

MIRROR



A child reads in Kara and Jenny's garden on the first day of school.

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WELCOME BACK TO OUR PEACEFUL PLACE

by MAURA JOYCE, HEAD OF SCHOOL

"Averting war is the work of politicians; establishing peace is the work of education."— Maria Montessori

As we return to the campus and the classrooms after a long summer break, and see all the work that has gone into the preparation for the children, we are once again reminded of what a peaceful place Montessori in Redlands is. If your child is just starting this week, chances are the word "peaceful" came out of your mouth, when Peter Davidson asked you to describe your observation of our classrooms many months back. "Peaceful" is the word we hear more often than any other.

MIR is a peaceful place by design, because we are a Montessori school. Forty years ago a few families, led by Margie and Leon Armantrout, wanted a Montessori school in Redlands and they did the work to realize their dream. They were young parents and wanted a good school experience for their children, but Margie has never wavered from her ultimate goal: "I wanted Montessori because I wanted world peace."

Dr. Maria Montessori, like Gandhi, believed that real peace in this world had to begin with the children, and since its

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ALL NEW BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT

Back-to-School Night to open MIR's 40th anniversary on the new play field

Back-to-School Night will be held Thursday, September 3, 5:15-7 PM. You'll learn about the school, life in the classroom, and what to expect for the new school year.

This year Back-to-School Night will be a little different. MIR is celebrating its 40th anniversary throughout the year. In honor of that milestone, Back-to-School Night will start with a procession of the students and a celebration.

Families should meet on the play field for a picnic to start the evening.

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REPORT FROM THE BOARD

By TREVOR NORTON, PRESIDENT

Welcome back to another great year at MIR. The Board of Trustees holds its first meeting of the school year in less than a week and we wanted to take this opportunity to introduce you to the board. We have three new members this year, and six returning. Trustees are elected to 3-year terms, and can only be re-elected once, so we have turnover almost every year.

I am personally quite happy and honored to be returning to the board after a one year absence, this time as president. I am a current and alumni parent and work as the Director of Production for the Theatre Arts Department at the University of Redlands. I am proud to be working with Maura and the rest of the board to maintain the excellence of Montessori in Redlands now and far in to the future.

Our new members are:

Adrienne Ortega is an assistant principal in Rialto Unified School District. She is an alumni parent (with two children at The

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PTM NEWS

By EDIE PUNT, PTM PRESIDENT

WELCOME TO THE 2015-16 SCHOOL YEAR!

The Parents and Teachers of Montessori (PTM) Executive Committee extends a warm welcome to returning—and especially new—MIR families. It's a special year, and we're really excited to be a part of the school's year-long 40th birthday party.

PTM exists to connect the parent community with the school. To achieve this, we sponsor many events throughout the year, but we also try to be the bridge between the workings of the school and the reality of corralling your kids out the door each day and getting them to campus ready to take on the world. We are parents too, and we are here to help you navigate as you progress through the school year and class transitions with your children.

As a MIR family, you are already part of the PTM. The PTM is made up of an elected executive committee, staff representatives, and volunteer parent representatives from each classroom. The PTM meets seven times throughout the school year. We review upcoming PTM activities and events and discuss focused topics that are important to the parent community. The results of these discussions are then brought by me to the MIR Board of Trustees.

If you'd like to be a room representative, simply let your child's teacher know. All of our meetings are wide open, so even if you don't want to be a room rep, you are always welcome to drop in and see what we're up to or give us some feedback. Check the school calendar for meeting dates and times.

Most PTM events are schoolwide social activities that are a fun way to connect with your kids and their friends and meet other parents. These include Family Skate Nights at CalSkate in Grand Terrace, Camp Montessori overnights in the Spring and Fall,

guest speakers at Parent Education nights, and the Halloween and Spring carnivals. New this year, we are planning to introduce new activities geared specifically to each class level. Stay tuned!

PTM has two major campaigns that help raise money for these events and activities. **From September 4-25**, the Innisbrook program is a great way to get your holiday shopping done early, while also helping out the school community. Participation is entirely optional, but we get a generous portion of the proceeds. Look for catalogs and order forms in your parent folder. You may place your order online at innisbrook.com (use school code 102074) 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 and will have their orders delivered to their homes.

