



Global Montessori Community: AMI's Educateurs sans Frontières started the Samburu nomadic school initiative in 2018, bringing Montessori learning to the Ntapanani and Tintil settlement areas in Kenya. Visit <https://montessori-esf.org/corner-hope> for more information.

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MIR Spring Gala is One of the Best Ever

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MIR'S PLACE IN THE INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI COMMUNITY

by JENNY DAVIDSON, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Every April, the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) hosts speakers and events in conjunction with its annual general meeting in Amsterdam. Since I am currently serving on the AMI board of directors, this event offers a front-row view into the remarkable Montessori work happening across the globe. It is a unique opportunity to reflect on our place in the much wider community of Montessori schools, training centers, and affiliate organizations.

During the AMI annual general meeting, participants and presentations show Montessori's strength as the most widely used educational pedagogy on the planet. Dr. Montessori opened her first classroom

in 1907 and since then this practice has spread across the continents, spanning not only vast changes in society that have happened over decades, but also countless languages and cultures. Montessori is now implemented in a wide array of socio-economic settings—from schools for children in refugee camps to private schools, and everything in between. Today there are Montessori courses where practitioners can learn to work with expecting families, children, adolescents, and all the way up to adults living with dementia.

Montessori is applicable in all of these settings because its core principles are based on inherent human tendencies that

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MONTESSORI U EVENTS IN APRIL

Smart but Scattered

Tuesday, April 30, 6 PM

Childcare is provided to enrolled students.

Dr. Peg Dawson, staff psychologist at the Center for Learning and Attention Disorders at Seacoast Mental Health Center in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, will talk about executive functioning skills and how you can help your child develop these habits of the mind.

You'll come away with easy-to-follow steps to identify your child's strengths and weaknesses, use activities and techniques proven to boost specific skills, and problem-solve daily routines.

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BOARD REPORT

TAKING THE LONG VIEW

by ANNE DESMARAIS, PRESIDENT

When my daughter was a toddler, I attended a Positive Discipline class at MIR. For our first activity, the instructor asked us to imagine our children as young adults. She asked “What is it you really want for your children?” Within minutes, we had a list of desired qualities such as confidence, patience, cooperation, wisdom, and respect. The instructor invited us to recognize that developing these qualities is a lifelong journey in which we, as parents, teachers, and caregivers, serve as models and guides.

This simple activity was a real “aha moment.” It helped us re

-focus on what we really *do* want for our children over time. It gave us perspective on how daily struggles are part of a longer journey of development. It helped us see our children as individuals in the process of becoming. And it reminded us to bring thoughtfulness, patience and compassion, for ourselves and our children, as we walk together on life’s journey.

Now as a parent of teens, I find myself thinking of those toddler years. Maria Montessori, in her wisdom, saw the early adolescent (12-15) and toddler years as parallel planes. Both

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PTM NEWS

IT’S TIME FOR THE SPRING CARNIVAL!

by SHAWNDA ZOOK, PRESIDENT

Join the MIR community on Saturday, April 13, 11 AM-3 PM for the Spring Carnival. Entry is FREE and the experience is priceless! Each classroom hosts a booth with games, face painting, or crafts. Bounce houses and rides like those featured at Redlands Market Night are included.

BBQ lunch tickets are \$5 each and there will be meat and veggie options. You will be able to pay by cash or card for meals. Water and lemonade will be provided. Don’t forget your reusable water bottle!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We need your support to make this event a success. Sign up to volunteer for a 30-minute time slot. Classes will need help setting up and taking down booths. Help with food service is also needed. Let your room rep or teacher know your availability. Many hands make light work!

CARNIVAL ART GALLERY AND MARKETPLACE

A Montessori Art Gallery featuring art from students, staff, and parents will be on display, and there will be a Marketplace of

goods for purchase. **If you are interested in showcasing your artwork or selling items from a home-based business at the carnival,** contact Primary teacher Jean Bonner-Drinkwine at jdrinkwine@mir.org for more information.

