

2011



North Star Montessori School



North Star Montessori School
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604.980-1205



Administrator's Note

Happy New Year and Welcome Back! It looks like 2011 is starting out to be a busy and fun-filled time for our school. We have lots of things planned including out of uniform days, going outs, field trips, great parent ed speakers and classroom activities.

Please remember to read your Weekly Memo each Thursday as it contains important information regarding all of the above.

In our continuing effort to streamline we are opening up our "Suggestion Box" to include "*Comments and Suggestions*". Please submit any of these in the box outside of Tiffany's office and we will review them each Thursday at our Admin Meeting and respond to you as quickly as possible. As always, if it is something of an urgent nature or a safety issue, please contact me directly.

And finally, a reminder that pick-up and drop-off are exceptionally busy times at the school and we ask that you keep your children (and those you are picking up) with you at all times. The Elementary children, teachers and staff are often in the hallway during these times and a quiet and respectful manner helps to create a safe environment.

Upcoming Events - Mark Your Calendar!

January 28 Professional Day – No classes
February 4 Community Fundraising Event
February 7-17 Parent Classroom Observations
February 9 Open House (4:00-7:00pm)
February 16 Re-registration packages distributed
February 18 Professional Day – No classes
February 21 Parent Ed Night – LYNN SUMIDA
February 23 Out of Uniform-Pink Shirt (Anti-Bully) Day
March 2 Second Term Report Cards
March 4 Parent/Teacher Interviews – No classes

March 9 Re-registration due
March 11 Last Day of classes (11:30 dismissal)
March 14-25 Spring Break
March 28 Classes resume

The True Meaning of Sharing:

By: Christie Stanford, Founder of Aid to Life Education

Food is such an important part of our environment that without it, we would not be alive. Each civilization has their own way of preparing the food specific to their environment and in general, food is related to the rituals that have been developed in each specific culture.

Children's involvement in food preparation should begin as early as possible in a collaborative effort. Very young children witness these activities being done around them daily. Children under 3 are learning to orient themselves to their environment and are interested in mimicking this observed behavior. The young child is ego-centered, working towards self-construction. Because of this, it is not realistic to expect that children under three know how to 'share' in the everyday sense that you and I understand.

Through the Food Preparation exercises, we provide the best opportunity for the child to learn how to share. Each class, children participate in peeling, slicing, chopping, etc. the fruit and vegetables that all children will enjoy at snack time. The child who has helped to prepare the food gets deep satisfaction from sharing his effort with all his classmates. He is sharing *who he is* with the other children.

What a wonderful gift of self-esteem and self-confidence we can give that child when we sit down for snack and ask: "Who prepared the bananas today?"

And a little voice with a big smile calls out, "ME!"



Then we all reply, “Thank you!”

That moment, in itself, is when the young child will understand the true meaning of what it means to ‘share’.

Oak Room

“We are here to offer to this life, which came into the world by itself, the means necessary for development, and having done that we must await this development with respect.” - Dr. Montessori.

In the last newsletter I spoke about the preparation that we as adults must undergo in order to work with the child on a level that offers them our fullest attention and our purest intentions. **Awareness, respect** and **humility** are the virtues we must embody to fully prepare ourselves to work with our children. **Observation, patience** and **support** are the gifts we must offer them in order for their energies and spirits to flourish to their greatest potential.

Having recently watched a talk on TED.com, given by Sir Ken Robinson about shifting educational paradigms through a ‘Learning Revolution’, it is easy to see that our current method of educating the masses is antiquated and destructive. It is arguable that a reason for this is because this system is based on an *egotistical* model, this method comes from the ego of an adult. Dr. Montessori believed that her method of education was to be *egocentric*. That is to say the ‘centre’ or the ‘core’ of an individual is the most intimate and spiritual dimension of a person. The ‘periphery’ of the child is that external expression of their core; it is a glimpse of their personality that we see in their chosen behaviour.

This is what we as adults see; this is where we meet the child. This is when we have the opportunity to observe who this person is, and when we are watching closely without interruption or influence, this is when we see who this child truly is and what they have the potential to do. It is through **observation** that we are able to identify where our children are in the process of their development, what characteristics they are demonstrating and what needs they may have that we can help them to meet in order for their development to continue smoothly. It is also through observation that we are privy to our child’s ideas, dreams and emotions.