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Student Adrian Balarezo shows off his MIR pride and his inner Robin Hood at Sherwood Forest in Nottingham, England. Send a picture of your child anywhere in the world or just in town in their t-shirt to lkensok@mir.org for a chance to get published in the MIRROR.



CURRICULUM MATTERS

by PETER DAVIDSON, ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

SEPTEMBER: A TIME OF TRANSITIONS

T.S. Eliot famously wrote, “*April is the cruellest month.*” I disagree. I think it is September!

The days are getting noticeably shorter, the long-anticipated summer family vacation has come and gone, and it is time to re-establish the rhythms and schedules of another school year. Gone are those long summer evenings of backyard barbecues, family walks, and playing at the park until the stars come out. Instead, we are back to the reality of getting up earlier to get to school and work on time, and going to bed earlier so that we aren’t exhausted in the morning.

It’s a transition for all of us, in other words, and some of us handle transitions better than others. No wonder many adults experience a mild depression that coincides with the end of summer and beginning of the school year. The trick is not to let your unsettled state affect your child’s first weeks of the school year.

Parents of children who are starting for the first time in a Toddler or Primary class expect their child to go through a period of adjustment and transition. They are not surprised if their child complains or cries a bit at separation for the first days or weeks. What do they do to help? They start adjusting the bedtime and the morning routine days or even weeks ahead of time so that the first day of school is not such an abrupt change of schedule. They remind themselves of the great lengths they went to in finding the right school, and fill themselves with confidence in that decision as they drop off their precious little one. They know that their confidence will help the child feel more confident and less anxious.

But what of the children transitioning from Toddler to Primary, Primary to Lower Elementary, or even Lower to Upper Elementary? Shouldn’t we expect them to undergo a transition too? Of course we should, and yet we are often taken by surprise when they do. It shouldn’t be a surprise, though, when you consider that, after the consistency of three years with the same

easy for us to overreact and exude worry, just when our child needs support and reassurance. Our children count on us to be rock solid, so it doesn’t help if we become worried at the same time that they are feeling uncertain.

What can the parent of a transitioning child do to help? Pretty much the same thing that the parents of a new child do. First, as it may be a slightly different schedule than they were used to in their former class, start making any adjustments in the morning routine and bedtime well ahead of time, so that the first mornings are not rushed and stressful. Second, fill yourself with confidence in the school, the teacher, and the program, so that when your child needs it you can be their rock of confidence and reassurance. Third, don’t be surprised and overreact if your child goes through a period of adjustment. And, finally, don’t forget that it’s a transition for you, too! This might be a good time for a chat with your child’s teacher or the parent of an older child in the class, so that you can get the reassurance you need, that what your child is experiencing is normal and expected.

And, of course, we can be grateful that, unlike the conventional schools that most of us attended as children, your Montessori child won’t have to transition to a new teacher, class, and grade each and every year. He or she has time to settle in and to grow in the skills and confidence needed to take on their new setting now, and to be ready for the next transition when it comes. Life is full of transitions; establishing habits for successful adaptation now will help your child for a lifetime.



Student Gavin Zook preparing for a transition back to MIR after a year away.

teacher and within the same classroom, the children are experiencing a new classroom with a new schedule and a new community of students, and a new teacher with new procedures and expectations. We should be shocked if a child doesn’t need some time and TLC to make that adjustment!

Unfortunately, when taken by surprise, it is natural for us to become anxious ourselves. We may wonder what’s wrong—“Why is my child complaining and not his/her usual bubbly, confident self?” It is

OUR PEACEFUL PLACE (cont.)

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inception, Montessori education has been referred to as “peace education” by many. She herself was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize more than once!

MIR and The Grove School students will celebrate the International Day of Peace in September, but that is just an exercise in collaboration and awareness. The real work towards peace happens in the classroom. At each level of our school, the design of the room, the atmosphere created by the adult, and the activity of the children, all lend itself to the cultivation of peace.

Our Toddler children are greeted with the soft-spoken, calming tone of our staff, into a room that is simply decorated, ordered, and sized for them. All of this creates a calmness that feels safe to them, and they begin to engage. Children *work* with things in their hands and feel a sense of purpose, satisfaction, and joy in being able to do things by themselves. Opening a drawer, stacking blocks, pouring water, serving oneself a snack, and engaging in a conversation are little steps towards independence. This work engages the energies of their bodies and minds—their first experiences in concentration. The result of this independent, concentrated work is a peaceful hum.

