the office.** Medications must be dispensed by the office, even for older children. Please sign them in at the office. They must be in their original container with the name of the child written on it.

**Please do not park at the curb to drop-off your child.** Curbside drop-off is available to Elementary students and to Primary students on the main campus. You may pull up and sign in your child from the curb, but please do not park and leave your car—this blocks the line behind you. If you need to physically get out of your car, please park in a parking space. **For more information on the school, its policies, and what to expect this year, join us for Back-to-School Night on Thursday, September 6 at 5:15 p.m.**

## BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT (cont.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

Trustees, and the PTM Board.

**At 6 PM** Primary and Elementary Orientations begin. Primary students go to classes with parents. The assistants have planned a special activity for them. Elementary teachers, parents, and students meet in

their classrooms. Elementary students have been working hard on presentations for Back to School Night and need a quiet, attentive audience. It is strongly recommended that toddlers and babies be taken home to avoid disrupting these important meetings.

Toddler parents are in-

## Help Keep Our Students Healthy

With the start of school, and with many children entering school for the first time, we start to see sniffles, coughs, and sneezes soon into the school year.

With your help, we can reduce the spread of illness. To ensure a healthy school and happy children, we must ask you to keep your children home when sick, even if they are only mildly ill.

Licensing rules requires that children are fever-free for 24 hours before attending school. A fever is defined as 99.9 degrees or higher. Any child showing signs of active illness, such as a runny nose or cough due to a cold, should stay home and will be sent home if brought to school to maintain the health and safety of our community.

We do understand that it can be hard sometimes if a child seems mostly “fine,” but with so many very young children and some children with more vulnerable immune systems, we must err on the side of caution and have ill children stay home.

MIR will notify parents if more severe or contagious illnesses break out, such as strep throat, so that you can take necessary precautions.



### MIR Needs Tennis Rackets

Do you have a spare racket you could lend or donate to MIR? P.E. teacher Rachel Mickelson is in need of 30 rackets of all sizes until the end of November. If you lend the racket to MIR, please be sure to include your family name on the handle.

vited to a “meet and greet” on the Toddler playground. *We regret that we are unable to include younger or older siblings.* Toddler Parent Orientation will be held separately on Tuesday, September 18 at 6 PM.

The evening concludes at **7 PM.**

## MIR to Offer Vision Screening for Students

On Tuesday, September 11, our students will have the opportunity for vision screening provided at no cost by MIR parent and pediatric ophthalmologist Leila Khazaeni, MD.

Dr. Khazaeni and her staff from the Loma Linda University Vision Intervention Program will be on campus to screen all MIR students with a photorefractive screener. The photorefractive screener takes a picture of your child's eyes and gives a pass/fail result within seconds. The photoscreener is like a camera and does not touch the child.

The photoscreener checks for refractive error, misalignment of the eyes, opacities, such as congenital cataracts or tumors, and unequal pupils. All of these problems are treatable if caught at an early age. If your child fails the vision screening, you will be directed to see your child's pediatrician for a referral to an appropriate eye care specialist. If you would like your child to be screened, you will be asked to sign an authorization form on the day of the screening. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ellen Camarillo at [ellen.camarillo@montessoriinredlands.org](mailto:ellen.camarillo@montessoriinredlands.org).

### Learn More about Montessori Education at Coffee, Tea, and M.E.

At 8:45 AM on one Friday of each month, Assistant Head of School Peter Davidson will host Coffee, Tea, and M.E., an informal gathering where participants discuss Montessori education, MIR, or education in general. The format for this is very flexible and meant to invite conversation.

All discussions will be held in the Yoga room. Coffee, tea, and treats will be provided. **The first Coffee, Tea and M.E. will be held on Friday, September 14.**

### PTM NEWS AND NOTES *(cont.)*

*(Continued from page 2)*

#### **Bluebird Running Club Resumes**

Led by teachers Jean Bonner-Drinkwine, Teesie Emge, and Emily Fitzgerald, the running club meets 7:30 AM Fridays outside Emily and Teesie's classroom and runs until 8:15 AM. Children ages 6 and older are welcome to join. They should wear running shoes and bring a water bottle. Write "RC" next to your child's name on the sign-in sheets and you will not be charged for childcare. We do not meet on rainy days. **Parents are welcome and encouraged to join as well.**

### BOARD REPORT *(cont.)*

*(Continued from page 3)*

Dean Silliman is also an attorney. He is the father of two daughters at MIR and he is very good at speaking up for his family's experiences at the school. He is a thoughtful spokesperson for the best of MIR. Without giving legal advice, he has been willing to remind us of the importance of legal details in our decision-making. A detail man, Dean is the board secretary.

