



MIR alumni Lillian Norton-Brainerd (left, 6th grade photo) and Kennedy McCarthy (right, current photo).

MARCH 2016
VOLUME 40, ISSUE 7
© Montessori in Redlands
LIC# 360910803-4-5

IN EVERY ISSUE:

Report from the Board
PTM News
Curriculum Matters
MIR Scrapbook
Calendar

ARTICLES:

Head of School Search update
3 ways to win classroom auction items (even if you can't go to the Gala)
Parent-Child Night and Pasta Dinner
Early registration begins March 1
New Parent Education Night on college savings scheduled for April 5

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

by KENNEDY MCCARTHY AND LILLIAN NORTON-BRAINERD, ALUMNI

Each year, I choose to hand over my MIRROR article to a guest writer. Since we had to cancel our Life After Montessori Parent Education Night, I thought I would share with you the thoughts a couple of our MIR alumni had planned to share that evening, Grove 10th grader Kennedy McCarthy and Grove 9th grader Lillian Norton-Brainerd.

Hello, my name is **Kennedy McCarthy**. I am currently a 10th grader at The Grove School. I attended MIR for 11 years, starting when I was 18 months old, in Kim and Liana's class, and moving onto the Grove School when I was 12. With two more years to graduation, I plan to continue my Montessori education for a full 17 years!

Montessori has taught me many things that I plan on using throughout my life. I know this because having been a student at MIR, I feel I am more than ready for my life in the near future. I have learned how to write checks, solve problems on my own, and help my community in any way I can. I learned the importance of service through many projects and activities. Montessori has taught me how to grow as an individual and the importance of all education. I have learned to challenge myself in reaching my goals in the future.

I have many fond memories of MIR. It would take forever to describe them all. A

(Continued on page 4)

NEW PARENTING CLASS TO START IN MARCH

Parenting is hard. Get help from your peers, Head of School Maura Joyce, and Resource Teacher Dorama Montoya in our spring Positive Discipline parenting class. The class will help you navigate the rough waters of parenting in a friendly, supportive atmosphere. Classes are discussion-based and will be held Thursdays, April 7-May 12, 6-8 PM in the MIR Yoga Room.

Sign up via the Parent Portal by Friday, April 1. Space is limited to 24 people/12 couples. The cost is \$75 per person/\$125 per couple, which includes books, and will be billed to your account.

REPORT FROM THE BOARD

By JENNIFER BURROWS, MEMBER

THINKING OF NEXT YEAR

The month of March brings warmer weather, longer days, and initial spring blooms. It signals a midway point between the first of the year and the beginning of the summer break. March also brings us to the point in the year when current parents are asked to re-enroll their children at MIR for the upcoming school year.

We know that for many families, this is not always an easy decision. There are many factors as to why parents have put trust into a Montessori education for their child(ren). And many of these reasons are extremely personal.

As a member of the Board of Trustees (BOT), and a parent of a third year elementary student, I'd like to share with you some of the reasons why we chose MIR, and why we will be re-enrolling our child at MIR.

ENVIRONMENT

Southern California, a metropolis of almost 23 million people linked together by ribbons of concrete, is not exactly a small community. Yet, MIR maintains a campus that makes you feel as if you are miles away from the hustle and bustle of "the city." The students enjoy the freedom to explore nature just outside their classroom door daily.

(Continued on page 4)

PTM NEWS

BY JESSICA BROCKARDT, SECRETARY

OPPORTUNITIES TO GATHER FOR FUN AND LEARNING



Student Jeremy Lowe wears his 40th anniversary MIR shirt at Pearl Harbor on a recent family vacation to Honolulu. His mom says Jeremy was ecstatic to visit Pearl Harbor since he is very interested in WWII airplanes and knows all about the history of Pearl Harbor. Submit your t-shirt photos to kensok@mir.org.

Our next PTM meeting will be held Tuesday, April 5 at 6 PM. All parents are welcome and childcare is available for enrolled students.