Our Primary children are in much larger groups of children and continue their independent and concentrated work, but at this level, they interact with many more people. The students are given the tools to respond to others through the lessons of *grace and courtesy*. Through these simple demonstrations, the teachers show children how to walk around someone’s work rug, how to interrupt politely, how to wait their turn, or how to ask for help. These lessons empower children to be responsible and self-aware in the classroom. Addi-

tionally, they are shown how to practice respectful communication, like saying, “No, thank you,” when invited to play a game they do not want to play, or saying, “Thank you,” when a friend is generous or kind. Children are learning to cultivate a peaceful environment.

Elementary children’s studies revolve around the Fundamental Needs of Humans, and the interrelationship of all life. Elementary Montessori students study historical time periods and geographic locations, and ponder how people have used the earth, and each other, to meet their fundamental human needs. As they dive into further studies of the earth, biology, language, geometry, and math, the Montessori lessons continue to refer back to the needs of humans, and the interconnection of all these studies to our survival.

Through this framework, Montessori Elementary students begin to realize they are not separate from the rest of the world but are an integral part of creating a harmonious world. They continue the peaceful hum of Toddlers and the grace and courtesy of the Primary classroom on a larger scale. They want to take their part in society and practice what it means to be a good, human person in their classroom, in the school, in their community, in the world. Their concern moves beyond the classroom. They discuss bigger causes—clean water, shoes for children in impoverished areas, and wasting paper. They want a just world for polar bears, trees, and people alike.

As our children experience and come to appreciate this type of environment, they will grow to expect the calm engagement, grace and courtesy, and respect for the interrelation of people and the earth, in the world they will inherit from us. This is building peace. This is what we do.

HELP THE CLASS OF 2016 GET TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

Each year MIR’s 6th year Elementary students take a big step in their ongoing journey toward independence by planning, organizing, and taking a trip to Washington, D.C. This year we have 18 6th years looking forward to the trip.

Part of their preparations includes raising a good portion of the funds needed to go through small fundraisers held once or twice a month throughout the school year. **They will begin these fundraisers on Friday, August 28 by selling breakfast burritos in the morning before school.** For \$5 you will get a hot egg-and-cheese or non-dairy burrito, salsa, and a glass of orange juice. Breakfast burritos will be sold the last Friday of every month, with the next fundraiser scheduled for Friday, September 25.

On Saturday, September 19, the students will hold a yard sale, and they are looking for donations. If you can donate goods for the sale, bring them to 901 W. Olive Ave., Redlands, on Friday, September 18, 3:30-5 PM. **If you are looking for a good bargain,** show up on that Saturday bright and early! The yard sale is 6 AM-12 PM at 901 W. Olive Ave., Redlands.

MIR has a new field trip shirt! Your child will receive theirs next week.



BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT

(cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

Bring a blanket or chair to sit on. All of the school's E-Z Ups will be set up to provide shade. Parents and Teachers of Montessori (PTM) will provide snacks and drinks.

The night will start at 5:30 PM with the procession. Head of School Maura Joyce will speak briefly, then introduce MIR staff, the Board of Trustees, and the PTM Executive Committee.

At 6 PM Primary and Elementary classroom orientations begin. Primary students go to their classes with their 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. Think about whether toddlers and babies might disrupt these important meetings and plan accordingly.

Toddler Parent orientation will be held separately on Tuesday, September 15 at 6 PM.

MIR TO OFFER VISION SCREENING TO ALL STUDENTS

On Tuesday, September 22, students have the opportunity to have their vision checked on campus 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 measure and assess students' eyes with a camera-like device called a photorefractive screener. The photoscreener does not touch the child. It checks for refractive error, misalign-

ment of the eyes, opacities such as congenital cataracts or tumors, and unequal pupils. All of these problems are treatable if caught early.

Reports will be provided to parents. If your child needs further evaluation, 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 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 ecamarillo@mir.org.

PIANO AND STRING LESSONS OFFERED ON CAMPUS

Mrs. Yang Steinke, a professional musician and experienced teacher, offers private lessons to MIR students at both the school and in her home. Currently she has a few openings for this school year. If your child is interested in learning piano, violin, or cello, call her at 951-743-7158.

