

# THE MIRROR



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IN REDLANDS

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MIR Elementary students practicing mindfulness for the holiday season.

## The Roots of Montessori Education

BY JENNY DAVIDSON, Head of School

I recently had a charming conversation with a young child who earnestly explained to me that Maria Montessori used to run our school here in Redlands. Recognizing that there was some confusion, we had some follow-up discussion about Dr. Montessori's life and the history of this school in particular. For that short conversation, I enjoyed the feeling that Maria Montessori was not so far removed from our own local community.

Dr. Maria Montessori had a fascinating life, and a legacy that will last long into the

future. She was born in 1870 and became one of the first Italian women to be awarded a medical degree. She developed her educational methods while working with children in the low-income housing projects of Rome. Through this work, she uncovered a unique understanding of the development of the whole human being.

During her lifetime, Maria Montessori worked with children and teachers around the world and saw her techniques improve educational outcomes for children.

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## HOLIDAY SING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 6:30 PM

**Seating begins at 6 PM**

The sounds of students singing are filling the campus as the children prepare for MIR's biggest event of the year, the Holiday Sing, a tradition that started in the very first year of MIR's existence.

We expect more than 1,000 family members to join us for the 44<sup>th</sup> annual Holiday Sing, which will be held at the University of Redlands Memorial Chapel. All classes will perform, as well as singers and musicians from The Grove School. The Toddlers close the show.

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## Board Report

### Exploring Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at MIR

**BY ANNE DESMARAIS**, President

*“The needs of humankind are universal. Our means of meeting them create the richness and diversity of the planet. The Montessori child should come to relish the texture of that diversity.”—Maria Montessori*

Grace and courtesy. Respect and understanding. Kindness and compassion. Cooperation, communication, and community. These are some of the values at the heart of Montessori education; values that give us hope for our future.

Maria Montessori lived in a time of global turmoil, social upheaval and war. While I have long accepted that “peace” is somehow part of Montessori education, only recently have I come to appreciate how vital and transformative this work is.

Montessori was, in a way, a revolutionary thinker ahead of her time. She saw that educating the whole child, in a prepared environment, as a valued member of community, was a pathway to a more peaceful and just society: *“Averting war is the work of politicians; establishing peace is the work of education.”*

And work it is. We see it in the earliest lessons on grace and courtesy. We see it in lessons on fundamental needs, the history of humans, flag matching, continent boxes. We see it in school gatherings and class celebrations of cultural traditions,

like Dia de los Muertos field trips and Lunar New Year presentations. We see it in class meetings, where our children practice respectful communication and peaceful conflict resolution.

An essential part of this work of peace is embracing and celebrating the great diversity of human culture, thought, and experience. At MIR, we want everyone to feel welcome, valued, respected, and included. We want to elevate learning and enrich our experience of community through inclusion of diverse perspectives, races, orientations, beliefs, and backgrounds—as described in our school policies on diversity and inclusion.

Last year, the Board of Directors began a dialogue around diversity, equity, and inclusion. We started by asking questions:

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## PTM News

### Holiday Sing: An Intimate Conversation with Our Children

**BY LUPINA HOSSAIN**, Room Rep

I begin with the question that is seldom asked by an article, although it is quite relevant to reading any text or experiencing any performance: What do you, the reader, bring to the reading of this article? And by extension I ask, what do we, as parents, bring to the act of watching our children perform on stage?

In writing a Japanese haiku for example, it is said that the poem is not completed by the poet. Instead, the poet creates only half the haiku and the remaining half awaits the reader’s response to reading the poem. In similar fashion, a stage actor’s performance is useless without the play being enacted before a discerning audience. This is because the aura of the performer is bound to him by the here-

and-now. So, as we watch the performance of Macbeth on stage, we cannot separate ourselves from the aura of the actor. We are tightly bound with each other. Through these mutual interactions between art and the perceiver-of-art, an intimate bond is created. A dialectic is established, as the performer enters into a personal conversation with the audience. And of course, in our case, as we watch our children perform on stage, a beautiful bond is similarly created. Our children laugh, sing, and dance, and we the audience fall deeply into a sacred intimacy with them.