NEW PARENT EDUCATION NIGHT

The PTM has arranged for local financial planners at KWB Wealth Management, Inc., to deliver a College Savings Seminar on April 5 at 7 PM for both MIR and Grove families. They will cover:

- * The basics of the US taxation system
- * Different types of retirement accounts
- * How 529 accounts can help with college
- * Benefits of an investment strategy.

Save the date for this informative seminar. Childcare will be available for enrolled Primary and Elementary students. Look for an email with details and links closer to the event.

(Continued on page 5)

CURRICULUM MATTERS

by PETER DAVIDSON, ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

THE STORY OF COMMUNICATION IN SIGNS

We know that the brain constantly searches for meaning and context. For this reason, scientists tell us that in education we should start with big picture ideas to create contextual understanding, before proceeding to the smaller and more detailed content (see *Connecting Brain Research with Effective Teaching*, by Dr. Mariale Hardiman, Johns Hopkins). At last month's Coffee, Tea, and M.E. we had a great example of how we regularly do that in Montessori.

The topic was language work, and lower elementary teacher Whitney Sforza gave us one of the "Great Lessons" with which she introduces this entire area of study and interest, called "The Story of Communication in Signs." She had the audience on the edge of their seats as she told this story of the coming of written human language. Talk about "starting with the big picture!"

I have included the story below. As you read it, picture yourself as an elementary student, using your imagination to follow Whitney back thousands of years to the origins of writing, and imagine also the wonder and excitement such a story generates in a child's mind. Imagine what this story might inspire you to create afterward—an alphabet of Egyptian hieroglyphics? A report on the Phoenicians? Your very own secret alphabet?

The Story of Communication in Signs

I have been telling you stories about the earth and how it came to be, and how plants and animals and human beings came to live on it. Today I have another story that is about something that happened after people came to the earth. Nobody knows exactly when this happened, so it is a 'once upon a time' kind of story,

but it is also a true story.

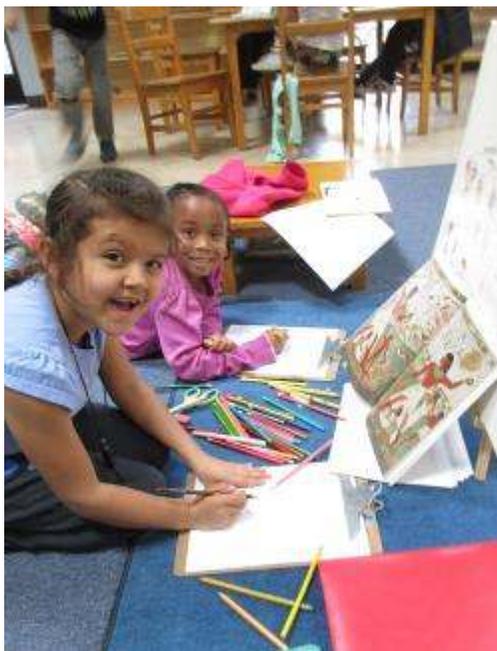
My story starts with people long, long ago looking for food. People long ago had to find their food because there were no grocery stores back then. So, when people found food that was good to eat they would tell all of their friends. It was important for people to know which nuts and berries were tasty and which might upset their tummies. Much time went by this way with people telling each other where the food was that was good to eat. However, this did not always work well, because people moved around a lot. So whenever someone moved to a new place they would have to find the good food all over again.

Then one day someone came up with an idea. We don't know who this person was, but they had the idea to leave a message. Kind of like this (Whitney draws a picture of some berries). These early messages were pictures of the things that the people back then found important. Things

went on this way for a very long time—people would leave messages for each other drawn in the dirt with sticks.