As said before the greater amount of awareness one has of someone, the greater capacity for respecting that person as an individual. It is this level of respect that we develop for our children that allows us to be **patient** with them. We are used to having a great deal of patience for our children when it comes to things like tying shoelaces, cleaning their rooms or even a when they throw a temper tantrum or two. (Some of us handle this better than others). This patience must also apply to the rate and style in which they learn and acquire information.

One way in which Ken Robinson suggests that we change education paradigms is through *customizing* the approach we take in educating our children. This is how we can **support** the on-going work within the core of the child. We can regard and respect each child as their own spiritual force that will fully reveal their beauty when they are ready. We, as the adult can help to ready them by offering them a customized ‘prepared environment’.

The next newsletter will discuss the specifics of the prepared environment, how the environment itself inspires work, promotes independence, allows for observation and requires patience.

A very Happy New Year to you all! I hope that every family had a joyful and restful holiday filled with compassion, generosity and warm memories. May 2011 bring fresh energy, a rejuvenated spirit and fortunate opportunities to you all.

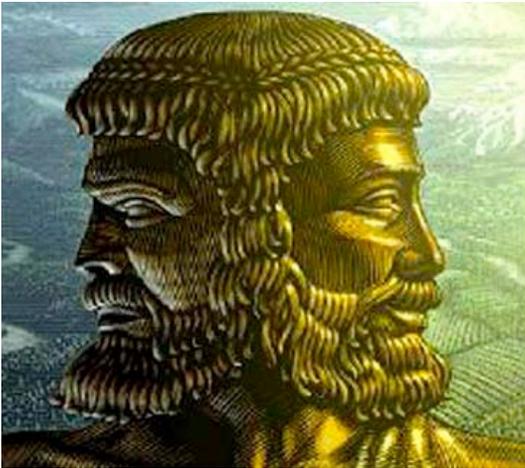
Enjoy the following Sir Ken Robinson discussions at TED.com:

http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_changing_education_paradigms.html

http://www.ted.com/talks/sir_ken_robinson_bring_on_the_revolution.html

Arbutus Room

In Roman religion, the month of January was named for Janus, the god of beginnings. He was one of the principal Roman gods, the custodian of the universe, and the guardian of doors and entrances. His principal festival was celebrated on the first day of the year. Janus was usually represented with two heads placed back to back so that he could look both backwards and forwards at the same time. This idea is still preserved today in many cultures around the world as we reflect on the past year with acquired wisdom and set intentions or resolutions for the upcoming year. We will be discussing this concept with the children during the first few days of class. We will look back, like Janus, to our accomplishments over the past year and discuss things that have given us a sense of pride at school, at home, and in the greater community. The children will then set intentions for themselves for the upcoming year in each of the three areas. They will be working on putting this into writing and hopefully sharing it with you by the end of the month. We encourage you to support these intentions at home, model some intentions of your own, and perhaps set some for your whole family to work towards together.



Janus

This idea of looking to the past is a common theme in Montessori education. Many lessons ultimately look back to the origin of things. In language, the children look at the Latin origins of words and how language has evolved over time. They learn that all cultures have the same need of communication. In botany and zoology they learn that plants and animals have needs as well that have evolved over time, many being similar to our own. In geography, the history of the universe and the Earth are central

themes. The children see that each part of the universe has a role to play and that all things are governed by the

same laws and have been for billions of years. In history, the study of ancient civilizations is taught primarily by comparing the fundamental needs of humans throughout history. Many of the students will soon begin discussing the fundamental needs of all humans and using the progress of civilization material to research several ancient civilizations. They will compare a specific need such as food or shelter across civilizations, hopefully finding a common thread. This topic ties in beautifully with the work the students did last term, discussing the four needs of choice theory, and comparing them with the work we received back from the children in Nepal. The children really enjoyed seeing how many of the children in Nepal met their needs in the same way as them.

The primary aim of the Montessori stories and lessons is to show the unification of all of humanity both with each other, and with the whole of the universe. The hope is that the children will see the commonality and interconnectedness between all things in the past, the present, and ultimately in the future. The lessons seek to help the children understand their place in the world. They show some of the important contributions made by humans throughout history, and inspire them to realize their potential to make an impact on the world themselves. Additionally, by understanding how humans responded to problems in the past, like Janus, they can be better prepared to look ahead and respond to problems in the future. Maria Montessori wanted children to learn important lessons from the events of the past so that they could take these lessons into the future to create a better world.