However, in watching their every action, a desperation enters our hearts, for we want to capture and preserve that moment for eternity. Thus, we enter the dilemma that the inhabitants of the 19th century faced as they questioned whether a photograph—with its never-ending promise of reproducibility—would be able to capture the person’s aura. German philosopher Walter Benjamin spends considerable time discussing the loss of the aura in his essays about the reproducibility of

art. The aura, he suggests, is the very uniqueness of art. The aura is the here-and-now that—with the advent of reproduction and reproducibility—is lost. Because, as an actor performs before a camera for example, he or she is no longer performing for a live audience who can react to the sweetness and melancholy of the performer’s emotional changes. Instead, the actor is performing for an apparatus, a piece of equipment, a camera. The actor’s body is no longer seen in its presence but loses its material substance. It is stripped from reality and its here-and-now.

Perhaps then, on that beautiful MIR tradition of Holiday Sing, when we watch our children perform, and our hearts pulsate with love—perhaps we can enter into an intimate conversation once more. Let our children see the expressions in our faces and let us be enchanted by their presence! Let us be beguiled by our children’s here-and-now and let us all be enraptured by our children’s sacred auras, as they laugh, sing, and dance their way into our overflowing hearts.



## Curriculum Matters

### A Foundation for Math: Never Give More to the Mind Than to the Hands

BY MANDIE CODY SCHADWINKEL, Assistant Head of School

*At MIR, we have identified nine Student Learner Outcomes (SLOs). They form the basis of our educational program. They align with the Montessori curriculum and current research on child development. In this article, I'm going to share with you some more information and context on how Montessori's approach to mathematics has been developed.*

It is a common belief that math evolved as a solution to practical problems of early humans. How to measure quantity, distance, relationships, etc., were questions early humans faced in their interactions within their environment and one another.

The three most foundational branches in math are arithmetic, geometry, and algebra. Arithmetic applies to that which is capable of being counted. It involves addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and powers and roots of numbers. Geometry is the measuring of land and studying of shapes, angles, and relationships of elements from one shape to another. Algebra generalizes what arithmetic expressed in detail, and studies the relationship and properties of quantities with symbols and letters.

At MIR, children are actively learning about arithmetic and geometry in all of the classrooms, and in upper elementary, the foundations of algebra are explored more directly.

The phrase that comes to my mind when I think of math is “never give more to the mind than to the hand.” It was something Maria Montessori said more than 100 years ago and is commonly quoted among early childhood educators. Montessori understood that in order for children to understand something abstract, there first needs to be a certain amount of concrete experiences and brain development that takes place.

We cannot (nor do we necessarily want to) speed up the maturation of the brain — it has its own timeline, and it's

important to understand and work within that timeline. However, we can provide children with interesting learning materials and opportunities to have physical, concrete experiences with their world around them. That prepares their mind very directly for mathematical and abstract concepts. When their brain is ready to make certain leaps, we know that experiences in their environment have been fruitful and a more complete development can occur.

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In her book *From Childhood to Adolescence*, Montessori wrote that “Men with hands and no head, and men with head and no hands, are equally out of place in the modern community.” In Montessori education, we are guiding children in a holistic way.

One of the first things people notice when they observe children working in a Montessori classroom are the attractive math materials. They provide incredible clarity. The fact that the children's senses are so engaged while using them make them easy for children (and adults) to recall and understand the concepts that are embedded in their design and function. In each classroom at MIR, and at each level, are accurate, beautiful, and interesting objects for the children to touch and learn about numbers, opera-

tions, relationships between the numbers, sizes, shapes, points, lines, angles, surfaces, solids, and symbols that lead to realization. It starts with the concrete materials, and it leads to abstract understanding.

Maria Montessori called the materials she designed and used “materialized abstraction.” She and the other scientists who developed them first used them with children who had significant cognitive development delays and disabilities.

Montessori observed how helpful the materials were for those children, and she wondered how they would be received by typically developing children. She spent the rest of her life and career observing, designing, implementing, and experimenting with different learning apparatus and

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# MIR Scrapbook

## Field Trips

*When the child goes out, it is the world itself that offers itself to him. Let us take the child out to show him real things instead of making objects which represent ideas and closing them up in cupboards.”—Maria Montessori*

In Montessori education, field trips are not a fun diversion from “real” schooling; they are a fundamental part of the education program, whether classes go far or stay close. Shown below are Aedin’s class trip to the Grove School’s pumpkin patch to pick out pumpkins, and Emily’s class trip to the Queen Mary in Long Beach.



