

# THE MIRROR



MONTESSORI  
IN REDLANDS

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Jean and Maryhelen's class on a recent trip to the Redlands Fire Department station.

## Hope and Promise for Mankind

BY JENNY DAVIDSON, Head of School

As the winter solstice has passed and our days begin to get longer, it is a wonderful time to reflect on our resolutions and aspirations for a fulfilling life and a bright future.

I know that maintaining the optimism of a new year can have some challenges. This moment in our history feels particularly disquieting as we see growing political tensions and the next directions for our country are unknown. The heart-breaking headlines from Australia remind us that our environment is facing unprecedented challenges.

While the news can be distressing, it was these circumstances that led me to choose Montessori education as a life-long career. After completing my undergraduate degree in Environmental Studies many years ago, I was disheartened by the threats to our environment and I felt little hope for a peaceful and secure future.

Discovering Montessori education at that moment in time was a breath of fresh air. I found a community of adults and children where there seemed to be un-

*(Continued on page 7)*

## MONTESSORI U JANUARY EVENTS

### JOURNEY & DISCOVERY

**Saturday, January 25, 8 AM-1 PM**

*Event is adults-only. We are not able to provide childcare. The event is cumulative and needs to be experienced from beginning to end.*

Montessori in Redlands and The Grove School invite you to Journey & Discovery, a hands-on seminar that lets you explore the full Montessori curriculum from 18 months to 18 years.

The day starts with a journey through

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# Board Report

## Engaging with the Community

**BY LEILA KHAZAENI**, President

My mother, who lives in Washington DC, received her first copy of the MIRROR last month in the mail! Of course, during the past 12 years that our family has been part of the MIR community, she has read multiple issues of the MIRROR, and the *Bluebird Bulletin* before that. In fact, the latest issue is usually sitting on our coffee table and it's often the first publication she reaches for when she visits us. Does she enjoy reading the articles about Montessori education, or learning about upcoming school events? Perhaps she loves

searching each photograph for a glimpse of one of her grandchildren going about their daily classroom activities? Likely all of the above! The MIRROR provides a connection to our school community and our children's daily lives.

One of my roles during the past three years as a Board member has been to chair the advancement committee. Initially, I asked the same question you are asking—what is an “advancement” committee? As we all do these days, I started with Google: the definition of advancement (from the Merriam Webster dictionary) is “The action of moving forward in position or progress”. But what does that mean for an independent school like MIR?

David Willows, Director of Advancement at the International School of Brussels in Belgium, has written that his role is

to be a storyteller: to help tell the story of his school, to help people find their place in that story, and to manage a set of processes that enable those two things to happen. I am a big fan of people and their stories, so this explanation really resonated with me. During our own advancement committee meetings, we have discussed ways to inform our local broader community about MIR and Montessori education. One of the specific goals of our advancement committee during the past few years has been to engage the extended MIR family—the grandparents, extended families, and alumni of our school.

And this brings me back to the MIRROR, this publication which you are reading! The Mirror tells a part of the story of

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# PTM News

## Journey & Discovery

**BY STEPHANIE WERTMAN & KAREN ZWICKER**, Room Reps

Want to learn more about Montessori education by immersing yourself in it for a day? Join your fellow and prospective parents on Saturday, January 25th from 8am - 1pm for a comprehensive look at the Montessori curriculum from 18 months to 18 years. You'll have the option to focus on 18 month to 3rd grade, or 4th grade to 12th grade (part of this journey is through a farm, so good footwear is encouraged). This event is hosted jointly by Montessori in Redlands and The Grove School.

This event is free, and lunch is included. Remember that this is an adult-only event, and childcare is not provided by MIR. The event takes the entire time and it is not possible to “drop in”.

*From Karen: What I found most remarkable from Journey & Discovery is having more time to see how lessons were taught*

*and to get a peek into lower elementary. My oldest would soon be transitioning and we needed more guidance to help us decide our path. Seeing the lessons up close, you get to appreciate how certain work preps little hands for holding a pencil for writing, or*

*how everything has a story behind it to help students remember why something is the way it is. The “a-ha” moments are pretty remarkable! Diving into why and how the school does what it does keeps you excited for the love of learning.*



*(Continued on page 6)*



# Child Development

## The Language of Listening

**BY MANDIE CODY SCHADWINKEL**, Assistant Head of School

MIR will be hosting a Positive Discipline “refresher course” for parents who have taken the Positive Discipline parenting course in the past and would like to refresh their skills.

