



BLUEBIRD BULLETIN

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Build a Park in a Day— Join us for Helping Hands Community Day of Service

The annual Redlands “Helping Hands Community Day of Service” will be held Saturday, April 27, 8 AM-1 PM at Heritage Park across the street from MIR.

You are invited to join MIR at this event, which will focus on creating most of the park during the time of the event (see the “Board Report” on page 3 for more info). Service work will also focus on needed improvements to the Grove Farm school (see page 5 for more details) and the Redlands Asistencia.

You’ll need to fill out waivers to participate. **Sign up at redlandsservice.org.** Lunch will be provided by Noon Kiwanis at the MIR south parking lot.

Heritage Park will provide a tremendous learning and natural resource for MIR and The Grove School. We’d love to have a big presence among the volunteers!



Unforgettable Learning

By MAURA JOYCE, HEAD OF SCHOOL

“One test of the correctness of educational procedure is the happiness of the child itself.”—Maria Montessori

Every year, I “share” my article space with another Montessorian. This month, my article is written by my friend and colleague John Snyder, who has taught in a Montessori classroom for decades, and is a regular contributor to the journal *Public School Montessorian* in which this article originally appeared. Snyder writes about how we foster learning in the Montessori classroom using the terminology of psycholinguist Frank Smith from the University of Toronto. In his beautifully written, deeply thoughtful book *The Book of Learning and Forgetting* (Teachers College Press, 1998), Smith introduces the very helpful language “forgettable learning” and “unforgettable learning” (or “permanent learning”).

In Montessori we look for certain characteristics in a healthy, well-functioning learning community and in each individual in that community. We want to see enthusiastic learning. Whether the children are quiet and deeply engrossed in work or actively exploring and discussing together, there should be an aura

of happy, spontaneous expression of their natural drive to learn. We know, both from classroom experience and from decades of educational research that this kind of learning only comes about when the learner is intrinsically motivated.

We want to see children developing at their own pace on all fronts: strengthening concentration, gaining self-confidence to take on greater challenges, developing perseverance, increasing self-knowledge, gaining knowledge in all areas while exploring deeply and joyfully in some areas. We want to see children growing in the knowledge and practice of social relationship and the morality that is rooted in community living.

Sometimes we wonder aloud if our children are “learning anything.” In fact, both we and our children are always learning. Short of extreme situations of deprivation and abuse, it is impossible to keep a child from learning. Learning is what a human mind does when-

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

By THE MIR PTM BOARD

NOMINATE OFFICERS FOR THE PTM BOARD

Do you know someone who would be a great asset to the PTM board? Nominations for Vice President and Secretary for the 2013-14 school year will be accepted April 22 through May 3. Nomination information will be sent out closer to the date. If you're interested but not sure what these positions involve, contact Maura Joyce for more information or talk with Kathleen Liess (Vice President) or Vanessa Causley (Secretary) about their roles.

FUNDRAISING

Create Custom Cards and Benefit PTM Art

PTM will hold its Art Cards greeting card fundraising campaign April 8-26. Create custom card packs for holidays, thank you cards, or general stationery and **forty-five percent of the proceeds will benefit our MIR community.**

Parents, staff and students can submit drawings, photos, poems or other artistic items to be created as card fronts.

Bluebird Takes on the Dinosaurs

Sophia Singleton's mom says she insisted on wearing her MIR t-shirt on a recent family "field trip" to the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles. Sophia fearlessly displays it here in front of a vicious-looking set of teeth in a fossil display in the museum's new Dinosaur Hall.



The cards are high quality and come in 15-card or 25-card packs. The artist's name and the school logo are prominently displayed on the back of the cards. Options to display the artist's photo and many other options for both the card and envelope are also available.

Watch your folder for your FundraiserGreetings packet. Card samples will be available in classrooms and at the front office. For more information, visit fundraisergreetings.com.

COMMUNITY

Spring Cleaning Drive for Family Service Association of Redlands

It's that time of year when thoughts turn to cleaning out the closets and garage in that annual ritual known as "Spring Cleaning." This year, we encourage you to do so for a worthy cause: supporting the Family Service Association of Redlands. Bring your gently used items to collection boxes set up at the school from April 8-26, and PTM will donate them for you.

