

WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality



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WASC REVIEW: A TIME FOR REFLECTION AND ASSESSMENT

by JENNY DAVIDSON, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Now that the routines of the school year are becoming more established, MIR is preparing for our accreditation renewal from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). WASC is one of six regional accrediting agencies in the United States and is frequently held as a model agency for the accreditation and recognition processes. The philosophy of WASC is centered on these principles:

1. A school's goal is successful student learning;
2. A school has a clear purpose and schoolwide student goals; and

3. A school engages in external and internal evaluations as part of continued school improvement to support student learning.

This is not a new process to MIR. Our school has been accredited since 2000 and this will be our fourth renewal of accreditation. WASC has historically served as a catalyst in our ongoing cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring, and reassessment based on our students' achievement.

Accreditation supports MIR's excellence in education by supporting an ongoing

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PARENT EVENTS IN OCTOBER

There are many Montessori U and WASC events in October. Please join us for the follow:

PARENT EDUCATION NIGHT:

LIFE AFTER MONTESSORI

Tuesday, October 3, 7 PM

Childcare offered to enrolled Primary and Elementary students

What does an MIR graduate look like? How well do they succeed in school beyond MIR? Find out from our large panel of alumni and alumni parents. The panel will answer your questions honestly and parents will share their perspective of the benefits of a Montessori education for their children.

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BOARD REPORT

MEET THE BOARD

BY TREVOR NORTON, PRESIDENT

We held our first Board of Trustees meeting last night, and it was such pleasure to look around the room and see the faces of this talented and caring group of people who have volunteered their time to work for Montessori in Redlands (MIR). While Board members are elected for three-year terms, most renew for a second term, which says a lot about how we all feel about the school. I'd like to introduce you to the Board members here, and I hope we have a chance to see you at one of the many school events this year.

I am Trevor Norton, the Board president. This is my third year as president after having served on the Board for several years as a Board member and then vice president. I have two children who attended MIR: Reid, who is now a middle school student at

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PTM NEWS

By VICTORIA HOBSON, TREASURER

The MIR Fund drive "Done in 31" kicks off this month. The MIR Fund is an important and worthwhile campaign, and you will hear about it from many different sources. **I would like to take this opportunity to educate and encourage you to give to the MIR Fund**, and to continue your giving throughout the year.

There are many reasons to donate to the MIR Fund: We are able to plan long-term financial goals, meet immediate needs, educate our staff and administrators, and protect the longevity of the school. The MIR Fund is also used as a metric to show the level of community involvement and parental commitment when the school writes grants or is assessed for accreditation.

The goal for MIR is to get to 100% participation by the board, staff, and parents in October (that's why it's called "Done in 31"). Beyond Done in 31, there are several ways you can continue to contribute to the community throughout the year:

Amazon Smile is a great way to support MIR through an activity you most likely already do: shopping online through Ama-

zon. Whether it is personal or professional, I encourage you to login through smile.amazon.com. Using the same user name and password, you will have access to all the same items you are use to seeing at Amazon.com. The beauty of Amazon Smile is that 0.5% of you purchase will be sent as a monetary donation to MIR. Here's how to do it:

1. Visit smile.amazon.com.
2. Log in or create an account.
3. Select a charity on the right side of the screen. Search Montessori in Redlands under 'select your own charitable organization'. A list of potential matches will pop up.
4. Select Montessori In Redlands, Inc. and begin shopping.

You can log in to smile.amazon.com every time or you can change your login to go to Smile automatically through the settings.

Box Tops for Education are a time-honored tradition at MIR. Parent volunteer Annie Rumary spent a lot of time training us to look for those little Box Top coupons because every Box Top collected

earns \$.10 for the school. Like Amazon Smile, you can contribute through items you may already be buying. Clip those little guys and bring them in to your classroom or drop them into the container in the office. In October, Upper Elementary students will collect them from you on Fridays, making it even easier to bring them in.

Attendance at events: Volunteer for your classroom, sign up to be a part of the WASC accreditation review, attend Montessori U events, and go to the carnivals. The Halloween Carnival is Friday, October 27, 5-8 pm. There is running club and bike club. You can offer to chaperone a field trip or craft with your class,. These all show support for your child, my child, and the amazing staff and the MIR community in its entirety.

When you decide how much to give to the MIR Fund, please take a moment to also commit to giving some time to this beautiful place we all love.