As children get older, your parenting techniques need to evolve. If you've taken a Positive Discipline parenting class at MIR and would like a review on parenting techniques for different ages, we encourage you to sign up for this four-week refresher course, which begins Wednesday, January 29. See page 6 for more details.

As parents and teachers, we spend quite a bit of energy thinking about how and what to say to our children. The sentiment that “Positive Discipline” has coined and that resonates with many of us is that we want to be both kind and firm with our children. We want to be encouraging, loving, and clear. At times it feels difficult to navigate through and find the “right” way, place, and time to tell our children the messages we believe they need and should hear to help them believe in themselves, consider others, and be their best. It takes a lot of energy and I know many of us are hard on ourselves when the words don't come out the way we had wanted. We know that words are powerful.

For a moment, let's give ourselves a break from finding the perfect words, tone, and timing and focus on something else that might be even more important than how we talk to our children: listening to them. Listening to our children is very different than talking to them (or talking at them, as happens from time to time). As adults, I wonder if we value the quality of listening to our children as much as we value the quality of talking to them. Here are a few tips I've gathered along the way that can make a difference as we work on refining how we listen to our children.

**Have a clear focus on your child when listening to them.** Many early childhood educators call it “whole body listening” when explaining it to children. It's when it is clear that your attention and presence are absolutely with the person talking. Whenever you are tempted to multitask, look at a

screen, or are otherwise preoccupied with something else, your child knows the difference and won't likely be as encouraged to open up and share as much as when they have your full attention (this goes for your conversations with adults too).

**Get down to their level and make eye contact while listening.**

**Reiterate what you are hearing from them.** Say it back to them and show your interest by asking some follow up ques-

For a moment, let's give ourselves a break from finding the perfect words, tone, and timing and focus on something else that might be even more important than how we talk to our children: listening to them.

tions when the time is right. This process helps them sense that you hear them and are thinking about them.

**Pay attention to when your child opens up the most to you.** This could be bedtime, time in the car, alone time in the morning, when you are on a walk together, during a shared meal, special time with just the two of you, right after school, etc. Make the extra effort to be present with your child during that time. How can you use that time to the fullest?

**Be a neutral yet supportive listener.** Most people, including children, want to be heard first and foremost. Having any judgement in our tone, being too pointed with our questions or even offering solutions to the challenges they are sharing is not what the other is looking for. If you have suggestions to offer that you think might be helpful, ask the child if they'd like to hear them.

**Listening under stress is especially difficult.** In the book *The Zen of Listening*, author Rebecca Shafir says this about listening under stress (any of us out there ever under stress when having a conflict and/or conversation with your child?) “The challenge is to process not only the words and emotions behind the words, but to avoid becoming defensive and/or eventually offensive. To do this, you need to unconditionally accept the reality of the

other person as legitimate. You need to remain calm and focused in order to choose your words carefully. You can see how listening under stress is the ultimate test of the firmness of your foundation for mindful listening.”

Every stage of our children's development is different than what happened before and what will happen after. It can

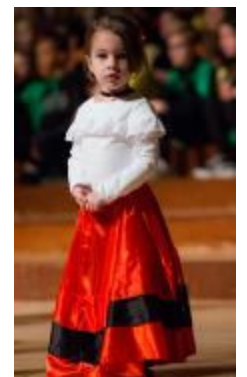
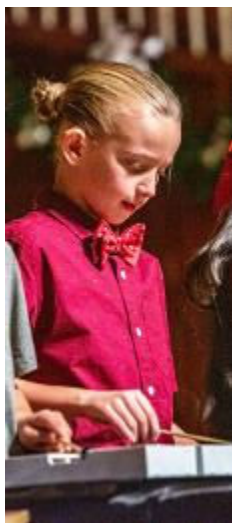
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# MIR Scrapbook

## Holiday Sing



# Child Development

## Breaking Away

BY MAREN SCHMIDT

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*“The finest inheritance you can give a child is to allow it to make its own way, completely on its own two feet.”*—Isadora Duncan

“Don’t kiss me or hug me in public, Mom,” your child says as he or she wipes off your kiss.

