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IN EVERY ISSUE:

*PTM News*  
*Curriculum Matters*  
*MIR Scrapbook*  
*Calendar*

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ARTICLES:

*The Committee on Trustees*  
*#GivingTuesday Campaign*  
*December Calendar Highlights*  
*Exchanging MIR Field Trip Shirts*  
*Please Fill Out the Parent Survey*

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## ELEVATING OUR MONTESSORI PRACTICE

by JENNIFER DAVIDSON, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Educators who work in Montessori education often refer to themselves as Montessori “practitioners.” We typically use this term for professionals such as doctors, lawyers, or for those who practice yoga or martial arts. The common ground in all of these areas is that it is always possible to keep refining and elevating one’s art, profession, craft or discipline. Beyond every level of mastery is yet another level of mastery to strive for. No matter how many years MIR teachers have been in the classroom, all are constantly working to learn and elevate how they work with children.

In addition to our WASC accreditation, Montessori in Redlands has sought multiple ways to support our continuous journey toward excellence. This year MIR is participating in a pilot program called the Montessori Peer Review Council (MPRC). This is an opportunity to elevate our Montessori practice and to continue improving through a self-study and an on-site visit conducted by other Montessori practitioners.

Conducting a school-wide self-reflection and self-assessment can help a great school become even better. It gives us the oppor-

(Continued on page 6)

## HOLIDAY SING

**Tuesday, December 12, 6:30 PM**  
**Seating begins at 6 PM**

The students are preparing for MIR’s biggest event of the year, the Holiday Sing, a tradition that started in the very first year of MIR’s existence when families and staff met informally for some holiday caroling and cookies.

This year we expect to host more than 1,000 family members at the University of Redlands Memorial Chapel for this event. All classes will perform. The Toddlers close the show.

(Continued on page 6)

# BOARD REPORT

## THE COMMITTEE ON TRUSTEES

by STEVEN WUHS, MEMBER

The Committee on Trustees exists to recruit members to the MIR Board of Trustees and to ensure that members of the Board have the support they need to serve the institution well. Its current members are Leila Khazaeni, Tim Ormsby, Adrienne Ortega, Kathleen Liess, and me.

Potential new MIR Board members participate in a long recruitment process that normally begins with nominations from the MIR administration and current and past MIR Board members. When the Board is notified of upcoming vacancies (around January 1 each year), the Committee on Trustees reviews the nature of the vacancy – what committees are losing members, what sort of professional skills are leaving the board, and how many vacancies there will be – and examines its list of potential members.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## PTM NEWS

### SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

by ELEANOR HAIRE, PRESIDENT

The holiday season brings many opportunities to celebrate with our community and to show kindness to those within it who are struggling. In Redlands, as in many of our neighboring cities, the community comes together in early December for the annual Christmas Parade. That amazing show of lights is topped only by the community's support of food and toy drives that aid local organizations such as Redlands Family Service.

Here at MIR, our community comes together to celebrate the season at the much-anticipated Holiday Sing; and, we work in conjunction with our students to source, build, and deliver hygiene kits to our homeless neighbors.

In past years, PTM also sponsored the traditional holiday food drive during this busy season. This year, we will hold our annual food and goods drive in February. So, this December, focus your charitable energies on the many other wonderful giving programs in our community but get ready to "Spread the love" once again dur-

ing PTM's annual food and goods drive in February.

The next PTM meeting will be held on Thursday, January 4 at 6 PM. All parents are welcome and encouraged to attend. No-cost childcare is available for enrolled students by reservation. Until then, the PTM wishes you, and yours, the happiest of holidays!

#### PTM TOY/BOOK EXCHANGE

PTM will host a toy and book exchange at the Grove Farmers Market Craft Fair on Saturday, December 2, 8 AM-12 PM. The market meets in the Heritage Park parking lot across from MIR.

Families can bring toys and/or books to swap for "new" toys and books brought by other families. After the event, any leftover books and toys will be donated to Redlands Family Service. This is a great way to reduce waste, find new items for your children, and support a worthy cause!

#### WAYS TO SUPPORT THE MIR AND GROVE COMMUNITIES

**Craft Fair at the Farmers Market:** Saturday, December 2, 8 AM-12 PM. In addition to participating in the PTM toy and book exchange, take the opportunity to browse and buy unique gifts from vendors and Grove students. Grove's parent group will sell scrip gift cards at the market as well.