# Child Development

## Generous Gestures

### BY MIR STAFF

*MIR staff from all areas contributed their ideas and expertise to this article.*

It's that time of year when so many of us adults begin to feel frazzled and overwhelmed at the pace of our lives when holidays and gatherings start to take center stage. It can be hard to stay focused on the sentiment behind the season and remember that these are all things intended to enhance our lives and the lives of our children (not just to stress us out).

Often times, the simple things are the most meaningful, memorable, and, thank goodness, the least complicated to plan and execute. Do yourselves a favor and embrace simplicity this time of year!

Here are some ideas the staff of MIR have gathered to share and inspire you with as you consider simple ways to include your children in the generosity and goodness of the season.

Write a poem and give it to someone.

Make baked goods for others.



Create and embellish place cards for guests when sharing meals.

Help decorate any wrapping or gift bags (plain paper works well) on gifts.

If something needs to be polished, cleaned, fixed, put together, sewn, etc., do that as a gift or token of appreciation in place of buying something new.

Write/decorate a card for someone letting them know what you like about them.

Learn a song together and sing it to others. You can record and send to others if you aren't able to do it in person.

Pay attention to someone's favorite color and buy them socks of that color.

Cover an empty soup or coffee can with construction paper and decorating it to use as a pencil holder.

Memorize a poem and recite it to someone.

Host a (free) hot chocolate stand for your neighborhood.

Go through exhausted, outgrown, or

**Often times, the simple things are the most meaningful, memorable, and, thank goodness, the least complicated to plan and execute.**

unused toys, games, clothes, etc., and see if any can find new homes (local children/young adult homes, retirement homes, thrift stores).

Create "Love Coupon" booklets by offering help (I'll make your bed for a week, "I'll do your laundry one time," etc.) or just expressions of love "A hug for a sad moment," and such. Draw pictures on every page and color them.

Give a plant or seeds.

Make a meal for someone .

Complete a chore for someone that they don't like to do. .

Make treats for birds or other animals in your neighborhood or lives .



Volunteer at a local organization.

Give a token of appreciation in secret without the other person knowing it was you.

Pick up trash around your neighborhood or a favorite local place as a gift to the earth.

Refamiliarize yourselves with daily courtesies and manners like saying please, thank you, and excuse me, and commit to practicing them more often. Make eye contact with each family member in the

morning and say good morning. Practice good table manners; wait for all to sit and begin, ask for something to be passed, wait to talk until your food is chewed and swallowed, use a napkin to wipe your lips. Open doors for others and push your chair in when you are done at a table.

Involve your child in picking a cause they care about and see if they'd be willing to give some of their money from a piggy bank to help take care of something other than themselves. Demonstrate doing the same thing and joining your child.

If you like knitting or crochet, you can find an organization that donates to people or animals in need.



## Southwest Civil War Symposium to be Held in February

**BY BODIE CROWDER**, MIR Student

Come to the Southwest Civil War Symposium on Saturday, February 1, 2020 to learn about the campaigns, commanders, and civilians of the American Civil War. The symposium will take place at the Esri Café in Redlands.

This is the second year for the symposium. This year, American Civil War historian Eric J. Wittenberg from Columbus, Ohio will join us as our keynote speaker.

Tickets are only \$50 and include lunch. Kids are free! Registration is now open. For more information or to register, visit [SouthwestCivilWar.com](http://SouthwestCivilWar.com).

## Shop for Unique Gifts and Support the Montessori Community

The following events and opportunities allow you to buy unique gifts and support our Montessori community.

### **Frugal Frigate Book Fair**

DECEMBER 3-10 AT MIR

Stop by the foyer of Jean and Maryhelen's classroom (through the main office) to browse and buy children's books for all ages. Teachers will have wish lists (gifts for the class!) and Frugal Frigate donates books to the school based on how many books are bought.

Frugal Frigate is an excellent independent children's book store in Redlands. If you choose to visit the store in-person December 3-10 for gift shopping, mention MIR when checking out and your purchase will apply to the book fair.

### **Grove Farmers Market Craft & Fiber Fair**

DECEMBER 7, 8 A.M.-12 P.M. AT HERITAGE PARK

Beautiful, handcrafted items with a focus on fiber arts will be available for sale at the Grove Farmers Market. Vendors

will include small gifts that are affordable for children. This is a great way to let children experience finding and paying for gifts for others.