Affection that was freely given and accepted becomes an embarrassment to the six-to-nine-year-old. As soon as adult teeth replace baby teeth, the child enters into a new phase of development. One of the characteristics of this period is a breaking out into a bigger world and a breaking away from the close familiarity of family and friends.

Human beings have an inborn drive to become independent. We see this independence assert itself in the infant who continually kicks off his or her socks; in two-year-olds with their forceful “no’s”; with the three-year-olds’ asserting, “Let me do it myself.”

One of the tricks of parenting is learning how to grow smaller and smaller as our children grow larger and larger.

- How do we hand over responsibility and encourage autonomy and independence in our children?
- How can we utilize this period of growing independence?
- How can we minimize our children’s feelings of dependency?

**First, we can let our children make choices where appropriate.**

For the three-year-old the choice may be, “Do you want to wear your red or your blue pajamas?” For a six-year-old, the choice might be in purchasing pajamas. For the ten-year-old, having a choice of bedtimes. For the sixteen-year-old, being involved in curfew decisions.

**We can show respect for the child’s struggle to gain competency.**

Learning new skills, such as tying your own shoes, takes time and dexterity. Instead of doing for our children, we need to ask, “How can I help?” remembering that any unnecessary help is a hindrance to their development towards independence.

**We try not to pry.**

Asking too many questions about our children’s day implies a level of distrust instead of interest. Can you remember a boss, teacher, or co-worker who seemed to cross-examine you? Every day? A simple “glad to see you” or “welcome home” is many times the best way to make connection with our children and keep their trust.

**We can encourage our children to use sources outside of the home to help answer questions or solve problems.**

Help your child establish habits of seeking expert advice from various people. For example, if your child wants to

**One of the tricks of parenting is learning how to grow smaller and smaller as our children grow larger and larger.**

know how to take care of a new hamster, suggest making a list of questions, then visiting with a pet store owner, searching the library, or contacting a friend or neighbor who has a hamster.

We can help our children learn to think for themselves by restating the question and encouraging exploration.

Don’t be too quick to be the encyclopedia of knowledge. “Dad, what makes a rocket ship go straight up?” may best be answered, even if you are a rocket scientist, with a question such as “What do you think makes a rocket go straight up?”

**Encourage your children’s dreams, even if they sound outrageous.**

Too many times we can dismiss youth-



ful optimism with a casual remark when “I want to be an astronaut” is met with “Forget it! You’re not good enough in math. And besides that, they’re not training anymore astronauts.” We can encourage the essence of the wish when we answer, “An astronaut? What would you like to do as an astronaut?”

**Encourage independence and autonomy by allowing your children to make appropriate choices, beginning at a young age.**

Respect your children’s struggle for independence, mastery and competency. Don’t ask too many questions. Encourage using sources outside the home for problem solving and decision-making. Don’t be too quick to offers answer to questions and solutions to problems. Give your children the gift of having the time to figure it out themselves. Try to see your children’s wishes, hopes, and dreams through their eyes.

Day by day, choice by choice, our children will become stronger in their journey to adulthood.

They will get larger and larger. We will get smaller and smaller. Until one day, they will look at us eye to eye, on their own two feet.



## MONTESSORI U (cont.) Southwest Civil War Symposium to be Held in February

(Continued from page 1)

classrooms spanning the entire Montessori curriculum from 18 months to 18 years, to get a feel for the Montessori prepared educational environment. Parents will then split into the track of their choice to fully discover the curriculum for ages 18 months-3<sup>rd</sup> grade, or 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades.

This second half will include hands-on learning and an opportunity to talk with teachers at all levels about what happens in the classroom each day. At the middle and high school level, you'll meet with students and hear first-hand about their educational experiences.

**Journey & Discovery is one of the most important parent events offered each year.** By experiencing what your child does each day, and what work he or she will do at the next level, you'll get a full understanding of the value of a Montessori education and confirm whether this is the right educational environment for your child.