Finally, a group of people called the Egyptians who lived by the Nile River had the idea to use the same picture over and over again. They called these pictures hieroglyphs, which means "holy carved writing," because they believed that these pictures were sacred and so only the priests should learn to write them. At first they carved their pictures into stone, which was very difficult. As time went on the Egyptians found a better way to write their hieroglyphs. They made a kind of paper from a plant that grew on the banks of the Nile called papyrus, and they used a brush to paint pictures. This made things a lot easier, but it was still difficult to interpret someone else's message in hieroglyphs, because sometimes a hieroglyph was used to represent an idea, and other times the same picture was used to represent a sound. So you couldn't always be sure you got the message right.

Now let me tell you about the Phoenicians. They were not farmers like the Egyptians, but sailors and merchants. They sailed their ships to many different countries in the Mediterranean and carried all kinds of wonderful goods for trading. There was one thing in particular for which they were famous and everywhere people wanted to trade for this special thing. It was a dye used to color material and clothing called Tyrian purple. You may know it as royal purple. It is sometimes called this because only people with a lot of money could afford it. It was very popular and whenever the Phoenicians



Lower elementary students studying the Egyptians.

(Continued on page 5)

BOARD REPORT *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 2)

There is a sense of calm in the MIR classrooms and across the campus. (And for those who know my child—this is exactly the environment his personality needs for balance!) There is pride of ownership—not just of the school owning the property—but of the children owning their surroundings. This campus setting is unlike any other educational experience in the immediate area and is what makes the physical environment of MIR so inviting.

PHILOSOPHY

The Montessori philosophy of following the child is needed more today than ever. With mainstream education mandated to teaching a specific set of schoolwork, children aren't as free to explore their own passions. At MIR, this is not the case! We have seen our child research topics that he is genuinely passionate about—leading to complete ownership and an unrivaled sense of pride with the completed work.

GOVERNANCE AND FUTURE

MIR is stable financially and growing. With a new Student Services Center in progress, which will allow space for an additional upper elementary classroom, the school will continue to thrive long after the current students have graduated and left the grapefruit grove.

The school is governed by a BOT who understand the important role MIR plays in the local community. The BOT is consistently investigating ways to increase the stature of the school in not only Redlands, but across the entire Montessori community. It is important that our school is recognized locally, nationally, and internationally for the incredible work it does in educating our future.

It's often said that it takes a village to raise a child. Montessori in Redlands is that village. Here's to another year of MIR education. I hope to see you and your child(ren) at MIR next year as well.

HEAD SEARCH UPDATE

The search has officially launched! Ads were posted with NAMTA and AMI-USA, and sent to the entire AMI membership. Visit mir.org/headsearch to see the search materials, including a beautiful School Profile brochure. Letters to the MIR community are also posted there.

Thank you to everyone who participated in focus groups and the online survey. Your comments are informing our search process.

Once the search closes March 11, we will proceed with phone interviews and prepare for possible site visits by finalists in mid-April.

Have questions about the search? Come to the next Board Open Forum (Monday, March 28, 6:30 PM) or email board@mir.org.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 1)

couple of my favorites would be taking care of the animals in the classroom and preparing for Holiday Sing. The most memorable thing I did was help to plan our 6th grade trip to Boston and Nantucket. The fact that we were able to take charge and decide what type of things we would like to do on the trip made it that much better. Going to Braswells Chateau Villa is definitely a highlight of my life at MIR. I loved seeing the smiles of the residents' faces and being able to interact with them and bring them Valentine's Day cards. Not everyone there has a family that visits. It brought a smile to my face every time.

I am eternally grateful that my parents sent me to MIR because it has set me up for a great future. It challenges kids in the right way and makes them part of a tight-knit community. I had the chance to grow close relationships with my teachers, which made it easier to ask for help and overcome problems. I feel Montessori has prepared me for the real world and not just a test.