We would like to wish a happy new year to all of the families at North Star. We thank you for all of your support in 2010 and look forward to sharing more exciting experiences with you and the children in 2011. Best wishes for a prosperous year ahead, filled with love, laughter, and learning.



Sitka Room

Happy New Year to all! We hope that you had a wonderful holiday filled with love and laughter. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all of the thoughtful cards and gifts. It has been lovely to get to know each one of you. Having a trusting and loving community is significant to all of us.

A Montessori classroom is based on the principle of respect: respect for the child, respect between children, respect for individual and cultural differences, respect for the teachers, respect for parents and respect for the Montessori materials. It is evident that children learn best when they are active participants in their own learning and it is our goal is to help them appreciate themselves and the world around them. Our objective is to enable and encourage them to become independent and not to interfere when they can achieve something on their own.

Maria Montessori emphasized the importance of following the child. She said, "Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed." Our philosophy is to respect and embrace where each child is at and in doing so, to foster a life-long love of learning. It is more important in developing independence, self-esteem and self-confidence, that the child enjoys and is engaged in what he is doing than it is to be pressured externally to complete work and receive praise.

Through classroom activities children experience challenges, joy, problems and miniature collaborative community. By overcoming difficulties, finding peaceful solutions and helping each other, their self-esteem as well as respect for each other and themselves, will develop.

We would like to give you a reminder about drop-off time. We open our classroom from 8:20-8:30. It is important for children to be on time in order to respect the flow of the day for themselves, other students and teachers. If you do happen to be late on occasion, please say good-bye to your child in the hallway and send him/her quietly to the classroom.

We appreciate cooperation with regard to this matter.

Cypress Room

Welcome back C Y P R E S S Families!

I would like to start by thanking all the families who helped, participated in and attended our very successful Winter Concert! Thank you for your dedication and cheerful spirit. Also, many thanks for your thoughtful gifts and cards!

And now, here we are again, after a wonderful and long break we are back to routine and back to our daily schedule. A transition from a non-responsibility period to a yes-responsibility daily life is always difficult. If adults require time to smoothly adjust to this "back to school routine" then children, who are less aware of time, require an even gentler adaptation to the everyday schedule. So if your child is having a difficult time going back to the school routine or even not wanting to come to school, please remember that this is part of a normal adjustment. During this transition the best help recommended is to first acknowledge your child's feelings and secondly, to place those everyday activities into practice as soon as possible. One of the most important lessons you can give to your child is how to adapt to changes and life routines, and how to see them as a positive and normal thing in life. Your perspective and example as these transitional times come, will greatly determine their future attitude towards change.



One more time, I would like to remind all the families to feel free to contact me if any concerns and questions might arise through this re-adaptation time. There is no small or less important question about your child, and staying in touch with all of you is paramount to providing the best help to your children.

Finally, I would like to welcome Isabella, Sora and their families to the Cypress Room and the North Star Community!

Looking forward to this 2011!

Community Action Team

Well, it is that time of year again. It's time to make your new year's resolutions. This year, alongside your weight loss and healthier eating goals, why not add some green resolutions? Encourage your children to get involved in the three Rs. With a small amount of planning and effort, reducing, reusing and recycling can become a regular activity in your home. Did you know on the third Saturday of every month, Pacific Mobile Depots will recycle many household items for a small fee? Come to Presentation House between 9am -12pm and drop off items such as hard and soft plastics (those without a number and most acrylic, polycarbonate, and ABS plastics), polystyrene (blocks, peanuts, meat trays, cups and containers, egg cartons and even polystyrene insulation), foil-lined bags, electronics, broken toys (remove all metal, including screws), and milk/soy drink boxes and cartons. For a complete list including fees, please see the bulletin board or visit www.pacificmobiledepots.com. Start hanging on to these items as the next drop off day is January 14th! Be sure to check out other local initiatives and familiarize yourself with your blue-box program as new items are being accepted regularly.



Thank you to all those who dropped off runners to be recycled in November. Nike stores across the lower mainland accept clean runners of all brands anytime to be made into courts and other items.

Other ideas for a green 2011: buy local produce (check out local markets such as Organics at home on Saturdays—see bulletin board) , walk or carpool to school, and compost and/or turn any garden space or window box into a veggie garden. Get your kids involved. They will love watching the plants grow and then they can help eat the produce.

Let's help make 2011 the Greenest year yet in our community.