### POSITIVE DISCIPLINE PARENTING REFRESHER COURSE

As children get older, your parenting techniques need to evolve. If you've taken a Positive Discipline parenting class at MIR and would like a review on parenting techniques for different ages, we encourage you to sign up for our new four-week refresher course. The class offers a friendly, supportive environment in which to learn and to share your successes and setbacks.

Classes will be held Wednesdays, January 29 through February 19, 6-8 PM in the MIR Yoga Room. Register online at <http://bit.ly/35vDtRj> by Friday, January 24. Participants must have taken the initial six-week Positive Discipline course. Space is limited to 24 people. The cost is \$75 per person or \$125 per couple, which you will pay when signing up. Class is subject to cancellation if fewer than 10 individuals sign up.

**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).

## JOURNEY & DISCOVERY (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

*From Stephanie: Last year, my mother (a retired, 35-year public school teacher) attended Journey & Discovery in my place, and she still raves about the lessons she witnessed. It was her first opportunity to tour the entire campus, as well as be inside the classrooms, and she immediately saw how special MIR is, and encouraged me to attend this year (her actual words were "I'll do anything you need next year so you're able to go to this!"). I hope you'll join me attending this year and we can learn how our school implements the Montessori method together!*



## BOARD REPORT (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

our school each month. What better way to engage our extended MIR family—my children's grandparents, even aunts and uncles—than by sharing with them a little bit of the story of our school each month?

If your extended family would be interested in receiving the MIRROR, please stop by the office or forward their preferred contact information to Jessica Bailiff, our own "storyteller" and amazing advancement coordinator, at [jbailiff@mir.org](mailto:jbailiff@mir.org).

## LANGUAGE OF LISTENING (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

be hard to keep up! One aspect that remains true in every stage of our life is the desire to truly be heard. Refining that practice will serve us all well. "Listening is an attitude of the heart, a genuine desire to be with another which both attracts and heals."—J. Isham.



## HOPE AND PROMISE FOR MANKIND

(Continued from page 1)

ending hope that sprang from the incredible power of children to shape and re-shape the future of humanity. It was most powerful because it was action-oriented, with long-term goals.

I found Dr. Montessori's writings on education and peace to be a deep source of inspiration. She wrote, "The child is capable of developing and giving us tangible proof of the possibility of a better humanity. He has shown us the true process of construction of the human being. We have seen children totally change as they acquire a love for things and as their sense of order, discipline, and self-control develops within them.... The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind."

While news headlines will probably always give me sleepless nights, I am so proud of the work that MIR does to support children's social and moral development. I see the hope and the promise that Dr. Montessori wrote about when our students learn how to resolve conflicts, make community-minded choices, engage in sustainable activities, and act generously to make the world a better place.

I see the hard work that staff and families invest into translating our ideals into small actionable steps that children can successfully accomplish. As community members, thank you sincerely for engaging in this work. By taking small actions together, the MIR community is powerful force for good.



## The Grove School Announces New Head of School (cont.)

### BY THE GROVE SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD

The Grove School, the public charter Montessori school that shares a campus with MIR, has hired a new Head of School (HoS).

On December 18, 2019, the Grove Governing Board announced to the Grove community that Andrew Christopherson, who has been leading the school on an interim basis since July, accepted the Board's offer to serve as HoS.

Grove's HoS search committee and Board of Trustees worked for almost a year to find a new Head of School. The Board's final selection was made after reviewing the valuable feedback received from parents, faculty, staff, and students gathered during and shortly following candidate site visits in October.

This is Andrew Christopherson's 20th consecutive year working in public education in the Inland Empire. He taught social science at Grove from 2006-2019 and has served in administrative roles at the school since 2013.

Before starting work at Grove, Andrew was a history teacher and department chair at Serrano Middle School in San Bernardino.

Andrew holds a Master of Arts in School Administration from the University of Redlands and a Bachelor of Arts in Social Science from Azusa Pacific University. He also has received the Montessori Orientation to Adolescent Studies.

Thank you to the MIR families, staff, and board members who contributed to this process. Grove appreciates the support and trust placed in the search committee and the Board throughout this process. The Grove Governing Board looks forward to continuing to work with Andrew and the larger Montessori community going forward.