**Frugal Frigate Book Fair at MIR:** Monday, December 4-Friday, December 8, Frugal Frigate will hold a children's book fair in the foyer of Jean and Maryhelen's classroom (through the main office). Frugal Frigate is an excellent independent children's book store in Redlands. Teachers will have wish lists if you're looking for class gift ideas. Frugal Frigate donates books to the school based on how many books are bought. It's the gift that keeps on giving!

**Scrip Gift Cards:** Every Wednesday, 8-9 AM, a representative from The Grove School's parent group sells gift cards in front of the main office. Scrip is good for

*(Continued on page 6)*

# CURRICULUM MATTERS

## THE STUDENT SERVICES TEAM - PART OF THE MIR VILLAGE

by MANDIE SCHADWINKEL, ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

It would be no surprise to find this atop the holiday wish list of most schools in 2017: direct access to, and continuity with, educational experts and specialist resources within a school community. Students and families benefit from support from teachers, specialists, administrators, and community members alike. Montessori in Redlands has taken this to heart and has made a commitment to your children and families to provide resources for this community to thrive.

A large part of that commitment and in-house expertise comes through the staff and facilities available in the Student Services Center. Located on the far northwest area of our campus, the Student Services Team comprises an Occupational Therapist, Speech Pathologist, Educational Consult-

ant, Resource Specialist and Tutor, and Student Services Specialist. These five individuals collectively offer the perspectives that come with a Montessori diploma, several years of classroom Montessori teaching experience, and specialized expertise in student services. They work together with the teachers at MIR to better understand and serve children who need specific support to succeed beyond what's available in their classroom. This process starts with a request from the teachers and/or parents in an effort to understand a child better and explore services that might benefit them. (More complete details about the referral process are available in the *Parent Handbook & Survival Guide*.)

Here is a brief profile of our Student Services Team:

**Michelle Beinners Moudry**, Educational Consultant, is in her third year as a tutor at MIR. She has a master's degree in education from the University of Minnesota and previously worked as a licensed special education teacher. For more than 20 years, Michelle has taught students with learning differences from primary age to post-secondary. She also has Orton-Gillingham advanced reading training as well as Social Thinking training. She has a passion for helping learners of all ages achieve their full potential and works with elementary students at MIR.

**Jody Pighin** is a Speech-Language Pathologist. She completed her master's in communication disorders at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, Canada. Jody has more than 20 years' experience. Before coming to MIR more than seven years ago, she worked at a rehabilitative hospital, several private pediatric clinics, and as an in-home early intervention specialist.

Jody specializes in assessment and treatment of speech and language development disorders. She works with children with articulation delay, phonological disorder, Childhood Apraxia of Speech, Autism Spectrum Disorder, receptive and expressive language delay/disorder, and cleft palate. She serves students at all levels—toddler, primary and elementary.

**Dorama Montoya** has been a Resource Specialist and Tutor for the last five years. She grew up and attended college in Chile. As a young adult, she moved to the U.S. and took a job as a Montessori assistant teacher in a primary community in Los

MIR's Student Services Team (l-r): Dorama Montoya, Michelle Beinners Moudry, Saskia de Jong, Jody Pighin, and Margaretann Harrison.



(Continued on page 7)

# MIR SCRAPBOOK

## *FIELD TRIP TO CAL EARTH AND PRIMARY CHILDCARE*



# MIR SCRAPBOOK

## *VETERANS DAY AND MISSION INN RUN*



## HOLIDAY SING (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

Admission to the Holiday Sing is free and you are welcome to invite extended family. **The event starts earlier this year** to ensure we can end on time (8 PM) and our youngest students can get to bed earlier. Seating begins at 6 PM and the program begins at 6:30 PM. Full instructions on where to drop off your children will be sent just before the event.

**School and childcare will close at 3:30 PM on that day** to give students a chance to rest and prepare for the evening.

### HOLIDAY SING DRESS REHEARSAL SCHEDULE AND LOGISTICS

Dress rehearsals start at 9:30 AM on Tuesday, December 12. Children will travel by bus to the University of Redlands. It is important that all children arrive at school on time to get on the bus. Otherwise, your child may miss their opportunity to rehearse.

Two-day toddlers can bring their children directly to the Chapel for rehearsal. Check with your child's teacher for the correct rehearsal time.