REDUCE CUPS AND STAY HYDRATED

Stations will be provided for families to label and leave their reusable water bottles. For those who forget their bottle, a reusable metal cup can be picked up at the food

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CURRICULUM MATTERS

THE PINK TOWER...AGAIN?!

by MANDIE SCHADWINKEL, ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

The Pink Tower, again? If you have a child three years or older, you may have thought and even said this to her recently; didn't she have that lesson weeks, months, even years ago? How can they possibly still be stimulating and interesting to her now? Isn't she ready to move on? Something must be wrong with my child.

Hold on a minute. You might be surprised to find out what the Pink Tower can offer a child of three, four, five, six, and yes even elementary-aged children. It's an exciting story.

Before beginning with the child of three, let's address what happened in your child earlier in life. Studies show that pre-natal life is very rich sensorially for the infant. She is in continuous contact with the environment, using her skin, her sense of smell, taste, hearing, and the least developed, her sense of sight. Although the sensory organs are functioning before birth, once born she is continuously bombarded with many different stimuli.

Dr. Montessori wrote that the child from 0-6 has an absorbent mind. By that she meant that the child's mind is like a sponge and soaks up whatever is offered to the child in her environment. She says that *"There is in the child a special kind of sensitivity which leads him to absorb everything about him, and it is this work of observing and absorbing that alone enables him to adapt to life. He does it in virtue of an unconscious power that only exists in childhood."* (Maria Montessori, *Absorbent Mind* pg. 62)

An easy illustration of this is how the child comes to speak the language(s) she is hearing. We do not teach a child to speak

our language. It is a natural process that happens simply by allowing the child to be exposed to spoken language. The same is true for other senses. We cannot teach the child sensations directly, but by living in a sensory-rich environment, she forms impressions of what hot and cold, soft and loud, small and large, light and dark, sweet and sour, smooth and rough, thick and thin, short and long, light and heavy,



straight and curvy, etc. mean long before she is ever introduced to any specific educational materials. Therefore, the purpose of the Montessori sensorial materials (which include the the Pink Tower) is not to introduce the sensorial attributes to the child, but to help move the child from an *unconscious understanding* to a *conscious awareness* of the qualities that surround her.

The Pink Tower is made up of 10 wood-

en cubes that have all been painted the color pink. Their sizes grow progressively in algebraic sense of the third power. When a child has her first presentation on the Pink Tower (usually around the age of three) the teacher first models how to carry each cube individually to the child's rug (this allows the child to have a sensorial impression right away of how each cube is different). After all the cubes are spread out the rug, the teacher says, "Now I'm going to build the Pink Tower." Using obvious mental analysis, the teacher looks for and finds the largest cube and places it as the base for the tower. She then looks and carefully builds the tower precisely with all ten cubes in progressive order. After admiring and dismantling the tower one cube at a time, the child is then invited to build the Pink Tower. Sounds easy enough, right? That's just the beginning! The beauty of the Montessori materials is that it can be simple for the child who is ready for the very first step, while many relationships and complexities wait to be discovered by the child who is ready to dig deeper.

A game that the children love to play is one where they close their eyes and someone else (first a teacher, later another child) removes a cube from the tower and they have to guess where it was taken from. The child makes a guess and then she gets to check to see if it in fact does fit into the place where they guessed. Typically, the child doesn't need an adult to tell them if they were right or wrong, because this child has already repeated building the tower many times, and she is able to see or

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PINK TOWER AGAIN (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

feel for herself if she guessed correctly.

Another fun game is to put the cubes on a rug and the child puts a blindfold on and tries to build the Pink Tower without looking; simply feeling the cubes and deciding which cube to place on top next to build the tower. Another favorite is to work with the pink cubes and the brown prisms (stair) together. There are many different relationships to discover between the two materials and intricate mathematical designs to create.