Hello, my name is **Lillian Norton-**

Brainerd and I am a 9th grader attending the Grove School. I went to both MIR and Smiley Elementary, a Redlands public school, making my experience different. I attended MIR for two years in Primary, then public school through 5th grade, then MIR again for 6th grade. I have been at Grove ever since. I enjoyed MIR; it was the school that made me love learning and school in general. This is a skill which has made me eager to be challenged and pushed me to succeed ever since Primary. The alternative learning style that has students learn from every experience was probably what made me love "work"—it didn't feel like work, just fun. I remember pulling carrots out of the garden, counting bead chains, and playing music outside in Primary, then later fundraising for Washington, D.C. and buying fruits so we could classify them for the purpose of learning. These were things I did not get to do at Smiley, things that have encouraged me to ask questions about the world and made me eager to do things in life. Another thing that I missed out on at Smiley was working in groups. There, working with others was a rare treat, unlike at elementary at MIR and the Grove, where working with people is something I get to do every day.

Working with people, a main skill I gained from MIR, has helped me with diplomacy and cooperation, skills important to the Model United Nations group I am in. The Model UN group at Grove includes many MIR students. This makes me think MIR has encouraged cooperation, leadership, curiosity, global awareness, and interest in and care for international affairs. These skills are something I think MIR pays attention to, that help students succeed. MIR is an amazing place. I made so many great memories at MIR, even though I was only there for three years.

PTM NEWS (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

PTM FAMILY SKATE NIGHT

Skate with your friends from MIR on Friday, April 8, 5-7 PM at CalSkate in Grand Terrace. MIR families and their guests are invited. Buy your tickets after Spring Break in the MIR office until 4 PM April 8 for \$6, or at the door for \$8. This is a private event and your ticket entitles you to a free skating lesson at 5:45 PM and coaching for emerging skaters at 6:45 PM. There are skates available as small as toddler size 9 and V-shaped supports available for an additional \$5 for those new to skating. We hope to see you there!

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE ANNUAL SPRING CARNIVAL

The Spring Carnival will be held Saturday, April 30 from 11 AM-3 PM. Admission is \$10 per family, which covers all activities. There will be food for purchase. **Parent volunteers are needed.** Most classes need help with creating their booths and with staffing the booth at the carnival. **They only need a half hour of your time.** Buddy up with a friend to watch the kids and sign up in your child's classroom for a slot during the carnival.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

On Thursday and Friday, March 17 and 18, you have the opportunity to meet with your children's teachers one-on-one for Parent-Teacher conferences.

We wanted to share tips and answer common questions about conferences based on our own experiences. An effective parent-teacher partnership can make a significant difference in your child's education. When parents and teachers communicate, it provides an opportunity for the child to be successful in and outside of the classroom and lets the child know they

have a strong support system.

Where are Parent-Teacher Conferences held?

Location varies by class. Some are in the classroom and some in classroom lofts. Jean and Maryhelen's class holds a conference day in the Esri Café due to the high number of Esri families in that class.

What if I can't make it on those dates?

Speak with your child's teacher to arrange an alternate time. Some classes already have additional dates and times built into their schedules.

How do I sign up?

Sign up via the Parent Portal at mir.org.

How long does each Parent-Teacher Conference last?

Most last around 20 minutes. Some may be arranged for longer based on the needs of the child.

Who should attend?

Ideally, both parents should make every effort to attend.

Should I do anything ahead of time?

We suggest you think through any questions you may have ahead of time. We recommend that you bring a pen and paper to take notes during the conference as well.

Will I receive a "report card" at the conference?

You will receive a written report that outlines your child's growth and development in several areas including academic and social-emotional. Children are assessed according to what is appropriate for their age and stage of development. Each child is measured on their own growth, not how they compare with the other children in class.

I am a Toddler parent. What will I learn at a conference?

Development at this age is very rapid and a lot of growth occurs in the space of

months. This is a great time to learn what your child's teacher is observing in class and how you can help your child's development at home.

Are conferences the only time to meet with the teachers?

No—you are welcome to schedule a meeting with your child's teacher at any time during the year. This is usually more fruitful for you both than trying to catch them at the end of the day.

