



# Montessori Matters



*E1 students attend science experiments demonstrating properties of matter. These experiments are precursors to the “Great Lessons.”*

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## Welcome 2011-2012!

By Paul Epstein, Ph.D.

## On the Calendar

### September

- 12 Montessori Monday! 8:45-9:45
- 14-16 E2 trip to Eagle Bluff
- 20 Toddler Parents’ Meeting,  
“Montessori in the Home.” 6:00 –  
7:00 PM
- 21 E2 Parents’ Meeting with pizza  
dinner 5:30 – 7:00 PM
- 21 Board Meeting 7:00 PM
- 22 E1 Parents’ Meeting with pizza  
dinner 5:30 – 7:00 PM

## Rochester Montessori School

- Spanish Immersion, • Environmental Education, • Technology in Instruction, • the Arts, • and a Candidate School with the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program.

*Because how children learn influences who they will become.*

What began as an intention has now moved us closer to achievement. More than a year ago we determined to become a community of 225 students. We open this 2011-2012 school year with an enrollment of 199. By way of perspective, we ended last year in June with 169 students. While we still have a few openings in E2 and in the Middle School, the rest of our programs are filled. Our school is becoming more balanced between the numbers of children enrolled in the early childhood programs and the elementary/middle school programs. And, almost fifty percent of the children are involved in Late Pickup and Afterschool Studios. Thank you for your support and for sharing your RMS experiences with friends and colleagues; you have helped make this happen. To accommodate our growth, we welcome seven new faculty members to RMS. We have also increased several assistant positions. Although we are but one week into the school year, we are already looking ahead to a strong possibility of opening a third E1 classroom next year.

## Recognition for Montessori in the News

Montessori education made the news this summer, specifically the *Wall Street Journal* and *Forbes Magazine*. In keeping with an emerging definition for preparedness for 21st century economic life, education and business leaders have determined that creativity is an essential element of a child’s education. Accordingly, a Montessori education is rated most favorably. Peter Sims writes in the *Wall Street Journal*, “The Montessori educational approach might be the surest route to joining the creative elite, which are so overrepre-



### How you learn influences who you will become

For over forty years, the Rochester Montessori School has successfully prepared children to become life-long independent learners. Our commitment to education remains strong today as we prepare to become an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School. RMS has recently been named a candidate for the IB Middle Years Program. The International Baccalaureate is a non-profit educational foundation with a reputation for academic rigor and an international education focus. Working collaboratively with the IB Organization, Rochester Montessori School will develop a distinctive curriculum for the Middle Years Program to ready students for their high school and college education. For more information about enrolling your child into our programs, ages 18 months through 8th grade, call 507-288-8725.



**Rochester Montessori School** 5099 7th Street NW [www.rmschool.org](http://www.rmschool.org)

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*A copy of our banner ad printed in the Post-Bulletin this summer. From left to right: the decimal checkerboard; geography studies; initial sounds of the alphabet; being friends; a rainbow puzzle; solving a problem with Lego robotics.*

sented by the school's alumni that one might suspect a Montessori Mafia: Google's founders Larry Page and Sergei Brin, Amazon's Jeff Bezos, videogame pioneer Will Wright, and Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales, not to mention Julia Child and rapper Sean "P. Diddy" Combs. Is there something going on here? Is there something about the Montessori approach that nurtures creativity and inventiveness that we can all learn from?"

Steve Denning, writing in Forbes, chastises the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for spending \$5 billion on educational "reform" that "isn't." Instead of innovation, he notes they've tried to strengthen traditional school bureaucratic top-down management, and the results have been negligible. Denning wants to see innovative cultures of learning where teachers are guides, and children are encouraged to develop and then pursue questions and creative endeavors. Denning notes, "Schools practicing this new culture of learning don't have to be invented. As pointed out by my colleague, Daniel Petter-Lipstein,

the new culture of learning takes place in thousands of Montessori classrooms every day, as noted in his marvelous article, "Superwoman Was Already Here":

*"The Montessori method cares far more about the inquiry process and less about the results of those inquiries, believing that children will eventually master—with the guidance of their teachers and the engaged use of the hands-on Montessori materials which control for error—the expected answers and results that are the focus of most traditional classroom activity."*

In a later article Denning notes, "Let's learn from Montessori. The idea that we don't have to reinvent the wheel was striking. The example of thousands of Montessori schools is before us. Montessori puts the student at the center. It is proven to work. As noted by Sivadik it's working on every inhabited continent, at every economic level. The approach is over 100 years old but the ideas are timeless. The world is finally catching up with Maria Montessori's insights." (continues on page 3)

## Testimonial

By Maya Khanna, Grade Six

If I could change one thing about my life, it would be that I had come to Montessori right away when we moved to Rochester. This school is nice. It gives kids a chance to be themselves. Instead of telling them what they should be, they just let them be. The teachers appreciate the kids. The teachers are nice to the kids making them feel like they are on top of the world. It is peaceful here, and they try to make the kids be the best they can be. They make kids reach for the stars. The school building is open and airy, allowing sunlight to fill the room, giving it a warm feel. At Montessori, we use the outdoors to our advantage instead of staying inside all day. This school is unlike any school I have ever been to before, but I love it already. I only wish I had come here from the start. If I could change one thing about my life, it would be that I had come to Montessori from the start.





***Scenes from summer. (left) Solving problems with Lego Robotics which will continue this fall during an After School Studio as students participate in league competition. (right) Montessori students read, read, and read!***

### ***Books and Beyond is***

our 2011-2012 annual fundraising theme. “Books” because we need to further develop our library, especially where materials are thin. “Beyond” because libraries are media centers that include technology as well as a variety of furniture. Once complete, the center will provide our students with resources to enhance and enrich their education here at RMS. Look for more information on this in the weeks ahead as well as our new fundraising page on the schools web site.

There is a lot of interest and excitement surrounding community outreach opportunities for our children this year. Our elementary classrooms will participate in meals on wheels once again. Additionally, we are actively seeking opportunities with Channel 1, The Humane Society and the residents of Madonna Towers. Stay tuned for what the children will do and how you can be a parent volunteer.

### **Montessori in the News (from the *Wall Street Journal*)**

In an extensive, six-year study about the way creative business executives think, Professors Jeffrey Dyer of Brigham Young University and Hal Gregersen surveyed over 3,000 executives and interviewed 500 people who had either started innovative companies or invented new products. “A number of the innovative entrepreneurs also went to Montessori schools, where they learned to follow their curiosity,” Mr. Gregersen said. “To paraphrase the famous Apple ad campaign, innovators not only learned early on to think different, they act different (and even talk different).”

Google founders Messrs. Page and Brin credited their early Montessori education. “We both went to Montessori school,” Mr. Page said, “and I think it was part of that training of not following rules and orders, and being self-motivated, questioning what’s going on in the world, doing things a little bit differently.”

Will Wright, inventor of bestselling “The Sims” videogame series, heaps similar praise. “Montessori taught me the joy of discovery. It’s all about learning on your terms, rather than a teacher explaining stuff to you. SimCity comes right out of Montessori.”

Neuroscience author Jonah Lehrer cites a 2006 study published in *Science* that compared the educational achievement performance of low-income Milwaukee children who attended Montessori schools versus children who attended a variety of other preschools, as determined by a lottery. By the end of kindergarten, among 5-year-olds, “Montessori students proved to be significantly better prepared for elementary school in reading and math skills than the non-Montessori children,” according to the researchers. “They also tested better on “executive function,” the ability to adapt to changing and more complex problems, an indicator of future school and life success.”