CURRICULUM MATTERS

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE IN YOUNG CHILDREN

By JENNY EWALT, PRIMARY TEACHER

One of the most fulfilling aspects of my job is when I get to sit down with parents and tell them all the amazing things their child is accomplishing in the classroom. He/she reads and writes, adds and multiplies, enjoys various art activities, and goes about their day functioning with confidence and independence. That last word is always the one that catches their attention the most. Then the questions begin, “Does he really put on his own jacket and shoes???” “She serves her own snack and then cleans it up???” and of course the one that surprises all parents “He actually chooses his own challenging work AND puts it away on his own?”

It can be hard as parents to envision our children going about their day with little to no help. After all, at home there is a constant trail of dirty clothing that they couldn't possibly get into the laundry basket alone. So what's the secret? How do we get our kids to function with the same independence at home as in the classroom? The answer lies in the prepared environment and the prepared adult. “*The child's development follows a path of successive stages of independence, and our knowledge of this must guide us in our behavior towards him.*” (*The Absorbent Mind*, pg. 257)

In the Montessori classroom, independence can be seen at every level. From the 3 year old who quickly learns how to pour his own milk to the 5 year old who organizes the entire map of the USA in order to trace, color, and label it. The quest for independence is ongoing. It evolves over time and with particular aspects aiding in that development. That is where the prepared environment and prepared adult

comes into play. Through practical life activities (such as pouring water, sewing a button, sweeping, dusting...) children gain the ability to accomplish everyday tasks alone. With each activity he feels he can do on his own, his confidence grows, which builds his inner drive towards independence in all areas.

We must create an environment that our children can be successful in. For example, if I wanted a child to learn to pour his own milk, I wouldn't give him the gallon of milk and a tall glass and say “have at it.” He would need a pouring vessel that he could manipulate with little effort and a cup that set the limit of how much milk he should have. Giving a child the opportunity to practice with water and having a sponge or towel nearby allows him to perfect the skill he is trying to master. With a pitcher he can lift with ease and a cup that allows for the correct amount, he is able to independently serve himself with no adult intervention. I wouldn't need to tell him when to stop filling or help him lift the

pitcher; he has the tools necessary to do it on his own. This is just one small way that we can prepare the environment for a child to gain freedom.

Once the environment is prepared, we then must prepare ourselves. This means we must have a keen eye in observing our children, and watch to see when they are ready to move from pouring water to serving the desired beverage. Sometimes it means that we just need to get out of the way and allow them to make that mess as many times as it takes! It can be difficult to watch our children struggle, especially when they are making a mess that we may have to go back and clean up, but looking at the long-term goal helps us take a step back and see this is the process our children need. Once you observe that your child may be ready, make sure to first prepare the environment and then show them how to do it the first time. Then stand back and allow them to practice, practice, practice!

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PARENT EVENTS

(Continued from page 1)

RSVP online using the link sent in the weekly emails. Childcare is available for enrolled Primary and Elementary students. A dessert reception will follow.

WASC INFORMATION MEETING

If you are interested in learning more about the WASC accreditation review and how you can assist, join us for this meeting on Wednesday, October 11 at 6 PM. More details are available in the email sent by Jenny Davidson and at mir.org/about-mir.

COFFEE, TEA AND M.E. (MONTESSORI EDUCATION): "YOUR LOWER ELEMENTARY CHILD"

Friday, October 13, 9 AM

Join this informative discussion forum with teacher Whitney Sforza to learn more about your child's development ages 6-9 years. Whitney will give an overview of this stage of development, then show you how Montessori capitalizes on these characteristics in a specific learning area.

This is a discussion-based session, with plenty of time for you to ask questions of the teacher and your peers.

PARENT EDUCATION NIGHT: MONTESSORI ASSESSMENT & OUTCOMES

Tuesday, October 24, 7 PM

Childcare offered to enrolled Primary and Elementary students

How is assessment performed in Montessori in the absence of tests and grades? How are outcomes measured? We'll cover assessment in detail at this Parent Education Night. *We especially encourage members of our WASC committees or parents interested in WASC to attend this session.*

(cont.)

WASC REVIEW (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

process of continuous improvement. By being accredited, MIR benefits from having an independent agency verify that MIR reflects a high level of quality and integrity. WASC also accredits the University of Redlands, Stanford University, and approximately 4,600 other public, independent, and adult schools by also collaborating with the California Department of Education.

