



Upper Elementary students resting after a hike to the top of Mt. Rubidoux.

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## WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION: PREPARING THE CHILDREN FOR THEIR FUTURE

by PETER DAVIDSON, HEAD OF SCHOOL

*“Before elaborating any system of education, we must therefore create a favorable environment that will encourage the flowering of a child’s natural gifts. All that is needed is to remove the obstacles. And this should be the basis of, and point of departure for, all future education.”—Maria Montessori*

A parent recently shared with me a story about his upper elementary Montessori student. During winter break, like many other students, he eventually started to get a bit bored. But he didn’t do what you might expect a child to do in this situation—complain to his parents or plug into screen time. Instead he did some problem solving, showed initiative, used his organi-

zational skills, drew upon his self-confidence and people skills, and came up with a creative solution for himself and several friends. He created indoor soccer game opportunities.

First he needed to find an indoor soccer facility, and call to research costs and availability. Next he called friends and dis-

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## JOURNEY & DISCOVERY: IMMERSE YOURSELF IN MONTESSORI

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 8 AM-2 PM

Montessori education is different from what most of us grew up with. Rather than try to understand what’s going on from the pieces of work that make it home, we encourage you to get hands on with Montessori for yourself at Journey & Discovery on Sunday, February 5, 8 AM to 2 PM. (Lunch will be served.)

We do know what day it is—you’ll make it home in time for kick-off for the Super Bowl. ☺

The days starts with a silent journey

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# REPORT FROM THE BOARD

## TUITION SETTING FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2017-18

BY ALISA EVANS, TREASURER

Adulting is hard, parenting at times can feel unbearable, and yet we don't give up on it because of those shining moments that happen all around us.

Sometimes it is just the little things that propel us forward knowing we are heading in the right direction. For me, it's making it to school on time, two days in a row. Or needing my four-year-old to help me complete a map puzzle of the US because I cannot remember without a guide where each state "lives." Always I'm reminded, that at four, I had not yet learned to write my name and learning about states was years away. Attending a lunch with Peter and having my mind blown on how much easier dreaded fractions would have been if I had come here too. Shining moments!

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## PTM NEWS

By ELEANOR HAIRE, PTM PRESIDENT

**One of the most important decisions we make as parents in the MIR community is to re-enroll for the next school year.** For many, this decision may be a no-brainer. Our children are progressing at a level appropriate for their age and they are happy and excited to come to school most days. For others, particularly those whose children will be transitioning to the Elementary program, this decision is made after careful consideration but ultimately may feel like a leap of faith.

**Here's how my family decided to take that leap.**

My son Gareth began his MIR career as a toddler in Christine's classroom. We'd heard about MIR through friends and were hooked after that initial observation. The cost for the toddler program was a bit more than we had been paying for day-

care, but not a lot more. We thought that MIR was an excellent place for Gareth to spend his days until he was old enough to go to the local elementary school.

By the time my daughter Rhiannon was born, Gareth was dressing himself, potty-trained, and talking a mile a minute. We were really hooked now! He moved up to Kara and Dorama's primary class and within a few weeks he was settled in and excitedly talking about new lessons. We chatted with his teachers often and managed to piece together an understanding of the work Gareth was doing each day from his explanations. We started seeing how each new lesson built upon the last. Re-enrollment time arrived again and the pros of staying at MIR (happy, thriving child) coupled with the cons of moving to traditional kindergarten (half-day, two schedules to manage) made it a fairly easy decision to sign up again.

In Gareth's final year in primary, re-enrollment required much more deliberation. We would save a lot of money if he went into first grade at our local elementary. It was a well-regarded school. In all likelihood, Gareth would do just fine there, but there was certainly a chance that his enthusiasm might lessen in a standard environment. Once again, we decided to keep our family as sane as possible and stick to one school calendar and schedule. We would enroll Gareth in MIR's Elementary program.

In reality, this just procrastinated the decision to this year's enrollment period...Rhiannon's final year in Primary. One school calendar and schedule is now possible with either of our

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Students Tanner and Toby Rice made sure to wear their MIR shirts on a family trip to Hoover Dam, despite the cool temperatures!



# CURRICULUM MATTERS

## MONTESSORI: AN INTEGRATIVE CURRICULUM

One of the defining characteristics of Montessori as children get into Elementary is that the curriculum is integrative rather than discrete. This means that rather than putting boundaries around subject areas as they're taught—"math," "science," "reading," "history," and so on, one lesson may cover all of these subject areas at once.