CURRICULUM MATTERS (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

sailed into port people would come to buy Tyrian purple from them. Now we know about the Phoenicians for another reason. They took the idea of hieroglyphs and made them easier to work with. Because they needed a way to keep track of all the goods they were selling, they took out the pictures that just stood for some thing, and left only the pictures that stood for sounds. That made things much easier and now messages didn't get confused.

But that's not the end of our story, because after the Phoenicians the Greeks decided to change the shape of the letters. As time went on, the Romans took the letters from the Greeks and changed them a bit more. The Romans only used capital letters and they made the first two letters of the alphabet, A and B.

Just think—if it weren't for all of these people and their wonderful ideas we wouldn't have written language today. So we can be thankful to that unknown person who wrote the first picture message, and to the Egyptians, the Phoenicians, the Greeks, and the Romans who came after.

3 WAYS TO WIN YOUR CHILD'S AUCTION ITEM



The MIR Spring Gala & Auction is coming up fast—Saturday, March 12, 6 PM-midnight, at the Mitten Building. Tickets are still available. Buy yours online at mir.org/galatickets.

I love my child's classroom item. How do I win it? Bid at the live auction! If you've never been to an auction before, we should warn you that the auction moves fast. Have a budget in mind before you get there and prepare to raise your paddle quickly.

I can't go because I don't have a babysitter. Can I still bid? Yes! If you are a toddler parent, you may bid online the week before the gala. If your bid remains the highest at the live auction, you win! **Anyone not able to attend can talk to the office about setting up a proxy bidder.** The proxy bids on the item you designate, staying within the budget you set.

I don't think I can afford the items. Is there another way to win? Yes—buy a Golden Ticket. Tickets are \$100 and the

winner gets the auction item of their choice before it enters the live auction.

I don't want to bid on items but I'd like to help out. What can I do? Proceeds from the auction will help build the new Student Services Center. **Whether or not you're attending, you can visit the office to participate in our new Raise the Roof campaign.** You select a donation envelop from the board and donate the amount printed—from \$1 to \$201.

SPRING GALA ITEMS: ACTIVITIES

Left to right: Kara and Jenny (outdoor games), Teesie (puppet theater/playhouse), Jean and Maryhelen (day at Disneyland with Jean and Maryhelen)



SPRING GALA ITEMS: MY OWN LITTLE CORNER

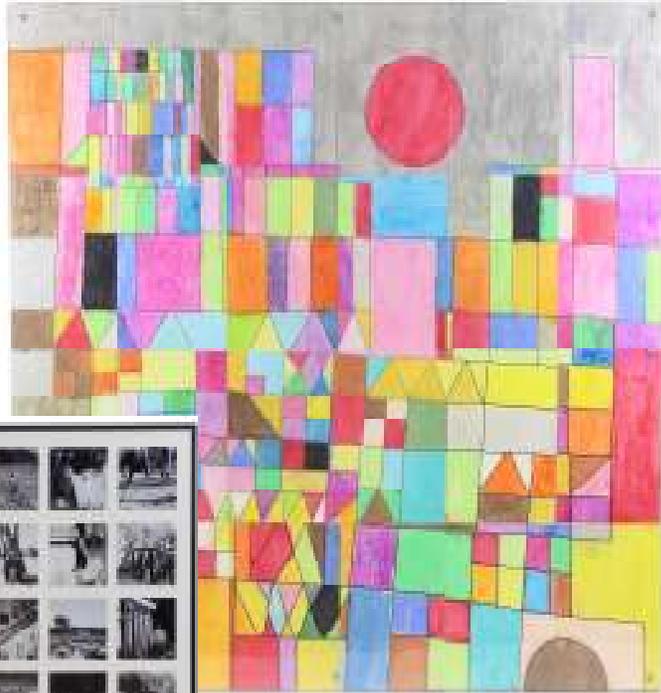
Left to right: Aedín, Christine, Nikki



MIR SCRAPBOOK

SPRING GALA ITEMS: ART

*Clockwise from top: Sara, Kelly,
Liana, Nicole, Kristen, Maria,
Emily*



ITEMS NOT PICTURED:

