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IN EVERY ISSUE:

Report from the Board
PTM News
Curriculum Matters
MIR Scrapbook
Calendar

ARTICLES:

*MIR to Launch Drawings and Online
Spring Auction on April 15*

*Summer School Enrollment is Open—
Enroll Online*

SCREENTIME AND YOUNG CHILDREN: WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

by PETER DAVIDSON, HEAD OF SCHOOL

As you'll learn in another part of this month's *MIRROR*, our PTM in conjunction with The Grove School is showing the movie *Screenagers* for our combined parent community. In it, physician and filmmaker Delaney Ruston "takes a deeply personal approach...to explore struggles over social media, video games, academics and internet addiction....reveals how tech time impacts kids' development, and offers solutions on how adults can empower kids to best navigate the digital world and find balance." Though largely aimed at parents of teenagers, we expect this film to appeal to parents with children of all ages,

as, quite rightly, parents of toddlers also share concerns about screen time and its effects on development.

I was recently watching a TED Talk by pediatrician, parent, and researcher Dimitri Christakis titled "Media and Children." In it he discusses the critical importance of the early years for lifelong development. For instance, a newborn's brain triples in size in the first two years, and, even more significantly, grows the number of synapses from 2,500 to more than 15,000. This growth happens as "a direct response to the environment that that infant experi-

(Continued on page 6)

APRIL EVENTS

Join Us for a Tour of the Student
Services Center

Friday, April 7, 9-10:30 AM

The new Student Services Center has been open and fully operational for a few weeks. It's beautiful and provides much needed space for our assistance programs.

The Center was made possible with the gifts to the MIR Fund over the past few years, as well as grants from local organizations. We want to invite you to see for yourself the good work you've done.

On Friday, April 7, 9-10:30 a.m., we are holding an open house in the Center. You'll be able to tour the building

(Continued on page 7)

REPORT FROM THE BOARD

THE GROVE SCHOOL AND MONTESSORI IN REDLANDS: A TRUE PARTNERSHIP

BY TREVOR NORTON, PRESIDENT

I remember when we first arrived at MIR. We had no idea that this little “preschool” would shape our lives (oh, and our kids) as much as it has. We were just happy to have found a beautiful and supportive place for our kids—a place where they weren’t plopped down in front of a TV! We had a vague sense that there was more to the school—we knew that there was this “other” school that was somehow connected but not the same, and shared the campus.

Even years later we didn’t understand the relationship between The Grove School and MIR. Now that both of our kids are

(Continued on page 7)

PTM NEWS

By VICTORIA HOBSON, TREASURER

Spring is officially here and with it comes some GREAT events you’ll want to put on your calendar for the month of April.

SKATE NIGHT

Join us for our third Skate Night of the school year on Friday, April 7, 5-7 PM at CalSkate in Grand Terrace. Tickets are available in the office for \$6 each or can be purchased the night of the event at the door for \$8 each. First-time and long-time skaters are welcome and will find the skate helpers, the all-ages lesson, and the games are just what you need to advance your skate skills and have fun with your friends.

SPRING CARNIVAL

Next on the list is the Spring Carnival on Saturday, April 22, 11 AM-3 PM. The entry fee is \$10 per family and includes all activities.

This fun-filled afternoon is always a crowd pleaser. We will transform the south campus playgrounds into a carnival ground with each class hosting a booth with games or crafts. Bounce houses, and train-style race cars (the same ones fea-

tured at the Redlands Market Night) will be on campus with unlimited rides for everyone attending.

If you’ve been to the Carnival before, here are a few changes to be aware of as well. When you pay your entry fee, children will be given wristbands that allow them unlimited access to rides and games. Meal tickets will be sold at the gate rather than in the lunch area, and can be purchased when you pay your entry fee. Meal tickets are \$5.