Peter Davidson often tells the story of the Babylonians to demonstrate this to parents. As the story is told, children who hear it learn that the Babylonians existed about 4,000 years ago and lived between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. They learn that they are famous for one of the "seven wonders of the ancient world," the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. They learn that the number 60 was holy to Babylonians, and that this fact combined with the Babylonians' use of star mapping for navigation led to the development of a 360-day calendar. Students learn that the Babylonians observed that the stars seemed to move in a circle relative to local landmarks, shifting position slightly each

day. From the measurement of these shifts comes the concept of degrees and the notion of a circle being divided into 360 individual degrees (because the stars shifted a degree each day, and the circle was completed in 360 days, a circle itself is 360 degrees). They learn that this is the reason the symbol for degree ( $^{\circ}$ ) is a circle.

In the course of this one fairly short story, students have learned history, geography, culture, science, mathematics, geometry, and astronomy, a seven-layer burrito of knowledge wrapped in a story.

Where does a student go from here?

Do they work on the geometry of a circle? Do they study Babylonian history? Do they learn more about star mapping, and the use of astronomy for navigation in history? What's the important "take away" from this lesson?

In the Montessori classroom, the answer is, "all of the above," and maybe more.

A story such as this, told in a group setting, is only the first step in the learning process. They will undoubtedly go on to

learn more about the circumference of a circle, and eventually to deriving the formula for area of a circle and the proof of pi. In addition, students may themselves decide on additional next steps. Some will dive deeper into the history of Babylon. Some will look into the culture, and some will diagram the fundamental needs for survival in ancient Babylonia. Some will study astronomy and star maps. Some will pursue the geometry. Some will start exploring the "Seven Wonders of the Ancient World."

There are endless paths for students to pursue after a story like this, and the self-directed nature of Montessori education lets the students pursue what satisfies their inner curiosity the most. Other stories will lead them to other studies—the student who focused on history after this story might study the geometry of Roman arches after a story on the Romans, and so on.

This is an integrative curriculum at work. In a more conventional model, by contrast, students might learn about the geometry of circles and then do worksheets on circles, angles, and degrees. They might read about the Babylonians in a text book and take a test to show what they've memorized. They might hear about the Seven Wonders and be asked to list them on a quiz. All of these concepts will be presented in isolation as distinct subjects with no relation to each other. If students are ever to establish a connection between them, that's something they'll have to do for themselves.

An integrative curriculum allows children to develop their systems thinking—the ability to "analyze how parts of a whole interact with each other to produce overall outcomes in complex systems" (as defined by the *Part-*

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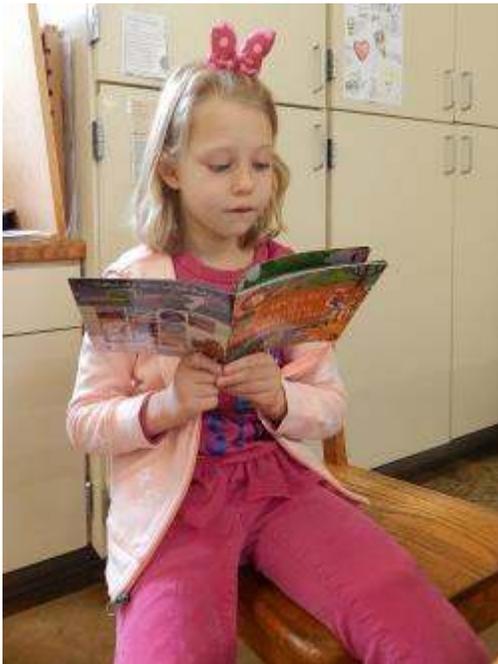
# MIR SCRAPBOOK

## SCENES FROM THE SCHOOL YEAR



# MIR SCRAPBOOK

## *SCENES FROM THE SCHOOL YEAR*



# PREPARING THE CHILDREN FOR THEIR FUTURE *(cont.)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

cussed a pooling of resources. Finally, he needed to organize parents to drive. When his father told me this story, he said that the other parents wanted to compliment him on organizing the soccer games, but he replied that all of the credit went not to him but to his son. He cited this to me as an example of how his son has benefitted from his Montessori experience, in ways that go way beyond the merely academic.