Our school benefits deeply from the accreditation process. It inspires us to conduct a deep review of our student learner outcomes and the activities that we take to support them. We are prompted to continuously evaluate our progress and adapt as necessary. The overarching goal is to increase what students know, what they are able to accomplish, and to improve how they feel about themselves, others and about learning.

MIR is now forming committees to gather data and draft our Self-Study during this school year. Our onsite visit is expected to be held in fall 2018. Please contact the office if you have any questions about the process or if you are interested in serving on a committee. We look forward to engaging all facets of our school community in this ongoing process of learning and improvement.

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

Other helpful hints that are easy to incorporate independence into your home life include:

Allow children to make choices: Limit the choice by offering only what you want them to have. For example, ask "Would you like a bath or a shower before bed?" They need to get clean but this is a way for

them to feel like they have some control over the decision.

Invite them to help in the care of the home: A shelf they can dust, or emptying the bathroom waste bin gives them responsibility and allows them to take ownership over the care of the environment.

Organize their belongings so they can put toys/clothes/etc...away on their own: Limit the number of toys they have access to and help them learn (or plan) where each object goes so they won't be overwhelmed by a huge mess. Toys can be changed out every few months so they can have variety.

Limit adult intervention when a child is accomplishing a task: This is a tough one. We can be impatient or know we could do it faster/better/easier than they could. It's that persistence in a task where the child gains the most confidence and competency. He goes from doubting himself to feeling his worth and proving to himself that if he works at something, he can accomplish it.

Give yourself and your child plenty of time to accomplish the job: If he is working on putting on his shoes, know that it is going to take longer to get out of the house so prepare for that and start earlier or allow him to work on it during a time when it is not crucial for him to get it done quickly.

Self-care: This is one thing that even the youngest children can begin to gain independence with. Simply providing a stool at the sink can encourage your child to wash his own hands. Setting up a mirror and brush at your child's level to allow him to take ownership of his body and how it looks.

Be careful of correction: No one gets it right the first time. Mistakes will be made and that is all a part of the process. Let

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MIR SCRAPBOOK

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE
SEPTEMBER 21



MEET THE BOARD *(cont.)*

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The Grove School, and Lillian who is a high school student at Grove. I work at the University of Redlands as the Director of Production in the Theatre Arts program.

Other returning voting members:

Anne Desmarais (Vice President) is an MIR and Grove parent. At work, she provides training and management consulting for nonprofits, government, and higher education. Outside of work, she enjoys family time, teaching Pilates, nature, the arts, reading, and baking.

Tim Ormsby (Secretary) was an MIR parent from 2006 to 2015 and is a current Grove parent. He is a software documentation writer at Esri.

Alisa Evans (Treasurer) is the Director of Business Development for the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), and for School and Student Services (SSS by NAIS). She lives in Redlands with her husband and 4-year-old son 2-year-old daughter, both of whom are MIR students.

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

Kathleen Liess is Vice President of the Grove PTG (Parents and Teachers of Grove, similar to the PTM at MIR) as well as the co-founder of Cupcakes for Cancer. She lives in Redlands with her husband Toby and daughter Makenna, a middle schooler at Grove, and continues to be devoted to helping strengthen the community.

Adrienne Ortega is an assistant principal for a local school district. She is an alumni parent (with two children at Grove) and a current parent with one student at MIR. She brings years of experience in ed-

ucation as well as being a Montessori student herself.

Gabrielle Singh currently serves as Assistant Vice President of Advancement & Senior Philanthropic Advisor at the University of Redlands. She and her husband Dave are parents of two MIR alumni, Rohin and Sofia.

Steve Wuhs is a professor of political science at the University of Redlands, and serves as the university's Assistant Provost for Internationalization. He is the father of two MIR students, Teo and Mara.

Our new voting members are:

Michelle Bologna is our first MIR alum to join the Board! Michelle is a consultant and ran the Summer in the Grove summer school program last summer. She is also a Board member with the Armantrout Montessori Education Foundation and Family Service Association of Redlands.

Leila Khazaeni is a pediatric ophthalmologist at Loma Linda University and has been an MIR parent for more than 10 years. Her son Camron is in 7th grade at Grove; her older daughter Mina is an Upper Elementary student at MIR, and her younger daughter Ariana is a Lower Elementary student at MIR.