### **Scrip Gift Cards**

DECEMBER 7 AT THE CRAFT FAIR AND ONGOING

The Grove School's parent group will have a booth at the Craft Fair to sell scrip gift cards, and you can also buy them online. When you buy your gift cards this way, a percentage of the proceeds supports Grove students.

Gift cards are available for everything from everyday necessities such as gas and groceries to retailers, restaurants, entertainment, and even plane tickets. To buy online, follow these steps:

1. Visit [shopwithscrip.com](http://shopwithscrip.com).
2. Click on the "Join a Program" button.
3. Enter the code for Grove School PTG to enroll: E84A9EB112897.
4. Follow the prompts to register your account. *You will need to link a bank account to pay. You cannot pay by credit card.*

## FOUNDATION FOR MATH (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

ways to engage children. An estimated 20,000 Montessori schools worldwide are currently using those wonderful learning materials.

**To truly appreciate the math materials, it's best to see and get your own hands on them!** If you've never been to *Journey & Discovery* (or if it's been a while!), please consider coming on Saturday, January 25, 2020. It's several hours (8 AM - 1 PM) of high-quality time with the Montessori materials, MIR, and The Grove School teachers, and other parents. More details will be shared in the new year; please save the date!

## BOARD REPORT (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

What do we know about diversity, equity, and inclusion at MIR? What do we not know? What is going well? What could we do better? What do these words mean to us? And what do they mean to the MIR community? What should we do next?

Several things became clear. One is that our dialogue is just beginning. While MIR is strong in many areas, there's a lot that we don't know. We want to find ways to engage the diverse voices of our community in this conversation. We need to gather more stories and better data to help us understand what these values mean to all of us at MIR; and to benchmark how we're doing now and where we'd like to go on this mission together.

This fall, the Board has started working with a focus group of MIR staff and teachers to begin charting a path forward. Likely next steps will be further exploring ideas, values, and definitions; discussing community engagement; and developing some surveys to help elicit your experiences, perspectives, thoughts, and values. We hope you will join us the conversation mission in the coming months!



## ROOTS OF MONTESSORI EDUCATION (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

She was a strong advocate for the rights of children and even called for the formation of a new political party called “The Social Party of the Child.” Maria Montessori believed in the power of education for social reform, and in a world where education could bring about peace.

In 1929, Dr. Montessori founded the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) to continue her work and ensure this approach remained relevant for future generations. Today, AMI is a thriving international organization with affiliated societies in 40 countries. It provides teacher training programs to maintain authentic and high-fidelity Montessori education across the globe. Here at Montessori in Redlands, 27 staff members hold teacher training diplomas from AMI.

Today, neuroscientific research supports Montessori’s original theories and discoveries, preserving her place as a leader in educational principles and practice. As Montessori practitioners, we continue to develop her work, champion the human rights of the child, and bring Montessori education to communities globally.

It is still possible to visit AMI headquarters in the Netherlands which is based in the home where Dr. Montessori lived and worked. I had the pleasure of visiting in November and her study now holds artifacts from Montessori’s life and educational methods. It is a pleasure to reconnect with the global and historical roots of Montessori education, while also seeing it unfold here in our own community on a daily basis.

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](mailto:lkensok@mir.org).

## December 3 is #GIVINGTUESDAY

Tuesday, December 3 is

#GivingTuesday, and a lot of very worthy causes are trying to get your attention, including us.

At MIR, we are using the day as a good reminder to ask ourselves what we can do to give back. And we thought we should start by saying thank you. You've given so many gifts to MIR. We couldn't be more grateful.

### Each day a child spends at MIR is made possible by your support.

Whether you volunteer time or expertise, or you donate money, MIR would not be the same school without you:

- You have given **more than \$1,000,000** in annual fund donations, Gala proceeds, and grants since 2012 ([mir.org/giving/campaigns-results](http://mir.org/giving/campaigns-results)).
- In that same time, **parents volunteered thousands of hours** as PTM Room Reps, for class activities, and at school events.

### That's a HUGE difference you've made for MIR students—THANK YOU! Your support means the world to us.

This doesn't even include your social media likes, comments, and shares. Or your kind words. Or the times you've shared our mission. **Thanks for giving your time, talent, and resources. You make our hearts smile!**

It is part of our mission to help children develop a sense of global responsibility, and they learn best from our example! We are spending our day supporting the causes that are meaningful to us. We encourage you today to donate your time, your expertise, or your money to a cause that's meaningful to you.