Obviously, this student and his parents deserve most of the credit, but I am proud to say that at MIR we have provided an environment that supports the further development of these skills, competencies, and personal characteristics. And it makes sense, doesn't it? In a Montessori environment, students have the opportunity not only to make choices and show initiative, but also to take responsibility for those choices in regular discussions with the teacher based upon self-reflection and guided goal setting. Many of the activities for elementary students in particular that are not purely academic—planning and executing camping trips and other “going out” activities, fundraisers and service projects in particular—incorporate collaboration, logistical problem-solving and people skills. Most importantly, Montessori's emphasis on independence and doing for oneself builds the self-confidence critical to carrying out a plan that interfaces with the adult community.

By contrast, in the schools in which most of us adults grew up, the opportunities to develop these skills and characteristics could be few and hard to come by before college or adulthood. For instance, it can be hard to develop initiative or problem solving skills when most decisions are made for you. It can be hard to learn to

collaborate in a competitive environment where much of your time is spent in individual desks. It is equally hard to develop people skills when such large amounts of time are spent listening to lecture rather than in discussion.

You have clearly chosen to break with your own past by choosing Montessori for your child to this point. Hopefully, we have done a good enough job of informing you about Montessori for you to continue—that is, your desired outcomes for your child are closely aligned with ours. At this time of year, during re-enrollment, it is a good time to revisit your reasons for choosing Montessori before you renew your commitment. Of course, we hope you'll choose to stay with MIR, but whatever you choose, you can always be proud of the gift you've given your child, of developing self-confidence and initiative, problem solving and organizational skills.

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## PTM REPORT *(cont.)*

*(Continued from page 2)*

options. What now? Happily, Gareth's first and second year in Whitney's class made our decision easier. We saw his academic skills progress while his enthusiasm for school, learning, and new lessons did not wane. We are confident that Rhiannon will have a similar experience. At MIR, our children make decisions for themselves. They live with the consequences of those decisions. They are guided by teachers who know them as individuals and push them to reach their full potential. We couldn't ask for more. Time to leap!

As you make your decision this month, talk with your child's teacher, parents in your classroom, parents who have children

in other schools, and gather the information that you need. Weigh the needs of your child and your family, the sacrifices you make with one option or another, and think about the skills your child will require as they grow into adulthood. The early re-enrollment period ends on February 28.

### TAKE THE TIME TO SAVE A DIME

Bring in your BoxTops for BoxTop Fridays starting February 3. Elementary students will collect them at drop-off, or you can put them in the container in your child's class.

Saving Box Tops is one of the easiest ways to help raise money for MIR! Box Tops are located on many of the items you use every day (see [btfe.com](http://btfe.com) for a complete list). Each Box Top earns our school 10 cents. If you have any questions regarding Box Tops, contact Annie Rumary at [annie@onpessprinting.com](mailto:annie@onpessprinting.com).

### NEXT PTM MEETING

The next PTM meeting is Thursday, February 2 at 6 PM. All parents are welcome and encouraged to attend. No-cost childcare is available for enrolled students by reservation.



Student Jeremy Lowe shows his MIR pride at Red Rock Canyon National Reserve near Las Vegas. Jeremy thoroughly enjoyed bouldering up these majestic red sandstone rocks!

The *MIRROR* is published by Montessori in Redlands, 1890 Orange Ave., Redlands, CA 92373, License number 360910803-4-5. © 2017 Send questions, stories, or photos to [lkensok@mir.org](mailto:lkensok@mir.org).

## BOARD REPORT

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The finance committee for MIR, of which I am a member, has a very specific set of goals. We are to monitor the financial health of the school both short and long term and ensure our school is affordable for our community. With that said, finding the best combination of financial sustainability and affordability is a balancing act we cross each year. We review deeply the budget for the existing year, adjust for any changes and build out the needed tuition to cover the expenses of the school. Layered on top of that are the priorities from the community, which are to attract and retain the best teachers and staff, and maintaining and improving our facilities.

The tuition increase last year and this year are very much allocated in those two buckets: 1) attracting qualified teachers and staff; and 2) facilities improvement through finishing up our new Student Services Center and maintaining ADA compliance on our property. While these are somewhat short-term allocations of funds, we also are needing to replenish our reserves for long term sustainability. We feel like the increase is manageable and modest enough to meet both our stated priorities of serving the school and our community. The increase to annual tuition range from \$265 in the shortest day program to \$816 in the all day program. The cost of education at MIR is modest as compared to other independent schools in the area yet offers superior quality and utmost care of our children.