### ORDER DVDS

The performance will be professionally recorded. You will be able to pre-order DVDs in December via the Parent Portal for a cost of \$15. The cost will be billed to your account.

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## COMMITTEE ON TRUSTEES (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

Based on those considerations, we invite applications to the Board. Individuals who apply typically meet with two current members for an interview, and, based on their application, résumé, and the interview, a

recommendation is made by the Committee on Trustees to the MIR Board to vote on new membership for the applicant.

We try to complete the recruitment process by April each year. New members of the Board serve a three-year term that can be renewed once.

That April deadline is important because it coincides with one of the other responsibilities of the Committee on Trustees: effective orientation and training of new Board members. In alternate years, we invite a not-for-profit board consultant to meet with and "train" the Board and the MIR administration about the roles and responsibilities of boards, board members, and school officials. That clarity is important to smooth operations for the institution. In the opposite years, we plan to invite board members or administrators from other community schools to talk with the MIR Board about how to work productively alongside our Head of School and her team.

April is also important as a deadline for our recruitment processes because it gives new board members who are not current or recent parents (like our first alumna MIR Board member, Michelle Bologna, who went to MIR at its old location, or our newest board member James Maloney) the opportunity to get properly oriented to the campus, the staff, the physical plant, and the operations of the school. We are aided in this orientation with materials provided by the National Association of Independent Schools.

If you have questions about the MIR Committee on Trustees, please feel free to email me at [steve.wuhs@gmail.com](mailto:steve.wuhs@gmail.com). If you're interested in exploring serving on the MIR Board of Trustees, please go to the MIR website ([mir.org/about-mir/governance](http://mir.org/about-mir/governance)).

## ELEVATING OUR PRACTICE (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

tunity to reflect on the fundamental characteristics of MIR's educational program, to what extent we live up to our aspirations, and which areas call for further exploration. The visiting team of Montessori peers can offer an outside perspective that can confirm and/or challenge the observations and conclusions that we reached in our self-study.

Our participation in MPRC and our accreditation by WASC are significant ways that MIR has committed to elevating our work. Beyond this, the school hosts Montessori experts, sends staff to outside trainings, and regularly support each other in working on current challenges. All of these efforts combine to create a strong culture of continuous improvement and learning at MIR.

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## SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

everyday necessities (gas and groceries), cards traditionally given as gifts (Amazon, Visa, retailers, Starbucks, restaurants), travel (several airlines, Air BnB, hotels), and more. There's a surprisingly large selection of cards available.

A percentage of each sale goes to help our sister school and has been used for important projects such as the completion of the crosswalk used by both schools.

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## STUDENT SERVICES TEAM

(cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

Angeles. A few years later, she took the Montessori primary training course and proceeded to teach for 31 years - about half of those at MIR. She earned an additional AMI diploma in Inclusive Education in 2014 and also has Orton-Gillingham reading training. Dorama is certified as a presenter and leads parent classes once a year here at MIR with Margaretann Harrison centered around the Positive Discipline approach. She works with primary and lower elementary students.

**Margaretann Harrison**, Student Services Specialist, is AMI Elementary trained with 19 years of classroom teaching experience at MIR. She is also a certified Positive Discipline parent trainer and has taken workshops in Social Thinking and Classroom Management. As part of the Student Services Team, she coordinates meetings and testing, as well as provides regular social lessons with the students in all six elementary classes. She frequently supports the elementary classes for large trips and works as a facilitator to the Elementary Math Club that meets after school once a week. She also works with Dorama to provide Positive Discipline training for staff and parents.

**Saskia de Jong** is a registered and licensed Occupational Therapist. She was born and raised in the Netherlands and got her bachelor's degree in Occupational Therapy (OT) there. She practiced OT in the Netherlands in a private practice, hospital, and a care facility. She moved to the U.S. in 2001 and in 2003 began working in schools with children from 0-12 years old. Her perspective and passion on how neurology affects child development is informed by her sensory integration therapy and neurodevelopmental treatment train-

ing. She works with children who are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, apraxia or motor planning problems, fine motor skills and gross motor skills. She helps our community understand more about executive functioning, attention issues, and social support. She works with children from toddlers to upper elementary here at MIR.