These materials (and all the other “sensorial materials”) provide wonderful opportunities to give the child specific language on size. We start with the language large and small and move to introducing the child to the last three cubes in the series with the language, “this is small, this is smaller, and this is the smallest.” Following this, in the same sitting, are many language and movement commands with these cubes to give the child a chance to solidify this specific language. The positive, superlative, and comparative can all be applied to the large cubes. Consider this quote taken from E.M Standings book, *Maria Montessori—Her Life and Work*: “All of these explorations into the sphere of the sensorial attributes, carried on day after day and month after month, collectively form a usually sure and broad foundation for the child’s subsequent mental life. It is a real inward preparation. Those children who have been through it are different from others. The imagery in their minds is clear.” (pg. 162)

When children transition to the elementary class, they rediscover the Pink Tower, this time in cubing work. Starting from the smallest cube, which is one cubic centimeter, eight more of this cube would make the next largest cube, 27 of the first cube would make the third cube...to the largest

cube, which is 1,000 cubic centimeters.

The volume of the cubes increases regularly in relationship to the cubes of the numbers 1^3 , 2^3 , 3^3 , 4^3 , 5^3 , 6^3 , 7^3 , 8^3 , 9^3 , and 10^3 . The elementary child also rediscovers the language game with large, larger, and largest, this time while learning what it means through the context of an adjective.

The Pink Tower (and all the other Montessori materials) have been scientifically tested and thoughtfully designed, placed, and prepared for children to serve their various stages of development and interests. The Montessori trained teacher observes the child and evaluates when the right time is to introduce the child to different activities. In a Montessori community, it is stressed that the role of the adult is to provide the child with a safe and supportive environment that allows her to use the opportunities and didactic materials so she can perfect herself through her own efforts, interests, and repeated activities in atmosphere of respect and harmony.

Language work in Jean and Maryhelen’s class: the work involves learning the vocabulary and identifying verbs and nouns. Montessori materials offer layers of learning to children.



PTM NEWS (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

station. The metal cup can be labeled with your name for reuse throughout the carnival. Cups will be gathered up following the event, washed and sanitized, and stored for future use. If you leave your reusable water bottle behind, you can retrieve it in the office the following Monday. We hope you find these stations helpful and look forward to hearing your feedback.

SPORT EQUIPMENT SWAP

PTM will host a sport equipment exchange at the Spring Carnival. Bring out-grown cleats, sportswear, gloves, bats, etc. to swap for equipment brought by other families. This is a great way to find “new” items for your children and recycle gently used sport clothing and equipment.

You can drop off equipment the day of the carnival, or ahead of time. Students will collect items at curbside in the days leading up to the carnival. After the event, any leftovers will be donated to Boys and Girls Club of Redlands.

SHOP AMAZON SMILE TO SUPPORT PTM

Shop through Amazon just like you normally do by using Amazon Smile, and Amazon will donate a small percentage of your purchases to PTM. The key is to get in the habit of using smile.amazon.com (rather than www.amazon.com) as your default shopping page. On your first visit to smile.amazon.com, you will be asked to select a charitable organization before you begin shopping. Search and select “Montessori in Redlands” and you’ll give back to MIR with every purchase.

If you have any suggestions or questions related to PTM, please email me at shawndazook@gmail.com.

MIR SPRING GALA IS ONE OF THE BEST EVER

by JESSICA BAILIFF, DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

This year's annual gala and auction, the "Mad Hatter's Ball," was held at the Mitten Building on Saturday, March 9 and drew a bevy of guests adorned in a variety of creative hats and attire that paired perfectly with the oversized bright flowers, whimsical tea cup displays, and colorful themed décor. Jazzy sounds of local band Pliny and the Elders tickled guests' ears while the "Mad-inspired" signature cocktails were seen in many of the hands of the mingling bidders during the silent auction, which offered a plethora of trips, experiences, and baskets to bid on and were pro-

vided by several generous donors. Guests enjoyed a two-course dinner served up by the Mitten Building staff and a sweet treat from Nothing Bundt Cakes; a delectable nourishment for all, including the unwitting guests who would soon serve as auctioneers themselves!

after, Rick Werner with Auctioneers for Good started off a lively auction program by drawing volunteers from each table to sell the centerpiece the highest bidder at their table. Thirteen standing auctioneers across the room simultaneously waved encouraging arms and incited bidding frenzies amongst their table guests, ultimately displaying the cheerfully competitive enthusiasm and generosity that was seen in the attendees throughout the rest of the auction program.