STARTING THE YEAR OFF RIGHT

Follow these guidelines to ensure a smooth experience for this busy first week.

Drive no more than 5 MPH in the parking lot. With so many small children on campus, please be on the lookout and drive slowly!

Remember to sign your child in and out. Sign your child in and out on the classroom sign-in sheets and record the drop-off/pick-up times accurately. This information is required by law and crucial for us to accurately track children in an emergency. A fee of \$9.50 will be incurred

if you do not sign your child in or out. If the drop-off and pick-up times listed on the sign-in sheet don't match your expectations, please see the office.

Bring medications to the office, including diaper cream or sunscreen. All medications must be checked into the office, as required by law, even for older children. Medications must be in their original container with the name of the child or original prescription label on it.

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 your child in from the curb, but do not park and leave your car. This forces the cars behind you to go around yours, which increases the chance of an



accident. If you need to physically get out of your car, please park in a parking space.

Leave ill children at home. We have many very young students and students with sensitive immune systems. Bringing even a mildly sick child to school could lead to serious illness or complications in these sensitive ones. The school will call you to pick up a child if he or she is ill.

For more information on the school, its policies, and what to expect this year, join us for Back-to-School Night on Thursday, September 3 at 5:15 PM.

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BOARD REPORT *(cont.)*

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Grove School) and a current parent, with one student at MIR. She brings years of experience in education and was a Montessori student herself.

Tim Ormsby is a Redlands native and alumni parent. Tim works at Esri as a writer and editor, creating workbooks and tutorials, and has worked as a classroom instructor.

Anne Desmarais has a strong background in strategic planning and program management and 14 years of experience working in non-profit and educational organizations. Anne has one child at MIR and one starting The Grove School this year.

Continuing their service to MIR this year:

Alisa Evans is an MIR parent and takes on the role of Treasurer this year. She works for the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), an organization dedicated to supporting private school education and to helping schools like ours carry out their work successfully. She has the experience to help us see ourselves in context with other similar schools.

Jennifer Burrows is familiar to you because she served as your PTM President. Also an MIR parent, she works in marketing and public relations possessing skills that are always valuable to a school like ours. She is used to managing multiple projects for various outcomes.

Lorraine Slattery-Farrell is an alumni parent, former MIR staff member, and professor of Child Development and Education at Mt. San Jacinto College.

Michele Vercoski and **Dean Silliman** are both current MIR parents who have had children in MIR from Toddlers through Elementary and both are practicing attorneys.

Edie Punt is your returning PTM President. She serves as a non-voting board member representing your parent body and keeping the board abreast of the many

PTM activities that occur throughout the year. She has experience working on the WASC self-study.

Emily Drinkwine and **Aedín Artigue** are MIR teachers who serve as non-voting board members to represent both the MIR staff and the Montessori philosophy.

Peter Davidson, Assistant Head of School and **Maura Joyce**, Head of School, are ex officio (non-voting) members representing the entire MIR community and Montessori. (Maura is also proud to call herself an alumni parent!)

The Board of Trustees promotes the mission of MIR, maintains the fiduciary well-being of the school, and plans for its future. We are all so pleased you have chosen MIR for your child/children!—Trevor

PTM NEWS *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 2)

The **BoxTops for Education** program also continues to raise money to help fund these programs. **BoxTop** coupons can be found on many items that you may already buy. Drop the coupons off in your child's classroom or in the office. The school receives \$.10 for each one. Last year we earned almost \$700 in **BoxTops**.

OUR FIRST SKATE NIGHT IS FRIDAY, AUGUST 28

Reconnect with old friends and make new ones at our first Skate Night of the school year on Friday, August 28, 5-7 PM. This is a private event open to MIR and Grove family, friends, and staff.

Tickets are available in the MIR office for \$6, or for \$8 at the door. The cost includes your skate rental, a skate lesson for new skaters, and a coaching session for skaters who want more help. Families who wish to stay past 7 PM may do so. This is a full night of fun for only \$6—a great bargain! Non-skaters do not need a ticket.



Spread the word! We hope to see you there.

Best wishes to everyone in the transition from summer to a fresh school year. If you have questions or ideas for the PTM, please email me directly at edie.punt@gmail.com.