Robert Dawes is an alumni parent. He has served on the MIR Board in the past and was willing to return to the board three years ago. As an auditor, he is very careful with MIR's finances. This is his fourth year on the Finance Committee and his first year as treasurer for this board.

Walt Johnson's son is now at The Grove School. Walt has an appreciation for MIR as well as great vision for its future. He is a surgeon currently focused on global health initiatives. His training and experiences encourage him to ask reasoned and balanced questions when we discuss our board business. Walt serves on several of the board committees and is our Vice President.

I'm the last board member to describe. I am an alumni parent (two boys, both of whom also attended The Grove School.) I was once the PTM President as well. I am a professor of Anthropology at Mt. San Jacinto College and I hope that my anthropology background, my teaching experience, and my college committee work can all contribute to make me a worthy president of your board.

The list above describes the voting members of the board. We are advised in every meeting by other members of the MIR community. Jennifer Burrows, your PTM President, keeps us aware of parent activities and issues. Teachers Aedin Artique and Kelly Read advise on classroom and curricular issues. And both Maura Joyce and Peter Davidson bring their administrative training and their Montessori training to the board.

What I think you really should know about this board is that the members work well together, are respectful of the entire MIR community and Montessori education, and are dedicated to the very long and healthful life of Montessori in Redlands so that it will be here for your children and for your children's children.

## MIR Offers Hot Lunch Program in Cooperation with The Grove School

MIR is pleased to offer a new “farm to fork” hot lunch option for the school year in cooperation with The Grove School.

Lunches will be made fresh at The Grove High School kitchen and will be available Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. MIR will offer pizza on Wednesdays. Vegetarian options are available.

Lunches are designed to be healthy and well-balanced and will feature locally grown produce. All lunches include side items such as fruit, salad, or bread in addition to the main dish. Children who order hot lunch will be provided a beverage in class.

Lunches will continue throughout the school year except for holidays. **All orders, including pizza, must be submitted online by 12 PM on the Sunday preceding that school week.** Look for a weekly email with the link, or follow the link at [montessoriinredlands.org](http://montessoriinredlands.org).

### Lango to Offer Spanish and Chinese Language Classes at MIR

Lango, an organization dedicated to the early learning of foreign languages, is offering Spanish and Chinese classes after school at MIR starting Tuesday, September 11. Classes are offered separately from the MIR school day and require separate registration. They are held in the Yoga room on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the following times:

- Spanish (ages 3–6): 3–3:30 PM
- Spanish (ages 6–9): 3:45–4:30 PM
- Chinese (ages 4–9): 4:45–5:30 PM

All classes last 12 weeks. The cost is \$314 per child, which covers the class and materials. Enroll online at [www.langoredlands.com](http://www.langoredlands.com) or call 909-528-3154.

Students who normally end their school day at 3:00 PM or 3:30 PM must be signed out from their MIR class and taken to the Lango class by a parent. Students whose day ends at 5:00 PM will be picked up for class by the Lango teacher.

#### Google honors Maria Montessori's birthday with a doodle



### Questions and Answers

1. **How do I sign my child(ren) up for lunch?**  
All orders, including pizza, will be taken *online only*. A new lunch menu for the following week will be emailed every Wednesday and available online. You must place your orders by 12 PM on Sunday.
2. **Where will lunch be served?**  
Toddler and Primary lunches will be delivered to the classroom. Elementary students will pick up their lunches at the Grove High School kitchen window at the end of playtime.
3. **What happens if my child did not sign up but he/she wishes to purchase lunch on a particular day?**  
We are not able to accommodate same day lunch orders.
4. **What if I sign my child up for lunch and they refuse to eat it?**  
You are still responsible for the cost of that lunch and will be billed for it. We will encourage them to try it.
5. **How much will lunch cost?**  
Toddler lunches are \$3; Primary and Elementary lunches are \$4 each. MIR will bill monthly for each lunch ordered.