The live auction featured new and returning popular packages such as a private

begin months in advance to create these amazing items! It's because of the time, effort and talent put forth into them that the live auction remains the highlight of the MIR annual galas from year to year.

There's so many things that make the community of MIR so special, one of which was on full display during the evening's fund-a-need appeal when staff, board members, and parents came together to raise \$25,600 that will go towards renovating the south campus outdoor environment. This amount surpassed the evenings goal of \$20,000.



suite at Angels stadium, "Principal for a Day," "Disney with the Drinkwines," and "Best Seats in the House," to name a few. The highlight of the evening was the 14 custom-crafted unique and beautiful items created by the community of teachers, assistants, and students in each classroom. Custom-framed photography, artwork, woven and resin wall hangings, wind chimes, and quilt art adorned the stage. With such a fantastic line up of auction items, this live auction was one of the strongest MIR experienced, with live items raising a total of \$37,700. A special thank you to the teachers, assistants, and students who

Renovations are anticipated to be complete prior to the start of the 2019-20 school year and will offer safety, support imagination and movement, enhancing the children's education experience. The total estimated cost for renovations is \$40,000 and we are more than halfway there. If you were unable to attend the Gala and wish to be a part of this exciting project, visit the "Giving Board" located in the main office (pictured above). This board includes several cards that represent a dollar amount from \$1 to \$200. Take one or multiple envelopes at the giving level of your choice,

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CHILD DEVELOPMENT

EXECUTIVE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND “SMART BUT SCATTERED” CHILDREN

by JESSICA BROCKARDT, ELEMENTARY COORDINATOR

One of our Student Learner Outcomes for Montessori in Redlands focuses on building executive function skills. It reads, “MIR students will build a foundation for learning by practicing inhibitory control, time management, working memory, and cognitive flexibility.” Our emphasis on whole-child development has made the integration of executive function skill development a natural part of Montessori education.

What are executive skills? Executive skills refer to the brain-based, cognitive processes that help us to regulate our behavior, make decisions, and set and achieve goals. These skills include task initiation and follow through, planning and organization, working memory, performance monitoring, inhibition of impulses, and self-regulation. Children with weak executive skills can be disorganized or forgetful, have trouble getting started on tasks, and get distracted easily. They can become angry when routines change or expectations are not met and act without realizing the consequences of their actions.

Dr. Peg Dawson, author of *Smart but Scattered*, will be leading our MIR staff through a professional development training at our April in-service day. The staff will learn more about how brain development governs executive-skill development, what are developmentally appropriate expectations for executive skills at different grade levels, and classroom-based strategies to support executive skill development. This ongoing training will help our community better understand the whole child and their developmental needs.

We invite you to learn from Dr. Dawson as well! On Tuesday, April 30 at 6 PM, MIR will host a Montessori U parent education event led by Dr. Dawson

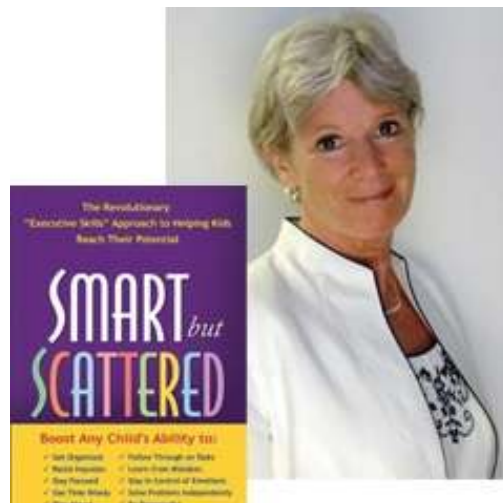
Dr. Dawson will explain the executive skills framework she’s been working with for more than 20 years. She’ll explain why this framework is a better way to describe struggling students than calling them “lazy” or “unmotivated,” and why the

hard for us parents to know how to support them in a way that is in line with their desire and need to become more independent. Your “smart but scattered” child might also have trouble coping with disappointment or managing anger.