EVENTS

Skate with Us on April 5

Please join us for another night of skating and fun on Friday, April 5 at CalSkate in Grand Terrace from 5-7 PM. Tickets are available in the office until 4 PM Friday for \$6 each, or at the door for \$8. Tickets are not required for anyone not skating.

This event is open to all MIR, Farm, and Grove students as well as any friends and family they would like to bring as their guests.

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Report from the Board

Help Build Heritage Park

BY PAMELA FORD, PRESIDENT

The toddlers have been watching the heavy equipment, volunteers from all over Redlands have been walking the ground, new fence posts are popping up, and trees are getting planted: what's going on across the street? A new city park, Heritage Park, is growing before our very eyes.

The land across the street from MIR on Orange Avenue was purchased by the City of Redlands 25 years ago because people in the city, instigated in part by Margie and Leon Armantrout (founders of MIR), had the foresight to plan for a park. This park property includes the Grove School's farm and garden facing Iowa Street, the relocated historic Barton School House, and the open space along Orange Avenue to Nevada Street. A Farmers' Market takes place here every Saturday morning, and you may have attended theatrical productions at Grove on this property.

That park is now becoming a reality, and you can help.

Saturday, April 27, is the Helping Hands Community Day of Service, an all-city event organized by the Redlands Service Club Council, Mormon Helping Hands, and the City of Redlands. On this day, thousands of volunteers will transform Heritage Park from a 25-year-old vision into a landscaped park. We would love to see MIR and the Grove School well-represented among volunteers, as the park will become an invaluable natural and educational resource for the schools. (See the March 2013 Bluebird Bulletin for a full description of the planned educational and natural areas.)

As volunteers, we will lay paths, build fences, spread mulch, build animal pens, landscape, create park features, and build steps to the 1908 Barton School House, while also making improvements and providing cleanup to the charter Farm School campus and Historical Asistencia Landmark.

Why does this matter to MIR and to the Board of Trustees for MIR? Because this park fits the Montessori vision for natural spaces in the planned environment for our children and adolescents. This park will add

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Curriculum Matters

by PETER DAVIDSON,
ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

Spring is Here

"From the end spring new beginnings."—Pliny the Elder

It's hard to miss the signs of spring—the days grow longer and warmer, leaves are budding out on the trees and flowers are blooming everywhere. There are unmistakable signs of spring at MIR, both inside and outside the classrooms.

On a recent in-service day, the toddler and primary staff were busy working on their classroom gardens so that, in the coming weeks, the students can pull the weeds, harvest whatever remains of winter crops, and plant flowers, bulbs and vegetables. Some teachers were ordering caterpillars so that students can experience their metamorphosis to adult painted lady butterflies, or planning where to capture tadpoles so the students can watch their transformation to adult frogs. Other teachers were cleaning birdhouses and putting out nesting material in hopes of watching some busy parents sitting on eggs soon.

Elementary students will be studying what to plant in a California garden in the spring, preparing their garden beds and starting seedlings. They will be seen with pencils and clipboards, drawing and identifying the many types of flowers and leaves opening up every day. The toddler classes will be taking more frequent walks around campus, sometimes stopping to sample strawberries from an elementary garden.

As the weather gets nicer, classroom doors can be left open to let in the fresh spring air and allow children to take more of their work outside. Not just gardening work or easel painting, but even the most academic work can be even more enjoyable when taken outside.

But not all of the changes happen outside the classrooms. While outdoors it is all about new beginnings, indoors it is all about bringing things to fruition. In every classroom, older students take their leadership role even more seriously in the spring, sharing their skills and experience with the next rising generation that will take their places as the leaders in class in the fall. Sometimes they are simply helping the younger ones with their tasks, but often

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MIR Scrapbook: Spring Gala is *une fête fabuleuse*



PTM NEWS AND NOTES *(Continued from page 2)*

Save the Date for the Annual Spring Carnival

The Spring Carnival will be held Saturday, May 4, 11 AM–3 PM. It will be a fun-filled day including a bounce house, inflatable obstacle course, classroom game booths, prizes, and more. Admission is \$10 per family and covers all games and activities.