This year, we are pleased to provide a bounce house exclusively for our smallest members of the MIR community. A separate bounce house will be dedicated to children age 5 and under and will be clearly marked with signs. Parents, please watch your children of all ages as we are here to all have fun and can only do this with the help of your watchful eye.

PTM will set up a BBQ lunch serving hot dogs, hamburgers, veggie dogs, and chips. Coolers of water will be set out and attendees are encouraged to bring their own water bottle to drink from.

The Spring Carnival will also host an

art gallery and a marketplace of home-based businesses, and will kick off the Frugal Frigate book fair.

If you are interested in showcasing your artwork or selling items from a home-based business, please contact Jean Bonner-Drinkwine for more information. She is located in the Primary classroom behind the office foyer or email her at jdinkwine@mir.org.

SCREENAGERS

Rounding out the month, on Thursday, April 27, 6-8:30 PM at the Barton School House (across the street from MIR, located in the Heritage Park) PTM and The Grove will be joining forces to provide a screening of the documentary movie *Screenagers*. Do not be fooled by the title. This movie will have something for everyone, not just parents of teenagers. The filmmakers describe it this way:

“SCREENAGERS probes into the vulnerable corners of family life, including the director’s own, and depicts messy struggles over social media, video games, academics

(Continued on page 7)

CURRICULUM MATTERS

STEM IN MONTESSORI

By LISA KENSOK

“Observation is the absolute basis of all knowledge. The first object, then, in education, must be to lead the child to observe with accuracy; the second, to express with correctness the results of his observation.”—Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi

It seems almost daily that we have parents ask us about the quality and quantity of our “STEM” education—education in science, technology, engineering, and math. There is much pressure from the culture and at the highest level of government to “raise scores” in these areas and raise the number of people who can fill the many vacancies in these disciplines.

It’s a reasonable question: does a Montessori education, with its emphasis on hands-on analog tools, adequately prepare students for a high-tech world and careers?

First, it’s important that we distinguish between pedagogy (education principles and practices) and content—what’s taught. There are specialty schools that promise a greater focus on STEM content, but what content is left out in this type of curriculum?

In doing research for this article, I came across a Reddit thread among parents discussing the merits of a STEM-based school vs. a local Montessori school. Honestly, I was expecting people to strongly advocate

This toddler material develops spatial thinking along with motor skills.



for the STEM option. I was surprised that the universal response was to favor Montessori through Elementary. Here are some of those opinions (see [reddit.com/r/Parenting/comments/4egpr9/trying_to_decide_between_montessori_and_stemsteam/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Parenting/comments/4egpr9/trying_to_decide_between_montessori_and_stemsteam/) for the full discussion):

“As a scientist myself I would go with Montessori. My boys went to Montessori preschool and I still regret that I did not choose that for elementary for my geeky one. However, I admit to a fairly strong bias against STEM, especially in elementary. I do not consider it a good way to educate a scientist... Children first need to be taught how to think—what they think about can safely be left to them as long as they exercise their brains... The most important element of science is creativity—art is the best subject for developing that...”

“I went to a STEM high school. I would strongly advocate Montessori over STEM-focused for elementary school, and honestly for higher grades as well unless the STEM school is truly elite. Any moderately

This toddler material helps the child visualize quantities while learning the numbers 1-5.



Technology is a tool for learning in the Elementary classroom.

clever person can be taught math, science, and tech as an adult in college. It’s much, much harder to learn...the ability to self-direct your problem solving. It’s also very hard to [unlearn] the habits of competing for grades and gold stars and to retrain yourself into intrinsic motivation for the joy of discovery and accomplishment.”

These are anecdotal quotes from some people’s experiences. Beyond these experiences, what do Montessori students learn in these subject areas? The answer, is quite a lot. Children start exploring science classifications at the earliest ages, by learning precise language to describe animals (a bird is never a “birdie” but an “Amazonian parrot” or “blue-footed booby” or “California scrub jay”). They learn biology by working on classification of flowers and leaves in Primary. As they move into Elementary, they learn the scientific method and how to use it for their science studies. They dissect worms, frogs, and even eyeballs. There is much more content than can be listed here.