- ◊ Reserved parking space at MIR
- ◊ Handyman services from MIR facilities manager Roger Smart and sidekick Vic Alonzo
- ◊ Best seats in the house for Holiday Sing
- ◊ Party for 6 in the Redlands downtown fire station
- ◊ Week in a Big Bear condo
- ◊ Design a "Pizza of the Month" with Gourmet Pizza Shoppe



CALENDAR

ENJOY A PASTA DINNER ON PARENT-CHILD NIGHT

Enjoy some dinner before or after your time in your child's classroom on Parent-Child Night and help the class of 2017 get to Washington, D.C.

MIR's 5th year Upper Elementary students will serve a delicious pasta meal. For \$5 you get a plate of pasta with plain, marinara, or meat sauce; salad with ranch or Italian dressing; and water or lemonade.

Dinner will be served 5-7 PM in Kristen's classroom on the North Campus. This is the first fundraiser for the class of 2017 trip to Washington, D.C. Thank you for your support!

SCHEDULE YOUR PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher conferences offer important time with your child's teacher. Conferences will be held Thursday and Friday, March 17 and 18 and allow you to discuss your child's progress and development with his or her teacher. You will receive a progress report for your child. **Sign up via the Parent Portal for a time slot.** *If you are unavailable at the specified times, please arrange an alternate time with your child's teacher.*

Childcare is available for your conference time or blocks of time. Sign up for childcare via the Parent Portal.

EARLY REGISTRATION STARTS NOW

During March, current MIR families have the opportunity to re-enroll current students and enroll siblings for the 2016-17 school year for a discounted registration fee of \$350 per child.

Registration will take place online. **Look for an email from admissions@mir.org with instructions.**

Registering early ensures you secure a space for your child for the next school year. While registrations will be accepted after March 31, our wait lists are long and we start placing new students beginning May 3. **After March 31, the registration fee is \$500 per child, no exceptions.**

NEW PARENT ED NIGHT—SAVING FOR COLLEGE

PTM has invited KWB Wealth Managers to give a seminar on saving for college on Tuesday, April 5, 7 PM. For families not from the U.S., KWB will cover the U.S. tax system and retirement planning along with the college savings information.

The seminar is open to MIR and Grove families. **Sign up via the Parent Portal.** Childcare is available to enrolled Primary and Elementary students.

March 2016

| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| 29 Raise the Roof begins Leap Year | 1 Payments Due Early registration begins for 2016-17 school year | 2 Bike Club Sportball | 3 Elementary P.E. field trip, Big Air Trampoline Park | 4 Final day to get Spring Gala tickets 5 Grove Monopoly Tournament |
| 7 | 8 Kara/Jenny field trip, The Sawdust Factory | 9 Nikki field trip, Kidspace Children's Museum Bike Club Sportball | 10 Kristen's class "Shake Hands with History," 3:30-5 PM | 11 Childcare RSVPs due for Parent-Teacher Confs. 12 MIR Spring Gala, 6 PM to 12 AM |
| 14 Childcare RSVPs due for Spring Break | 15 School closes @5 PM Parent-Child Night and Pasta Dinner, 5-7 PM | 16 Bluebird Assembly, 9:15 AM Kristen field trip, Oak Glen Preserve Bike Club | 17 St. Patrick's Day Parent/Teacher conferences for all classes. No school, childcare by reservation. | 18 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 Holi Spring Break. No school, childcare by reservation. | 24 | 25 |
| 28 Staff in-service No school, no childcare. Board of Trustees Open Forum, 6:30-7 PM | 29 | 30 Kelly field trip, Indian Hill Trail 6 th year Elem. parent meeting, 4 PM Bike Club | 31 Last day of Early Registration 4 th year Elementary Heritage Tour | 1 Payments Due Coffee, Tea, and M.E., 8:45 AM |