I have two young children at MIR, and with this process I get the distinct pleasure of combining the hard parts about adulting and parenting in one fell swoop. All but one of our board members on this committee currently have children at the school so we all had this challenge to overcome. We needed to make the best decision on tuition increases for the budget of the school,

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not our own budget. So we all get it, and do our best to use data and statistics as the driver for our discussions and not our own personal feelings about it.

When I walk my kids to school, I am always reminded that the sacrifices we make to afford a Montessori education are worth every penny. I am making an investment in my children's education and in this school for generations to come. Just being on the campus and walking over the bridge puts a smile on my face and watching the progress each week on the Student Services Center makes me happy. We get to be part of a community that is beyond ourselves and can support one another here. Education is an investment that doesn't get much praise from my children yet, but it will. I will get to experience a lifetime of shining moments when my children use the tools they are learning here to do great things in our world. I would like to thank all of you for your commitment to the school.

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## CURRICULUM MATTERS

(cont.)

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*nership for 21st Century Learning).*

Maria Montessori believed it was necessary to present children with the big picture first, allowing them to learn the details for themselves. In this way, they understand why they are learning what they are learning (why it matters), and they are more engaged in the process. *"The secret of good teaching is to regard the child's intelligence as a fertile field in which seeds may be sown, to grow under the heat of flaming imagination. Our aim therefore is not merely to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his inmost core."*—Maria Montessori

## JOURNEY & DISCOVERY

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(Continued from page 1)

from Toddlers through the high school. This is followed by hands-on work in your choice of Toddlers through Elementary or Elementary through High School. Teachers from all levels are present to meet and work with you. At the middle and high school levels, you'll engage in a panel discussion with students and staff.

Journey & Discovery will help you understand Montessori education the best way possible—by immersing yourself in it for a day. **We encourage every parent to attend at least once during your time at MIR. You won't regret it!**

To sign up, click on the link in the invitation emails you received, visit [mir.org/journey](http://mir.org/journey), or call the MIR office at 909-793-6989.



# CALENDAR

## RE-ENROLL EARLY TO GUARANTEE YOUR SPACE FOR NEXT YEAR

During February, current MIR families have the opportunity to re-enroll current students and apply for enrollment for siblings for the 2017-18 school year, ahead of open enrollment.

As a further benefit for current families, the enrollment fee is only \$350 per child. Starting March 1, and for new families, the enrollment fee will be \$500.

Re-enrollment will take place online. Forms will be available through the Parent Portal. **There are four forms and all forms must be completed for re-enrollment.**

Look for an email from [admissions@mir.org](mailto:admissions@mir.org) with full information and instructions for re-enrollment.

Re-enrolling early ensures you secure a space for your child for the next school year. While enrollments will be accepted after February 28, space cannot be guaranteed after that date.



## BRING IN YOUR BOX TOPS ON FRIDAYS

**Box Top Fridays begin February 3.** Collect all your Box Tops and bring them to curb or send them into childcare with your child(ren). If you can, take time to make sure none are expired.

Box Tops bring in \$.10 per coupon. PTM collects the Box Tops to help fund activities for the school such as the Halloween and Spring Carnivals, Skate Nights, and more.

# February 2017

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
30	31	1 <b>Payments Due</b> <b>Early re-enrollment begins for 2017-18</b>  Math Club Positive Discipline	2 PTM Meeting, 6 PM  Sportball Math Club	3 <b>Box Top Friday</b>
6 <sup>th</sup> Year curbside oranges fundraiser				
5 Journey & Discovery, 8 AM-2 PM	7  Soccer	8 Childcare reservations due for Feb. 17  Math Club Positive Discipline	9  Sportball Math Club	10 <b>Box Top Friday</b> Jean/Maryhelen— Lewis Family Playhouse
6 Kelly—Riley's Farm				
13	14 Emily—Braswell's Chateau Villa  Soccer Valentine's Day	15  Math Club Positive Discipline	16 Kristen's 4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> years—Riley's Farm  Sportball Math Club	17 <b>No school, childcare by reservation.</b>
6 <sup>th</sup> Year "Friendly Grams" fundraiser				
20 President's Day No school, no childcare.	21  Soccer	22  Math Club	23 Kara and Jenny— Kidspace Museum  Sportball Math Club	24 <b>Box Top Friday</b> Assembly, 9:15 AM
27 Board of Trustees Open Forum, 6:30 PM	28 <b>Early re-enrollment ends for 2017-18</b>  Soccer	1 <b>Payments Due</b>  Math Club	2 Kristen's class World Fair  Sportball Math Club	3