Children learn and practice engineering

(Continued on page 4)

CURRICULUM MATTERS *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 3)



Primary addition work.



Finding fossils in Primary.

when building missions, Roman arches, skyscrapers, Greek homes complete with underlying catacombs, or studying all of the above as part of their normal work. Even using cardboard or paper, it is really hard to successfully build models without employing some engineering practices.

Math is, of course, taught in all its forms from early ages as well (see the November MIRROR article on the “Importance of Geometry in Montessori,” or the December article “Ah Ha Moments.”) From fractions, to algebraic thinking to geometry, Montessori lays the foundation for solid math understanding. You won’t see this reflected in worksheets or homework but in the thinking of the students themselves. The goal is to teach students how to think mathematically. You’ll see this come to fruition in the middle and high school work they do. (See [maria montessori.com/?s=math](http://maria.montessori.com/?s=math) for a brief example of what we mean by teaching young children to think mathematically.)

Technology is a more of a philosophical conundrum for Montessori classes. Technology is pervasive in our culture and, as noted, Montessori remains steadfastly analog through the early ages. Starting in Upper Elementary, students use computers in the classroom as a tool, and teachers are collaborating among themselves and with the Grove school to help their students become better digital citizens.

Montessori educators approach technology as a tool for learning. The fact is, technology changes rapidly and the computers, tablets, and smart phones of today will give way to something new in just a few years. Tablets and smart phones didn’t exist before 2007, and our children have no problem using them (neither do we). Computing in general changes, with one futurologist predicting a sort of “smart yogurt” to replace current hardware (usnews.com/news/articles/2016-08-12/the-future-of-computers-in-america). How does one program for yogurt?

Rather than focus on teaching specific

Building structures to compute volume of rectangles using cubes in Elementary.



technological skills, we maintain our focus on teaching students how to learn and adapt rapidly to a rapidly changing world. We also help them develop the logic and reasoning skills that will later make them better scientists, technologists, engineers, or mathematicians as well as business owners, college professors, actors, writers, musicians, linguists, and so on.

Montessori chooses not to emphasize or de-emphasize any particular content, and in truth it is the children themselves who have the power over the content they learn. Our job is not to teach them what to think and learn but how to think and learn. With these skills, they will be prepared to take on whatever the future will bring, and they will do it joyfully.

An introduction to squaring in Primary using the short bead chains.



Examining drops of water under a microscope in Primary.



Giving a presentation on volcanoes using a working model in Elementary.

Dissecting animal eyeballs in Elementary.



MIR SCRAPBOOK

*MIR STUDENTS
HAD A FIELD
DAY IN MARCH*



SCREENTIME (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

ences,” which includes television and other technologies.

As he points out, “We are technologizing childhood in a way that is unprecedented. In 1970 the average age children began to watch TV regularly was 4 years, but today it is 4 months. It’s not just how early they watch, but how much they watch. The typical child before the age of 5 is watching about 4 ½ hours of TV per day. That represents about 40% of their waking hours.”

And it’s not just how early and how much they watch, but also the nature of the content they are consuming. If you have watched any children’s commercial entertainment television recently (as opposed to educational TV), you may have been as surprised as Dr. Christakis was by how fast paced it often is, and how frequently scenes change—sometimes every few seconds. We know that too little stimulation impedes brain development, but Dr. Christakis wondered what the effect of too much stimulation might be. He and his colleagues decided to test an “over-stimulation hypothesis: that prolonged exposure to rapid image change during the critical period of brain development would precondition the mind to expect high levels of stimulation and lead to inattention later in life.”

What they found was that the more TV children watch before age 3, the more likely they are to have attention problems at school age. Specifically, for each hour of daily TV watching before age 3, their chances of having an attention problem increased by 10%. That is, a child who watched two hours of television per day before age 3 would be 20% more likely to have attention problems than a child who watched none.