James Maloney is a Certified Public Accountant working at a local accounting firm, and spends his free time with his wife and toddler.

Our non-voting members are:

Jenny Davidson (Head of School) was Executive Director of Montessori Northwest (MNW), one of the premiere Montessori teacher training facilities, for 11 years before taking on the role of Head of School at MIR. She is an AMI-trained teacher and has many years of experience working in the world of Montessori education. is a current Board Member of the Association Montessori Internationale and the National Center for Montessori in the

Public Sector. Jennifer holds an AMI Primary teaching diploma from MNW, an M.Ed. from Loyola University (MD) and a B.A. in Environmental Studies from Lewis & Clark College (OR).

Mandie Shadwinkel (Assistant Head of School) Before joining MIR, Mandie was Head of School/Executive Director of Prairie Hill Learning Center, in Lincoln, NE, a Montessori farm school serving children 18 months-14 years old. Prior to that role, she was Education Director and served 14 years in the classroom as a Primary Teacher at Prairie Hill. Mandie holds an AMI Primary teaching diploma from Montessori Training Center of Minnesota, an M.Ed. from Loyola University (MD) and a B.S. in Elementary Education/Early Childhood Development from University of Nebraska.

Peter Davidson (Assistant Head of School) has been involved in Montessori as a teacher and administrator for 42 years, including the past 8 years as Assistant Head of School (and last year as interim HOS) at MIR.

Lisa Oliver (Chief Financial Officer) has been at MIR for 14 years and is Chief Financial Officer. She is the proud mom of two MIR and Grove School alumni.

Eleanor Haire (PTM President) proud Welsh-born woman, and most importantly, mum to Gareth and Rhiannon. Eleanor has happily been part of the MIR community since Gareth started as a toddler in 2011. Her children have thrived while she has enjoyed being part the vibrant MIR community. During school hours, you'll find her managing web site projects at Esri.

Emily Drinkwine (Elementary teacher) has been in the MIR community for 16 years, serving as an assistant for four of those and teaching for 12. She currently guides a class of Upper Elementary children and has participated in the Montesso-

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FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE (cont.)

(Continued from page 4)

them spill and provide them with a towel to clean it up with. Its ok if they put too much tooth paste on the brush; they will just have extra clean teeth that night. Step back and allow the mistakes to happen. In those mistakes will come the natural desire to repeat and perfect.

Your children will undoubtedly accomplish a great many tasks as they grow in the Primary environment ~ everything from reading literary classics to long division into the millions, yet that is not how they measure their own success. They truly feel they have gained something great when they can say "I did it all by myself!"

MEET THE BOARD (cont.)

(Continued from page 6)

ri Peer Review Council, as well as assisted other schools in the growth of their programs. In her spare time, she enjoys yoga, running, being with family and furry friends, and volunteering for the local circus program.

Sara Garcia (Primary teacher) has been a teacher at MIR for 22 years and is the mother of two MIR alumni. She holds her AMI Primary certification and a BA in English. Sara participates in Educateurs sans Frontières, an organization dedicated to furthering the rights, education, and welfare of children. She grew up in Toronto, Canada and speaks French fluently.

On another note...

Participating in the MIR Fund is not a requirement for Board membership—we are not a "pay to play" Board—but yet again, the Board has achieved 100% participation in the MIR Fund before it officially starts. We hope you'll join us in giving to the MIR Fund during the annual "Done in 31" campaign in October.

'DONE IN 31' MIR FUND CAMPAIGN BEGINS THIS MONTH

Tuition covers the cost of your child's education—the great classrooms and materials, your child's teacher's salary and benefits, and necessities such as keeping the lights on and toilets flushing. The MIR Fund touches every aspect of life at MIR:

- Your gift allows us to retain and grow a talented, dedicated team of teachers.
- Your gift allows us to grow as a school to accommodate our growing student body.
- Your gift ensures the financial stability and continuity of the school into the future.

Our goal for this year is to raise \$75,000 in direct donations to the MIR Fund, and we hope for 100% participation by families. Specific investments paid for by the MIR Fund in previous years include (but are not limited to):

- Converting the entire north campus to solar to significantly reduce electricity costs, especially the cost of cooling five large buildings.
- Converting the entire campus to drought tolerant landscaping, which has reduced MIR's water usage by 10,000 gallons a day.

These two investments ensure more of your tuition money is directly spent on your child's education.