Parent volunteers are needed. Please sign up in your child's classroom to work for just a half hour during the carnival. This is a fun way to participate in making the Spring Carnival a great day for everyone.

It's a Circus Roundup!

Howdy cowpokes! If you're a fan of the Great Y Circus, consider supporting their auction on Friday, April 12, 6-10 PM at the Mitten Building. Tickets are \$40 each, and you can buy them at the YMCA gym. Funds raised provide costumes for performances and support scholarships to participate in Circus. This year's auction theme is "Circus Roundup" and you're encouraged to wear your finest western duds.



REPORT FROM THE BOARD *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 3)

tremendously to the physical aspect of the Montessori curriculum and will be a tangible manifestation of Maria Montessori's goal to allow our children to participate fully in the surrounding community. Cool, huh? Our children will use this park!

The work hours will be 8 AM–1 PM. You can show up as early as 7 AM to sign in and receive your assignment for the day. The streets will be closed off and designated parking arranged. Lunch will be provided by the Noon Kiwanis on the MIR campus (south parking lot). Wear your MIR or Grove (or both!) t-shirts to represent our communities proudly.

EVERYONE is welcome to contribute to this effort on April 27. When I say EVERYONE, that is exactly what I mean. Our children are included and invited to participate as volunteers. So bring the entire family. **Register everyone online at redlandsservice.org** so that the Kiwanis can plan the right number of lunches. I will see you there!

PS: Bring your work gloves, a hat, sunscreen, and a water bottle!!! Check the website for other items to bring, too.

Helping Hands Day of Service Plans

Spaces planned for Heritage Park



Service work plans for Heritage Park include the following.

Zanja reconstruction



Pathways through the park



More work is planned for both Heritage Park and The Grove School than we can show here. Please join us on April 27 to help make the Park a reality and fix up our sister school! (See page 1 for more information.)

Service work plans for The Grove School include the following.



Mulching around rail fences (above) and the farmer's market area (below).



Greenhouse repair



Work on the Barton House restoration



SPRING IS HERE *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 3)

they will ask to give a lesson to a younger student, passing on their knowledge to the next generation. They'll share sage advice based on their 3 years of experience in the class, such as the admonition from one third-grader to his younger classmates last spring that whatever work they do, they should always try to "take it to the next level" to get the most out of the opportunity.

In particular, the 6th graders are bringing things to fruition, polishing and fine-tuning their skills, filling in the last empty corners of their elementary portfolios, and tying a ribbon around the amazing accomplishments of their childhood. They'll go on a trip to Washington D.C., for

which they have been planning and fundraising for an entire year, and toward which they have been aiming for far longer than that. They will write their graduation speeches, summing up their experience, thoughts, and perspective in memorable ways. We will celebrate them as they bring childhood to completion, and move into adolescence, beginning an entirely new stage of life.

Whether your child is completing their time at MIR, in the middle of it, or looking forward to "moving up" to the next level, we encourage you to observe and enjoy their continued growth and blossoming. Spring is as much about fruition as about new beginnings.

Sign Up for Summer at MIR

Session 1: June 17–28 ☀ Session 2: July 1–12 ☀ Session 3: July 15–26 ☀ Session 4: July 29–August 9

The MIR Summer Program offers flexible programs, lots of summer fun, and a consistent environment for your child. **Whether you need a full-day schedule or just a few hours, MIR has a summer program for your child.**

TODDLER PROGRAM

Toddlers (ages 18 months to 2 1/2 years) will supplement their Montessori environment with special summer activities including gardening, crafts, and water play. An outing to the San Bernardino County Museum will enhance their summer enjoyment. Full-, all-, and half-day programs are available, as well as two- and three-day programs.

PRIMARY PROGRAM

Primary-age children (2 1/2 to 6 years) seem like they never stop moving or exploring, and the MIR summer program pro-

vides plenty of fun and engaging activities in addition to their regular Montessori program.

Your child will enjoy the consistency of their Montessori environment, supplemented by special summer activities such as cooking, gardening, sporting activities, and an in-depth look at subjects such as sea life and art. Field trips provide opportunities for exploration in the wider world as well as old-fashioned summer fun. Full-, all-, and half-day programs are available.

ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

The Elementary Summer Program offers classes to suit a whole range of interests. Children can explore the world, create a masterpiece, learn a bit of French, or enjoy numerous outdoor activities, just to name a few classes. Field trips round out their opportunities for exploration. Students may



enroll for morning sessions, afternoon sessions, or all day.

WHO CAN ENROLL

The Toddler and Primary summer programs are open to continuing students and to new students registered for the 2013–2014 school year who meet the age requirements. **The Elementary summer program is open to any student age 6 to 12 who has completed first grade.**

HOW TO ENROLL

Registration for current MIR families is ongoing. The deposit for families who register by April 12 is \$100. All families who register after April 12 will be required to pay the full amount of the first session attending at the time of registration. New families may register starting April 15. Fill out the packet you received in your student folder or pick up a packet at the school.

UNFORGETTABLE LEARNING *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 1)

ever it is awake and encountering the world.

Most of our learning is forgettable, and that's both natural and fortunate. We learn things, use them while there is a need and then let them go. I remember my own phone number; I remember my office phone number as long as I work there; but I don't try to remember every phone number I dial. However, our most important learning is unforgettable or permanent learning—learning that becomes a part of who we are, learning that “sticks with us” even when we have no immediate need for that skill or knowledge. My one 100-year-old grandmother can still remember precise details of her childhood experience, even though her present circumstances and needs are completely different.

A moment's reflection on a list of one's unforgettable learning will reveal that invariably this learning is attached to some strong emotion or feeling. This connection between the “cognitive” or thinking mind and the “affective” or feeling mind is well-known to all good teachers (and brain researchers). Various educational reformers down through the years have attempted to codify and capitalize on this connection...the Montessori classroom is a place in which the connection between thinking and feeling arises constantly and naturally in the children's work.

When it comes to the permanence of learning, it does not seem to matter whether the associated emotion is painful or pleasurable. This leads us to four possibilities: painful forgettable learning, pleasurable forgettable learning, painful unforgettable learning, and pleasurable unforgettable learning.

If all painful learning were unforgettable, we would presumably never make the same bad mistake twice. Whatever the case, for designers of an educational system, it would be nonsensical to employ painful means to learn what will soon be forgotten anyway. Yet, this seems to be what happens in many educational settings. I suspect that painful learning becomes forgettable when the meta-cognitive learning is painful and the content learning is eminently forgettable. So, a child who is learning multiplication tables under duress may be learning a number of things: (1) multiplication tables; (2) that they hate math; (3) that they hate the teacher; (4) that learning is something they must be forced to do; etc. They may still forget their multiplication tables, but what they learned about learning may be near-permanent.

And what if they do remember their multiplication tables? Then we have painful unforgettable learning, in the same category with learning not to pick up a hot frying pan with your bare hand or remembering where you were when you first heard about the destruction of the World Trade Center or the assassination of John Kennedy.

As Montessori said of the conventional schools she knew, “Study such as it is today, is a work against nature, so the students carry it out aridly and under compulsion without animation. [...] Other needs exist, which if not satisfied always cause inner conflicts that influence the mental state and confuse the clarity of the mind.” (*From Childhood to Adolescence*)

In a classroom where learning is routinely pleasurable, its permanence or impermanence will be dictated by the child's perceived need for it and for its usefulness to the child's own purposes. This is why Montessori spoke of a good education as an “aid to life” and worked to make her schools just that—relevant to the child's life as it currently was and as it soon could be. In Montessori, there is little place for “memorizing it now because you might need it when you grow up.” However true such an adult need may be, if the learning does not connect with the child as she presently is, it will very likely be impermanent. This is not the perversity of the child, but the nature of human learning.

[This kind of education] is pleasurable unforgettable learning—that is “home base” for the Montessori classroom. This is not so much because Montessori guides tend to be kind people (we do!) but because we know that this is the only way that we can successfully... help children learn both what they need to know to function in our society and simultaneously to develop positive, healthy attitudes about learning, community, and their own abilities.

By the end of her career, Montessori was able to see that one of the keys to the success of her methods was that in her classrooms, children were given the freedoms they needed to express the basic tendencies or characteristics of the healthy human of any age or race. Among these human tendencies are the tendency to explore; to orient oneself physically, temporally, and socially; to create order; to imagine; to think conceptually and abstractly; to move, use one's hands, and work; to perfect a skill through repetition and to find one's own errors along the way; to freely communicate with others; to belong; and to create meaning through symbols and rituals.