The good news in their research, however, is that each hour of healthy cognitive stimulation a child receives per day—things

MIR TO LAUNCH DRAWINGS AND ONLINE SPRING AUCTION ON APRIL 15

MIR is not holding a Spring Gala this year, but that doesn’t mean we don’t have some of your favorite auction items available!



On Saturday, April 15, MIR will launch an online auction featuring five auction items. These include the Reserved Parking Space, the Best Seats in the House for the Holiday Sing, Principal for a Day (with new head Jenny Davidson!), First Pick at Camp MIR, and Farmers Market Cornucopia. The Spring Auction bolsters the MIR Fund while giving you the chance at some awesome prizes!

In addition to the auction, MIR will hold an opportunity drawing for two fabulous items: a Gift Card Tree worth \$200, and 4 Park Hopper tickets for Disneyland and Disney’s California Adventure. There will also be a 50/50 drawing—the winner takes home half of the ticket proceeds for the drawing.

Instructions for how to participate in the auction will be sent by email as we get closer to the event. Tickets for the opportunity and 50/50 drawings will cost \$2 each and be available in the office starting the week of April 17. For any questions, contact Jill McDermott at jmcdermott@mir.org.



Reserved Parking Space

Your own parking space throughout the school year.



First Pick at Camp MIR

Entry fee, your pick of camp spots, and we’ll put up your tent for you!



Principal for a Day

Take the reigns of MIR for the day!



Best Seats in the House

Reserved seats in the row with the best view at Holiday Sing.

Farmers Market Cornucopia: A monthly basket of eggs (when available), seasonal produce, and fresh loaf of bread from the Grove School Farmers Market.

like talking, singing, and playing with their parents—reduces the chances of later inattentiveness by 30%. So the conclusion one draws here is, turning off the TV, putting down the phone or iPad (out of reach of children) and playing with children works wonders! Read to them, sing with them, interact with them. And, enjoy them!

Come watch *Screenagers* with us on April 27, and support yourself and your community in resisting the “technologizing” of our

children. Visit <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/5/e20162591> for the American Academy of Pediatrics *Policy Statement on Media and Young Minds* based on a meta-review of available research.

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BOARD REPORT

(Continued from page 2)

thriving at the Grove, we have a much better sense of how the two schools work together toward a common goal.

Maria Montessori wrote a lot about kids in their Toddler, Primary and Elementary years, but very little about adolescents and young adults. Although many adolescents start at Grove without previous Montessori experience, we know that kids who have gone through MIR are well prepared for not only the academic challenges ahead, but the social and “life skill” challenges that await in those difficult years (difficult for the adolescents AND their parents!).

What we have here—a private school and a charter school sharing space, sharing a philosophy, and sharing students from 18 months to 18 years—is quite remarkable and quite special.

Both MIR and Grove have worked hard to develop and maintain strong communication and synergy between the schools. On a board level, many of our board members have gone on to become board members at Grove. The MIR head of school (HoS) was on the search committee for the current Grove HoS, and the current Grove HoS was recently on the search committee for our new head because we believe so strongly that the schools must (and do) work in harmony together.

We also have staff and administrators who are parents at both schools, and working on committees and other support capacities at Grove. And, of course, a great many MIR students go on to graduate from Grove and on to college or other adventures.

(cont.)

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APRIL EVENTS (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

and hear from the Student Services Team about their program. Meet in the office and we’ll get started from there.

The Open House replaces the Glass Classroom event originally listed on the calendar for April 7.

Spring Carnival Celebrates Earth Day Saturday, April 22, 11 AM-3 PM

This year the Carnival falls on Earth Day (Saturday, April 22). In addition to rides, games, and food, we will honor the day with performances.

Performances will include a Sri Lankan dancer; José and his World Vibrations Ensemble featuring MIR Elementary students; and Aztec dance troupe Tepeyolloti. Performances will start at 12:30 PM on Jean and Maryhelen’s playground. Performances will be followed by the Spring Auction opportunity drawings (around 2:30 PM).