**If MIR is a cause close to your heart, we encourage you to share the following link with family and friends:** <http://bit.ly/mirdonations>.

Here are causes our students love to support throughout the school year: UNICEF USA ([unicefusa.org](http://unicefusa.org)), Redlands

Family Service Association ([redlandfamilyservice.org](http://redlandfamilyservice.org)), Terry Fox Foundation ([terryfox.org](http://terryfox.org)), The Blessing Center ([theblessingcenterredlands.org](http://theblessingcenterredlands.org)), and YouthHope Foundation ([youthhope.org](http://youthhope.org)).

### What is #GivingTuesday?

#GivingTuesday is a global generosity movement. It was started in 2012 as a simple idea: create a day that encourages people to do good. Over the past seven years, this idea has grown into a global movement that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity.

For MIR, #GivingTuesday is a chance to talk about our values and why we care so much about the work that we do. You'll see this throughout the day on our social media.

You can learn more about #GivingTuesday at [givingtuesday.org](http://givingtuesday.org).

### Why does MIR fundraise?

MIR is an independent, nonprofit school. This means we are not supported by outside organizations. Private schools, by contrast, are often part of a larger entity such as a church. We fundraise because we must depend on donations over and above tuition to

- Maintain and enhance our campus and classrooms
  - Ensure teachers receive the training they need to remain current in their skills
  - Fund our financial aid program
- MIR is a 501(c)(3) corporation. Our tax ID is 95-3036995.



# Holiday Sing

(Continued from page 1)

Admission to the Holiday Sing is free and you are welcome to invite extended family. 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 the day of Holiday Sing to give students a chance to rest and prepare for the evening.

## Don't be Late for Rehearsal

Dress rehearsals will be held starting at 9:30 AM on the day of the show. 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 Toddler families can bring their children directly to the Chapel for rehearsal. Check in with your child's teacher for the rehearsal time.



# MIR Class of 2020 December Fundraisers

MIR's Class of 2020 are holding a couple of fundraisers in December to help pay for their capstone trip to Boston.

## Breakfast Burritos

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 7:45-9:15 AM

Make breakfast easy on December 6. Students will be selling breakfast burritos on the north and south campuses.

For \$5, you'll get a hot egg-and-cheese or non-dairy burrito. Children may eat their burritos in class.

## Parents' Night Out

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 6-8 PM

Take a couple of hours for yourselves! The students (with adult help) will watch your kids for you at MIR while you go to dinner, run errands, or get some secret holiday shopping done. Children will be fed dinner and will have a fun evening!

This evening is for enrolled Primary and Elementary students. The cost for Parents' Night out is \$25 per child. Look for the link in the MIR Weekly Planner email to sign up.

# Calendar

## December 2019

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
2  Elementary Dance	3 F.F. Book Fair begins #GivingTuesday  Soccer	4 Nikki field trip Sara field trip  Elementary Dance	5 Maria/Jennifer field trip Jean/Maryhelen field trip  Sportball Elementary Math Games	6 Box Top Friday Breakfast Burritos, 7:45-9:15 AM  Grove Market Craft & Fiber Fair, (Dec 7 <sup>th</sup> 8 AM-12 PM) Elementary Makerspace
9  Elementary Dance	10 F.F. Book Fair ends 4 <sup>th</sup> Year Heritage Tour  Soccer	11  Elementary Dance	12  Sportball Elementary Math Games	13 Box Top Friday Emily field trip  Elementary Makerspace
16 Recital for Yang Chen's students (Dec 15 <sup>th</sup> , 1-3 PM)  Elementary Dance	17 School closes at 3:30 PM Holiday Sing, 6:30 PM	18 Kristen field trip	19 Emily Potluck, 12 PM  Sportball Elementary Math Games	20 Box Top Friday PJ Days & Book Exchanges: Jean/Maryhelen, Kara/Jenny, Maria/Jennifer, Sara  Winter Solstice (Dec 21 <sup>st</sup> )
23 Hanukkah begins (Dec 22 <sup>nd</sup> , sunset)	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26 Boxing Day Kwanzaa begins	27
School and childcare closed for Holiday break.				
30 Hanukkah ends (sunset)	31 New Year's Eve	1 New Year's Day Kwanzaa ends	2	3
School and childcare closed for Holiday break.				