Storyoga Classes

Our first Storyoga™ class (Tues, Jan 11th) was a great success, with four little North Star yogis! We started the session with one of my all time favourite books, "Move Over Rover", by Karen Beaumont. Using the animals in the story as inspiration, the children were led through mouse, cat, dog, raccoon, snake & blue jay poses. Be sure to ask your child about our, "Namaste Mountain" warm-up! The children were very excited to meet "Yogarilla" and to have him share several of his yoga cards. Together we practiced boat pose, slide, happy baby, chair pose & triangle. We closed the class with our final relaxation in "starfish pose" and the children received the special Storyoga™ "Pom Pom Blessing." I look forward to sharing the next three weeks with your children.

* If you are interested in Storyoga™ but Tuesday does not work with your schedule, please suggest an alternate day of the week to Jeanne and we will take it into consideration for the next session.



Storyoga™ Poses 101: Setting the Foundation...

An interactive workshop for parents, yogis & educators (preschool - gr.3)



Gain the confidence & skills you need to bring Storyoga™ into your studio, classroom, and/or home setting...

During this 3-hour foundational workshop, participants will learn 10 - 15 "traditional" yoga poses, and then explore ways to transfer these poses into a variety of Storyoga™ forms. For example, learn how "child's pose" (balasana) can be transformed into seed, mouse, rock, mushroom pose etc. as well as how to apply these poses to specific stories/books.

In this way, participants will learn how to "do" the foundational poses safely and effectively, and then see how these poses can be taken into many different animal nature inspired forms.

* Bring your camera if you'd like to take photos of the poses for reference!
* Participants will receive a handout/breakdown of the "traditional" poses, Storyoga™ variations & literature links, as well as a certificate that may be submitted for professional development hours.

Saturday: February 26, 2011

1:00 - 4:00 pm
Alchemy Centre
North Vancouver, BC

Workshop Cost: \$79.00
Register @ (604) 328 - 4282
vanessa@storyoga.com
www.storyoga.com

* Register by Feb. 19 and receive 10% off!

Sunday: March 13, 2011

1:00 - 4:00 pm
Base Lounge: Yoga + Fitness Studio
Victoria, BC

Workshop Cost: \$79.00
Register @ (604) 328 - 4282
vanessa@storyoga.com
www.storyoga.com

* Register by March 6 and receive 10% off!



Montessori Corner

Avoiding Power Struggles

By Maren Schmidt, www.kidstalknews.com

"You can't make me!" yells our darling child.

Instantly our breathing quickens, our heart rate elevates, our blood pressure rises and a throb starts at the temples.

At times we feel like we "have to" make our children do some things against their will. Brush their teeth. Take a bath. Get dressed. Take their medicine.

Unfortunately, our children are taunting us with the truth. In the long run, they are right. We can't make them do anything against their will. We can physically force them to do something, but we win the battle only to damage a peaceable relationship that should be built on trust. How can we avoid these power struggles with our young children?

First, sidestep confrontation. We can't control our children's behavior, but we can control our own. When we hear, "You can't make me," simply move to leave the room and invite cooperation by saying, "Please, let me know when you're ready to cooperate." Then go on with your activity. Brush your teeth. Get dressed. Take your vitamins. Sweep the floor. Hum. Hum some more.

Avoid pushing back, and the resistance doesn't have any buttons to push.

Give choices when appropriate. Would you like to brush your teeth before or after your bath? Do you want bubble bath tonight, or no bubbles in your bath? Do you want to wear your red shirt or your blue shirt?

Notice that the choice is not do you want to brush your teeth, take a bath, or get dressed--or not. The choice is when.

Giving choices invites cooperation. As you give choices, also listen for your children's suggestions, as in, "No, I want to wear my yellow shirt." The yellow shirt may not be the choice we gave, but it is an offer of cooperation.

Sidestepping confrontation and offering choices to gain cooperation lead us to a win/win situation. Our relationship with our children shouldn't be a contest with winners and losers.

We can also invite our children to problem solve with us. "It's important to me that you have clean, healthy teeth. Would you be willing to think of ways to make sure you have clean healthy teeth?"

Our children are full of viable ideas if we give them a chance to think and ourselves time to listen. When the solution comes from our children, we have buy-in and a commitment to make a situation better.

Can't make me do it? Remember: sidestep confrontation, invite cooperation by giving choices, and invite win/win problem solving.