Montessori guides are trained to see all the children's activity as expressions of such universal tendencies, and the human tendencies are also our guide for furnishing the classroom environment with a rich assortment of activities and materials... [F]or learning to be pleasurable and unforgettable, children must work at their own pace, with allowances for their personal social maturity, their personal cognitive strengths and weaknesses, their relative need for closure, and their personal history.

If you are, as I am, often astonished by the wisdom of Maria Montessori, it is perhaps only a vindication of Ralph Waldo Emerson's observation that “Nothing astonishes men so much as common sense and plain dealing.”

Spring Picture Day is Thursday, April 4

Dress your child up (if he or she will allow!) and be sure to send them to school with a smile on Thursday, April 4. Children are photographed individually.

Photos will be posted to a secure website for which you will be given a code to access and order the photos you want. Order(s) will be mailed to your home.

Ordering photos benefits your child's education as well—12% of the proceeds are returned to MIR.

From the MIR Development Office

Annual Fund School-wide Picnic and Performance

MIR will hold a school-wide picnic and musical performance on Wednesday, April 24, 6-7 PM to celebrate achieving our Annual Fund milestones: 100% school-wide participation and \$50,000 raised. This picnic is our way of saying thank you to staff, the Board of Trustees, and MIR families for reaching these milestones.

The picnic will take place on Jean and Maryhelen's playground. Similar to Back to School Night, be sure to bring a blanket and plan to hang out with your friends. The picnic will be catered by Mark Woodson from The Grove School. Sack lunches and picnic food will be provided at no cost to you, including vegetarian and kid-friendly options.

Dinner music will be provided by José Ledezma. Parent Marcus Miller and his band will follow with a rousing drums performance that is sure to entertain all ages.

Thank you again for helping MIR reach 100% participation in the Annual Fund. This is truly a special milestone for any private school and non-profit organization and we are deeply grateful for your commitment to and support of the school and the children.

April 2013

New Lango Classes to Start April 2

Classes are offered separately from the MIR school day and require separate registration. Classes last 8 weeks and are held 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

The cost is \$229 per child, which covers the class and materials. Enroll online at langoredlands.com or call 909-528-3154. Students who end their school day at 3 or 3:30 PM will be escorted to the Lango class, but parents must sign them out from their MIR class at their standard time. Students whose day ends at 5 PM will be escorted to and from their Lango class.

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1 Kara/Marie's class trip to Pretend City	2 Lango classes PTM meeting, 6 PM 	3 Parent-Infant class  Soccer clinics	4 Teesie's & Nicole's trip to Lewis Family Playhouse Lango classes Spring Picture Day  Choir	5 Jean/MH's class trip to the Arboretum Bluebird family skate night at CalSkate, 5-7 PM 
8 PTM Art Cards fundraiser begins Emily and Teesie's 6th year trip to Aquarium of the Pacific	9 Lango classes 	10 Parent-Infant class  Soccer clinics	11 Lango classes  Choir	12 ☀ Summer School early registration ends
15 Staff in-service day. No school; no childcare.	16 Lango classes 	17 Parent-Infant class  Soccer clinics	18 Lango classes Nikki's & Maria's classes trip to Living Desert Sara's class trip to Jurupa Mntns Discovery Center  Choir	19 Coffee, Tea, and M.E., 8:45 AM
22 PTM board nominations begin	23 Lango classes 	24 Parent-Infant class Annual Fund school-wide picnic and performance, 6-7 PM  Soccer clinics	25 Lango classes Teesie's class trip to the Purple Easel Upper Elementary P.E. fieldtrip to Muscle Beach  Choir	26 Bluebird Assembly, 9:15 AM Parent-Infant class discussion group Art Cards due
29	30 Lango classes 	1  Soccer clinics	2 Lango classes  Choir	27 Helping Hands Day of Service for Heritage Park
				3 PTM board nominations end Jean/MH class trip to Lewis Family Playhouse
				4 Spring Carnival, 11 AM-3 PM