The latest research in child development shows that many kids who have the brain and heart to succeed lack or lag in executive skills. At our Montessori U event, you’ll learn easy-to-follow steps to identify your child’s strengths and weaknesses, use activities and techniques proven to boost specific skills, and problem-solve daily routines.

We hope to see you on April 30!

Read this short review by a parent on the book *Smart but Scattered* for a little more information about the concept: <https://bouncebackparenting.com/recommended-resource-smart-but-scattered/>.



Psychologist and author Dr. Peg Dawson will help you learn how to help your “smart, but scattered” child develop their executive functioning.

more parents and teachers understand about executive skills, the better they’ll be able to help students strengthen these important habits of mind. She will paint a picture of the strategies she sees as holding the most promise for helping students of all ages develop, tune-up, and master these critical life skills.

It can be frustrating to see your bright, talented son or daughter struggle with everyday tasks like finishing work, putting away toys, or following instructions. It’s

MONTESSORI U EVENTS (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

CHILD-PARENT NIGHT AND PASTA DINNER

Tuesday, April 16, 5-7 pm

School and childcare close at 5 PM

See how much your child has grown this year at the Spring Child-Parent Night. **This is a child-led event.** Your child will show you what he or she does each day. This is your chance to enjoy the pride they take in the work that they do. Teachers will be on hand to guide children as necessary.

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MONTESSORI U EVENTS *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 6)

This is not “surprise your child with pop quizzes” night. You’ll be able to ask specific questions about your child’s progress at Parent-Teacher Conferences at the end of April.

School and childcare close at 5 PM for this event. If you have more than one child at MIR, the schedule gives time to rotate to each child’s classroom.

Spring Parent-Child Night activities take place in Toddler, Primary, Lower Elementary classrooms, and Kristen and Kelly’s classes. Emily’s 5th year students will host a Pasta Dinner as a fundraiser towards the class of 2020 Washington, D.C. trip (their very first fundraiser!). For \$5 you’ll get pasta with meat or marinara sauce, salad, bread, and a beverage. This is a great way to keep your younger ones from getting hungry on this late night at school.

SPRING GALA RESULTS *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 5)

complete the back of the card, and you can return your donation to the office.

The 2019 Mad Hatters Ball wrapped up after an hour of drinks and dancing from a live DJ, closing the books on the 22nd Annual Gala and Auction. Thanks to all of the staff, volunteers, attendees and donors, the event raised a total of \$89,517!

Make sure you plan to attend next year’s Gala, which has been scheduled for Saturday, April 4, 2020. The theme will be announced later this year. There will be several ways to get involved if you are interested in volunteering. Feel free to contact me at jbailiff@mir.org.

MIR’S PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 1)

are universally found across every time and culture. These tendencies include communication, activity, orientation, and exploration. For example, most children learn to walk, talk, and meet other developmental milestones at approximately the same age, whether they were born in Italy in 1907, in Australia in 1950, or in California in 2019. Montessori is tailored to support these natural patterns of physical, social, and intellectual development. While there is a deep structure within the Montessori system, it is designed to be adaptable and responsive so that it can be customized to the culture, age, and needs of the community.

I am grateful that MIR is a part of an international community of educators who continues to offer this practice in new and remarkable ways. I am also proud to represent Montessori in Redlands to the other participants at AMI’s annual general meetings. Our school has an international reputation for its strong program that has emerged from the work of this entire community. The longevity of our staff, natural campus, and strong on-site offering of Student Services also earns MIR a well-deserved international reputation for excellence. The larger community of MIR and The Grove School are recognized for offering Montessori for the full age span from 18 months to 18 years and for our unique public and private school partnership.

With the conclusion of re-enrollment last month, I want to extend a thank you for continuing to entrust your children to our care. Know that your children are part of a worldwide community of Montessori learners embarking on or continuing a life journey of self-realization, love of learning, and global responsibility.