MONTHLY COFFEE CHATS HELP YOU LEARN ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION

Assistant Head of School Peter Davidson hosts Coffee, Tea, and Montessori Education (M.E.) on the second Friday of most months throughout the school year. At this informal gathering, participants discuss various aspects of Montessori education.

The format is flexible and meant to invite conversation. Teachers often join to demonstrate a topic or teaching practice, making this a good opportunity to get to know the MIR staff. Coffee, tea, and treats will be provided.

The first Coffee, Tea and M.E. will be held on Friday, September 11 at 8:45 AM in the Yoga Room.

MIR SCRAPBOOK

THE CONTINUED TRANSFORMATION OF MIR



The next big thing: MIR is clearing the way behind Nicole, Whitney, and Kristen's classes to build a new, specially designed space for Student Services. The new building will open in the 2016-17 school year.

MIR continues to enhance the learning environment and play areas for the students. This summer, the scraggly jungle in the groves of the north campus became a shady path and the lunch area for Nicole, Whitney, and Kristen's classes was moved. We cleared, replanted, and reconfigured the play field; gave Emily and Teesie's classes a shadier lunch area; reconfigured the space behind Emily and Teesie's classrooms to give them a larger "back yard"; and added a new, bigger shade structure to the Toddler play area. Two classrooms were swapped and reconfigured as well.

CALENDAR

CAMP OUT AT MIR

Join us for Camp Montessori on Friday, September 25, beginning at 6:30 PM.

Start the year off by camping under the stars at Camp Montessori! We will pitch tents on Jean and Maryhelen's playground, cook hotdogs and hamburgers, sing songs, tell stories, and have a lot of fun. In the morning everyone will enjoy a pancake breakfast.



Camp Montessori is open to enrolled children 5-12 with or without a chaperone or enrolled children under 5 with a chaperone. Chaperones will be asked to help with activities such as preparation for dinner or breakfast, serving dinner or breakfast, cleanup for either meal, and trash duty along with watching children.

Fees are \$30 per child without a chaperone or \$15 per child with a chaperone. **Sign ups will be online.** Look for a link in the lunch and weekly emails in mid-September.

CELEBRATE PEACE ON SEPTEMBER 21: MIR and The Grove School will observe the United Nations' International Day of Peace together on Monday, September 21. In honor of MIR's 40th anniversary, our Peace Day activities will include a celebration of 40 years of education for peace at MIR.

RUNNING CLUB RESUMES FRIDAY, AUGUST 28: Children ages 6 and older may join us without a chaperone. We meet at 7:30 a.m.

outside Kristen, Nicole, and Whitney's classrooms. Write "RC" in the time slot when you sign in your child to avoid incurring childcare fees. **Siblings of runners cannot be dropped off early without first contacting the office to see if there is space in morning childcare. There will be a fee for siblings dropped off early.**

BIKE CLUB TO RESUME: Bike Club will start up again soon. We will send more information by email.

September 2015

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
	1	2	3 School closes at 5 PM Back to School Night @ 5:15 PM Primary and Elementary classroom orientations, 6 PM	4 PTM Innisbrook sales begin All Upper Elementary field trip to Bob Baker Marionette Theater
7 Labor Day No school, no childcare.	8	9	10 PTM Room Rep Orientation, 6-7:30 PM	11 Coffee, Tea, & M.E. (Montessori Education), 8:45 AM
14 Rosh Hashanah	15 Payments Due Toddler Parent Orientation, 6 PM	16	17	18
		Kristen and Nicole's Upper Elementary camping trip		
				19 6th Year Yard Sale, 6 AM-NOON
21 International Day of Peace	22 All-school vision screening	23 Autumn begins Eid al-Adha begins Yom Kippur	24 Eid al-Adha ends	25 6th Year Breakfast Burritos, 7:15-9 AM Bluebird Assembly, 9:15 AM Camp MIR, 6:30 PM Innisbrook orders
28 Board of Trustees Open Forum, 6:30-7 PM	29	30	1 Annual Fund "Done in 31" Campaign starts PTM Meeting, 6 PM Parent Ed Night: 40th Retrospective, 7 PM	2 Staff in-service No school, no childcare.
Emily's Upper Elementary camping trip				