The staff at MIR and the parents who have experience with this team are grateful to have student services expertise on campus and integrated into our community's routine and schedule. The direct collaboration and communication that happens between the student services team, the teacher, and the administration is uncommon and serves as a model for other schools. We are so fortunate to have a team of experts working hard to create and act upon individual plans for education in such a comprehensive and integrated way, all in the name of promoting optimal development in each child.

While it requires significant communication, resources, and coordination to serve children at this high standard, the benefits are clear. We recently had an AMI Montessori trainer visit campus for in-service training and meetings with teachers. She immediately noticed the effective results of our strong student services team and reminded us that what we have in place is pretty phenomenal. It seems fitting to take this moment to celebrate that, and to mention that we are continuously seeking ways to grow and evaluate how we can improve. As always, we appreciate parent feedback.

We feel an abundance of gratitude for all of the staff members, parents, community supporters, and donors, past and present, who have made the student services team what it is today.

## CAMPAIGN LETS EXTENDED FAMILY SUPPORT THEIR MIR STUDENT

By JILL MCDERMOTT,  
DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

MIR kicked off a #GivingTuesday campaign for the MIR Fund on Tuesday, November 28, to end on Tuesday, December 5. We are often told that grandparents and other extended family members would like an opportunity to support their MIR students, and this campaign offers a way for them to do so.

If you'd like your family members to participate, send the link [mir.org/givingtuesday](https://mir.org/givingtuesday) to them. This allows them to donate online.

It has been exciting to hear that extended family members are interested in joining the support of the school. Giving to MIR is a concrete way for children to benefit from the generosity of others in the community who are able to contribute.

Our school has made a significant difference in the lives of children, families, and the community for more than 40 years and counting. And it's happened through community building, support, and commitment from people just like you.

Thank you!



# CALENDAR

## SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER

The end of the calendar year is busy! Please note the dates of class field trips and year-end holiday feasts on the calendar. Be sure to check classroom notices for additional dates and updates, or check the calendar online ([mir.org/calendar](http://mir.org/calendar)).

The winter recital for Yang Chen’s music students will be held Sunday, December 10, 1-3 PM. Contact Yang for more details.

School will be closed, and childcare is available by reservation December 18-22. Sign up online for childcare. Please note that childcare closes at noon on Friday, December 22, and only the morning block is available.

School and childcare are closed December 25, 2017- January 1, 2018 and will reopen Wednesday, January 3, 2018. Tuesday, January 2, 2018, school and childcare are closed for staff in-service.

## OH NO! MY CHILD GREW OUT OF THEIR MIR SHIRT

Children grow fast! If your child has grown out of their field trip shirt, come to the office for a new one! There is no cost for a replacement. You are welcome to return gently used shirts for use by students who forget theirs on field trip days.

## TELL MIR WHAT YOU THINK: COMPLETE THE FALL SURVEY



Each fall, MIR performs a survey of our community. This year our survey focuses on questions we need answered for our WASC accreditation. The information collected will be used to help us improve our programs and provide data for our self-study report.

We would like each parent in the household to take the survey, which is short. Use the link in the Weekly Planner email to access the survey.

## December 2017

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
<p><i>“Joy, feeling one’s own value, being appreciated and loved by others, feeling useful and capable of production—these are all factors of enormous value for the human soul.”—Maria Montessori</i></p>				1 Payments Due
				2 Grove Farmers Market Craft Fair/PTM book & toy exchange, 8 AM-12 PM
4 F.F. book fair  Elementary Dance	5 F.F. book fair	6 F.F. book fair  Elementary Dance	7 F.F. book fair	8 F.F. book fair Childcare reservations due for holidays Nikki—Bridges Auditorium Emily—Braswell’s
11  Elementary Dance	12 School closes 3:30 PM Holiday Sing, 7 PM  Hanukkah begins	13	14	15 School closes @12 PM Jean/MH—Lewis Family Playhouse, 8:45 AM-12:30 PM Maria’s class and Nikki’s class—PJ days Sara—PJ day and book exchange Whitney—holiday potluck, 9-11:30 AM Emily—holiday potluck, 10 AM-12 PM Kristen—holiday potluck, 10:30 AM-12 PM
18	19	20  Hanukkah ends	21  Winter begins	22 Holiday childcare closes at 12 PM. Happy holidays!
Holiday Break. No school, childcare by reservation.				
25  Christmas Day	26  Kwanzaa begins	27	28	29
School and childcare closed for holiday break.				