BOARD REPORT *(cont.)*

(Continued from page 2)

ages share intensive social, physical, cognitive and emotional development. Both feel like navigating murky waters.

While each person’s path is unique—we each develop in our own way, at our own pace—we all arrive at the destination. I remind myself that my kids are adults in training, and that my job is to support their journey of self-discovery and independence. I try to take the long view.

What does this have to do with the MIR board? Like people, organizations are always in the process of becoming. They experience different phases of development and maturity. And like people, that growth may be uneven: we are more mature, or have more capacity or expertise in one area than in another.

As board members, it’s our job to take the long view. We look two, three, or five years down the road and ask: Who are we now? Who are we becoming? Where are we headed? Do we have the resources to get there? We look at the factors shaping our future, and proactively plan to build resilience for times of change: What’s coming next? How do we prepare?

Taking the long view doesn’t mean we detach from our current reality. Knowing what’s going on in school is part of our responsibility, as stewards of the mission. But our responsibility to good governance means that we also need to “get off the dance floor and up on the balcony” (to borrow from adaptive leadership gurus Heifetz & Linsky), so we can see the bigger picture. So that we can see MIR as a school and a community that is always in the process of becoming. Just like our kids. And just like us.

CALENDAR

SUMMER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT CONTINUES

Some sessions have already filled—don't wait to sign up.

The MIR Summer Program complements MIR's school-year program by reinforcing what the children have already learned and providing activities that support continued growth and development at every level. Fun is definitely part of the equation, with outdoor and water play, swimming, field trips, and many more activities appropriate to the summer.

The Summer Program is available for eight weeks starting Monday, June 17. Sessions are organized into four two-week 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 with a confirmed space for the 2019-20 school year may enroll, and enrollment is first-come, first-served.

Elementary parents: Please follow the enrollment instructions emailed to you on April 3. Summer enrollment is more complicated for this age group.

The *MIRROR* is published by Montessori in Redlands, 1890 Orange Ave., Redlands, CA 92373, License number 360910803-4-5. © 2019 Send questions, stories, or photos to lkensok@mir.org.

LEARN ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S PROGRESS AT PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher conferences offer you precious individual time with your child's teachers. Conferences will be held Thursday and Friday, April 25 and 26. You will receive a progress report for your child and be able to discuss your child's growth in each academic and social-emotional area.

Look for an email with instructions on how to schedule your conference. Sign up for childcare via the Family Access Module in the Parent Portal

(sign in to the Parent Portal, select Family Access Module from the drop-down menu at the top right, and click on Bulletin Board in the left navigation).

Some teachers have additional dates and times available for conferences, and those will be displayed on their schedule. If you are unable to meet during any of the available slots, please work with your child's teacher to arrange an alternate time.

April 2019

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1 Payments Due Elem. Dance	2 Soccer	3 Elem. Dance	4 Spring Picture Day Sportball Elem. Math Club	5 Box Tops Friday Elem. Chess Club
8 Elem. Dance	9 Fieldtrip: Sara's class Soccer	10 Elem. Dance	11 Sportball Elem. Math Club	12 Box Tops Friday Fieldtrips: Kara & Jenny, Nikki, and Roslyn's classes Elem. Chess Club
15 Elem. Dance Tax Day	16 School closes at 5 PM Child-Parent Night and Pasta Dinner, 5-7 PM Soccer	17 Elem. Dance	18 Fieldtrips: Emily, Jean & Maryhelen, Kelly, and Kristen's classes Sportball	19 Box Tops Friday Childcare reservations due for P-T Conferences Elem. Chess Club Good Friday
22 Elem. Dance	23 Soccer	24 Elem. Dance	25 Parent-Teacher conferences for all classes. No school, childcare by reservation.	26 Good Friday (Orthodox)
29 Staff in-service No school, no childcare.	30 Parent Ed Night: "Smart, but Scattered," 6 PM Soccer	1 Elem. Dance	2 Sportball	27 Redlands Day of Service, 9 AM to 1 PM
				3 Elem. Chess Club