Special Parent-Only Event: *Screenagers* Film with Discussion: April 27, 6-8:30 PM, Barton School House

Parents and Teachers of Montessori (PTM), The Grove School, and the Parent and Teachers of Grove (PTG) are together hosting a parents-only showing of the film *Screenagers*. *Screenagers* is a documentary that looks into the issue of safe, reasonable, and manageable technology use by children.

The filmmakers describe the documentary this way: “Award-winning *Screenagers*

probes into the vulnerable corners of family life, including the director's own, and depicts messy struggles over social media, video games, academics, and internet addiction. Through surprising insights from authors and brain scientists, solutions emerge on how we can empower kids to best navigate the digital world.”

The film showing will be followed by breakout discussion groups where parents of both schools can talk with each other about the film and how to support healthier habits around digital technology at home.

Childcare is available for enrolled Primary and Elementary students. A light supper will be provided for parents. Children in childcare will have a pizza dinner.

PTM NEWS (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

and internet addiction. Through surprising insights from authors and brain scientists, solutions emerge on how we can empower kids to best navigate the digital world.”

The evening will consist of a light finger-food dinner, movie viewing, and discussion groups. We are excited to offer this to the community at large as we tried a small group discussion at the last PTM meeting and enjoyed insightful and thoughtful conversations. You will receive an e-invitation and will be asked to RSVP. Please consider joining us as we navigate this topic together, parents helping parents.

PTM MEETING

The next, and last, PTM meeting will be held in the yoga room on Thursday, May 4, 6-8 PM. If you are interested in being more involved with the PTM or are considering being a room representative, please talk to your child’s teacher about what is involved and come to this meeting! It’s fun! REALLY!

CALENDAR

SUMMER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IS OPEN – ENROLL ONLINE



The MIR Summer Program is fun and enriching for all ages.

The MIR Summer Program is designed to be enriching, safe, and fun. The program complements MIR’s school-year program by reinforcing what the children have already learned and providing continued growth and development at every level.

The Summer Program spans eight weeks, conveniently organized into four sessions. We offer half, full, and all-day programs as well as before- and aftercare.

Enroll online through the Parent Portal. A \$100 deposit is required. Continuing students and new students confirmed for the 2017-18 school year may enroll, and enrollment is first-come, first-served. Visit mir.org/summer for information about each program.

April 2017

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><i>“It is spring again. The earth is like a child that knows poems by heart.”</i> — Rainer Maria Rilke</p>					1 Payments Due
3 World Party Day celebration, 5-6:30 PM	4 Whitney—Oak Glen Nature Preserve PTM Meeting, 6 PM Soccer	5 Math Club	6 Spring Picture Day	7 Student Service Ctr Open House, 9-10:30 AM PTM Family Skate Night, Cal Skate, 5-7 PM	8
10	11 Soccer	12 Kara/Jenny—Oak Glen Conservancy Math Club	13 Jean/MH—Oak Glen Conservancy	14 4 th years—Redlands Heritage Tour Emily’s 5 th & 6 th years—Edward Dean Museum	15 Online Spring Auction starts at 3 PM
17 Spring Auction (online)	18 Spring Auction (online) Soccer	19 Spring Auction (online) Math Club	20 Spring Auction (online) Teesie & Venus—Living Desert	21 Spring Auction (online) Whitney, Kristen, & Kelly—Krikorian Theatre	22 F.F. book fair Spring Carnival, 11 AM to 3 PM Online Spring Auction ends at 3 PM
24 F.F. book fair	25 F.F. book fair Nikki—Lewis Family Playhouse Soccer	25 F.F. book fair Maria & Sara—Lewis Family Playhouse Math Club	27 F.F. book fair	28 F.F. book fair Assembly, 9:15 AM	29 Redlands Day of Service, 9 AM-1 PM