### New Refresher Course Offered for Positive Discipline Parenting Class Alumni

As children get older, your parenting techniques need to evolve. If you've taken a Positive Discipline parenting class at MIR and would like a review on parenting techniques for different ages, we encourage you to sign up for our new four-week refresher course. The class offers a friendly, supportive environment in which to learn and to share your successes and setbacks.

Classes will be held Wednesdays, September 12, 19, 26, and October 3, 6:30–8:30 PM in the MIR Yoga Room. Register in the office or by phone (909-793-6989) by Friday, September 7. Participants must have taken the initial seven-week Positive Discipline course.

Space is limited to 30 people/15 couples. The cost is \$80 per person/\$150 per couple. Check is due at sign-up and payable to MIR.

*The 7 week Positive Discipline parenting class for first-time participants will begin October 9. Look in your classroom parent folders for information on signing up.*

### Camp Out at Camp Montessori

Start the school year with a night under the stars at Camp Montessori on Friday, September 28 starting at 6:30 PM. We will pitch tents under the trees of MIR, cook hotdogs and hamburgers, sing songs, tell stories, and have a whole lot of fun. In the morning everyone will enjoy a pancake breakfast. Children ages 5 to 12 are welcome on their own or with parent volunteers. Children under 5 must be accompanied by a parent volunteer.

Fees are \$30 per child or \$15 for children accompanied by a parent volunteer. Sign up in the office. Payment is due at sign-up. Parent volunteers will be asked to help with cooking, clean-up, and activities.



### Volunteers Wanted for Parent Work Day

Help get our campus ship shape for the school year! Join us for Parent Work Day immediately following Camp Montessori, 8:30-11:30 AM on Saturday, September 29. Many hands make light work!

### Celebrate Peace on September 21

MIR and The Grove School will observe the United Nations' International Day of Peace together on Friday, September 21, gathering at the MIR Peace Pole on the north campus.

"Peace Day" was established by UN resolution in 1981 to coincide with the opening of the UN General Assembly and provides an opportunity for individuals, organizations, and nations to create practical acts of peace on a shared date.

As part of our celebrations we are going to start to build a labyrinth and need each child to bring in a rock. It can be any kind of rock—the smallest being the size of your child's fist and the largest being the size of two adult fists together. Children can paint the rock or just bring in a plain one. (If you forget there will be rocks on hand so that every child can participate.) Bring in rocks on Friday, September 21 or before, and your child's teacher will keep it in the classroom for Peace Day.

### Check Your Spam Folder for MIR Email

MIR sends out weekly schedule information and weekly lunch menus and order forms. Be sure you're not missing this important information. Check your email system's spam, junk, or bulk email files for our first set of emails. Be sure to mark MIR as a safe sender to receive this important information. You can also update your email to a different address.



## September 2012

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
3  School closed for Labor Day. No school, no childcare.	4	5	6 <b>School closes at 5 PM</b> Back to School Night, 5:15 PM Primary/Elem class orientations, 6 PM	7 PTM Innisbrook Giftwrap sale begins
10	11 Vision Screening Lango classes	12 Positive Discipline refresher class, 6:30 PM	13 Lango classes	14 Coffee, Tea, and M.E. (Montessori Education), 8:45 AM
17	18 Lango classes Toddler Parent Orientation, 6 PM	19 Positive Discipline refresher class, 6:30 PM	20 Lango classes PTM Room Rep Orientation, 6 PM	21  INTERNATIONAL PEACE DAY
24 Board of Trustees Open Forum, 6:30 PM	25 Lango classes	26 Positive Discipline refresher class, 6:30 PM	27 Lango classes	28/29 Bluebird Assembly, 9:15 AM Innisbrook Giftwrap orders due Camp MIR, 6:30 PM <hr/> Saturday—Parent work day, 8:30-11:30 AM