If you have any questions, please contact [board@thegroveschool.org](mailto:board@thegroveschool.org).

## Save the Date for the MIR Spring Gala

MIR is preparing for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Spring Gala & Auction. The theme is 90's Flashback Bash and we are planning a fabulous throwback party for you!

Please make plans to join us on Saturday, April 4 at 6 PM at the historic Mitten Building.

MIR is seeking donations for the silent auction as well as sponsors and program book advertisers. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Jessica Bailiff in the MIR office.

### Gala FAQs:

1. *What is the Spring Gala?* The gala is community event and an important fundraiser, providing significant money for campus improvements. Last year the event raised a record-breaking \$89,517.

2. *What happens at the Gala?* You will enjoy a fine dinner, live and silent auctions, opportunity drawings, and dancing to a live DJ. The live auction is hosted by a professional auctioneer.

2. *Who may attend?* The Gala is open to the MIR community and the public.

2. *How will proceeds be used?* Funds raised from the Gala will help MIR make the school campus more safe, functional, and sustainable for children.

4. *What is offered in the live auction?* Every year, the classes create amazing, one-of-a-kind items for the auction. In addition, we will offer experiences such as Principal for a Day and valuable and popular items such as your own private parking spot for a year or up to 8 reserved seats at Holiday Sing. Bidding is fast and items often sell for \$1,000-\$5,000 or more.

5. *What is offered in the silent auction?* Local and national businesses donate a bevy of products and experiences for which guests can compete "silently" via bid sheets. The silent auction closes when dinner is served.

Learn more at [mir.org/gala](http://mir.org/gala). Tickets will go on sale at the beginning of February.

## Grove Invites Elementary Families to Sweetheart Dance

The Grove School Model United Nations Club invites Elementary families to this special Valentine's event on Saturday, February 8, 3-5 PM in the Barton School House.

The "Sweetheart Family Dance" is for Elementary-aged children and a parent, guardian, or special adult in their lives. Attendees will be treated to special activities, an ice cream sundae bar, a commemorative Polaroid, and of course dancing!

The cost is \$30 per child+adult. Tickets can be purchased at [www.eventbrite.com/e/85640201147](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/85640201147).

Grove School Model UN will use proceeds to travel to University of California, Berkeley Model UN conference.



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## Honoring a Montessori Advocate



Many of you may remember Dr. Jackie Cossentino as visiting lecturer that MIR hosted in January 2018. She spoke to parents about the history of standardized tests and how a more wholistic approach to assessment can provide a more accurate picture of child development.

We are sorry to share that after an 11-month battle with cancer, Jackie passed away in December.

It was in Montessori education where Jackie found her true passion and life's work. Jackie was Co-founder and Executive Director of the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector and worked tirelessly to bring Montessori education to diverse communities. We are deeply sorry for this loss, and we honor her work on behalf of children.

## Calendar

### January 2020

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
30	31	1	2	3
School and childcare closed for Holiday break.				
6 School and childcare closed for staff in-service	7	8 Pali Parent Information Meeting, 4 PM	9 PTM Meeting, 6 PM	10 Box Top Friday Maria/Jennifer field trip, 9:15 AM - 2 PM
13 UE Digital Storytelling	14 Sara field trip, 9 AM-12 PM  Soccer	15 2 <sup>nd</sup> Semi-Annual Payment Kara/Jenny field trip, 9 AM-3 PM Kelly field trip, 9 AM-2 PM UE Digital Storytelling	16  Sportball Elementary Math Games	17 Box Top Friday Breakfast burritos, 7:30-9:15 AM  Makerspace
20 School and childcare closed in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr., Day	21  Soccer	22  UE Digital Storytelling	23 Jean/Maryhelen field trip, 8:30 AM-4:30 PM  Sportball Elementary Math Games	24 Box Top Friday PTM FUN-raiser, 5-7 PM Makerspace  25 Journey & Discovery, 8 AM -1 PM
27 UE Digital Storytelling	28 Soccer	29 6 <sup>th</sup> Year field trip, 8:30 AM-12 PM  UE Digital Storytelling Positive Discipline Refresher	30  Sportball Elementary Math Games	31 Box Top Friday  Makerspace