- Opening a third Upper Elementary class in 2015-16 to accommodate growth in that program and continue to ensure manageable class sizes for that age group.

We mailed home a letter with more details about the MIR Fund and with answers to frequently asked questions about who it benefits and how your donation makes a difference. If you have questions about the MIR Fund, contact Development Coordinator Jill McDermott (jmcdermott@mir.org).

Thank you for your support.

DONE IN 31 PLEDGE DRIVE IF WE REACH 100% PARTICIPATION FOR THE WHOLE SCHOOL

"Done in 31" is an annual pledge drive that runs October 1-31, during which we try to reach to 100% participation by families, staff, and the Board. We have reached this goal for the Board and staff and now we just need you!

If all classes reach 100% participation by October 31, we will celebrate with a special all-school dance party.

Pledge or donate online today at mir.org/legacy.

BE A PERMANENT PART OF MIR HISTORY

Donors who give \$1,000 or more will earn a dedicated paver in MIR's new Legacy Path.



CALENDAR

HALLOWEEN CARNIVAL FUN

Bring the entire family for a night of games, rides, and festivities on Friday, October 27, 5 PM (school and childcare close at 5 PM that night).

We'll hold a costume parade at dusk (adults—nothing too scary/gory, please). **Admission is free.** A dinner of hot dogs (veggie and regular) and baked potatoes with toppings will be available for \$5.



ARE YOU PREPARED FOR A QUAKE?

Earthquakes are a fact of life in California. Each year MIR participates in the Great California ShakeOut to help prepare students and staff for what to do if one hits during the school day.

On Thursday, October 19 at 10:19 AM, more than 8 million Californians will participate in this state-wide (voluntary) earthquake drill along with MIR and The Grove School.

For more information about the Great ShakeOut and what you can do to prepare for an earthquake, visit shakeout.org.

FALL PICTURE DAY IS OCTOBER 11

Picture Day is Wednesday, October 11. You will receive an envelope for each child. *Please confirm your child/ren's information and the spelling of their name and return the envelope on or before Picture Day even if you are not ordering photos.*

You will receive a picture

packet with one 8x10 photo, two 5x7 photos, four 3x5 photos, 12 wallet photos, one class photo, and an ID card. This packet is provided at no additional cost (it is included in your re-enrollment fee). To order additional photos, mark your order on the envelope and

return it with payment inside. *Please note: we will not be doing sibling photos.*

Makeup pictures will be taken on Thursday, November 9. Two-day Toddler families may take photos on this date or bring their children to the photography site on October 11.

October 2017

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1 Payments Due MIR Fund "Done in 31" Campaign starts	3 PTM Meeting, 6 PM Parent Ed Night: "Life after Montessori," 7 PM	4 Toddlers—Pumpkin Patch, 9-11 AM	5	6 Box Top Friday
2 Dance	Soccer	Dance	Sportball	
	Kelly's class camping trip—Point Magu La Jolla			
9 Staff in-service No school, no childcare.	10 Soccer	11 Picture Day WASC information meeting, 6 PM	12 Sportball	13 Box Top Friday Coffee, Tea, & M.E. (Montessori Education), "Your Lower Elementary Child," 9 AM
16 Dance	17 Kara/Jenny—Riley's Farm, 9 AM-3 PM	18 Emily—CA Science Center, 8 AM-3:30 PM Nikki—Pumpkin Patch, 9:10 AM-12:30 PM	19 The Great ShakeOut, 10:19 AM	20 Box Top Friday Jean/MH—Whitewater Desert Preserve, 8:45 AM-3:30 PM
23 Dance	24 Parent Education Night: "Montessori Assessment & Outcomes," 7 PM	25 Kristen—The Grove School play	26 Sportball	27 Box Top Friday Assembly, 9:15 AM School Closes at 5 PM Halloween Carnival, 5-8 PM
30 Dance Kelly—Spanish field trip, 7:30 AM-3:30 PM Coffee Curbside, 8 AM	31 Annual Fund "Done in 31" Campaign ends Halloween	1 Payments Due Childcare reservations due for Veterans Day Emily—Spanish field trip, 7:30 AM-3:30 PM Dance	2 Kristen—Spanish field trip, 8 AM-3:30 PM Whitney—Huntington Library, 8:30 AM-3:15 PM PTM meeting, 6 PM Sportball	3