



Rochester Montessori School

E-Newsletter

Whole Child * Whole World

Volume 2, Number 5

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The Board Corner

A monthly update from RMS Board of Directors

The RMS School Board consists of volunteers who help guide the school with its vision. The board is comprised of parents of current RMS students, and meets on the 3rd Wed. of every month. The Executive Board (office holders on the board) also meets an additional time each month. Parents are always welcome to attend board meetings ☺

Did you know that the first item on the agenda at the monthly meeting is a time for “Parent Comments?” The next Board meeting is on Wed., March 21st at 7:00 – you are welcome to attend!

The **Executive Board** consists of Jeff Piepho (board chair), Ben Brinkman (vice chair), Bryan Neel (treasurer), and Rich Wright (secretary). The regular board has recently formed the following committees, which meet and then report at regular board meetings:

Building and Grounds:

Nathan Hauber – Chair
Jackie Emery
Todd Humphrey

Fund Raising and Capital Campaigns:

Bryan Neel – Chair
Sherry Jester
Zelalem Temesgen
Rich Wright

Marketing and Communications:

Ben Brinkman – Chair
Sarah Field
Janine Yanisch

To help you get to know your board members, we will be doing a short profile every month. This month we profile Jeff Piepho and Nathan Hauber:

Events

Calendar

March

5 Discovering French 3:00 – 4:30 pm for 4 & 5 year olds
7 E2 Math Masters 7:30 am
7 French Club 3:15 – 4:45 pm for E1 & E2
9 NO SCHOOL
9 Daycare available for Children’s House & first year E1 students from 8:30 am – 3:30 pm
12 Discovering French 3:00 – 4:30 pm for 4 & 5 year olds
14 E2 Math Masters 7:30 am
14 French Club 3:15 – 4:45 pm for E1/ E2
15 Gingkos Open House 4:00 – 4:30pm
16 Parent Connection Coffee 8:30 am RMS foyer
19 Discovering French 3:00 – 4:30 pm for 4 & 5 year olds
21 E2 Math Masters 7:30 am
21 French Club 3:15 – 4:45 pm for E1/
21 Board Meeting at 7:00 pm
22 Willows morning Visit at 8:00 am
22 PTSA Meeting at 9:00 am

Events, cont.

Jeff Piepho – RMS Board President

Jeff grew up in Albert Lea, MN and graduated from the College of St. Thomas (St. Paul) with a degree in journalism and science. Jeff works at the family business of Piepho Moving and Storage, which he co-owns with two of his brothers. He and his wife, Carolyn, have 3 wonderful children, all of whom attended (or attend) RMS: Colin (16), Chloe (13), and Evan (10 and in EII).

Jeff’s involvement in RMS started about 11 years ago when he joined the board, and a couple of years later he became chair, a post which he STILL holds ☺ Jeff, along with Cari Humphrey and Paul Dahlberg, was instrumental in getting our new building from a dream to a reality.

Jeff says that he would not spend so much time volunteering for RMS if he didn’t think RMS was a worthwhile school for his kids and the community. Jeff believes that “the academic, social, and leadership skills that students gain at RMS are paramount for our society.” Thanks, Jeff!

Nathan Hauber – board member, Building and Grounds Committee Chair

Nathan lived in many cities in the U.S. and finally put down roots here in Rochester about 10 years ago. Those roots grew deeper when he met his beautiful and amazing wife, Anne-Marie Sykes, while swimming laps at the RAC! Nathan has a BA in economics from U of Colorado-Boulder and a BS in medical technology from the U of Minnesota. Nathan and Anne-Marie have 3 beautiful children, all of whom attend RMS: Callum (EI), Chloe (Oaks), and Georgia (Willows).

Nathan is a newer board member, having joined last spring. Last year Nathan decided to attend a PTSA meeting and as a result of that fateful day (☺) has been very active at the school ever since, particularly now as chair of the Outdoor Environment committee, which is working on adding the in-ground slide and a structure tentatively referred to as the Tree House Pavilion. On the PTSA, Nathan is helping to organize the 1st Annual RMS Indoor Rummage and Bake Sale in order to raise funds for the Outdoor Environment. With a 15-acre plan and projects ranging from said slide and Pavilion to retaining walls, there is a great need for money for the outdoor environment, which will proceed with development as fast as their resources permit.

Nathan believes that everyone in the RMS community has a contribution to make to our school community. For some, that contribution may be time in the PTSA and organizing events. For others who have less time, that contribution may simply be a much needed and appreciated monetary contribution. Either way, it’s important to make a contribution for the benefit of the children – present and future.

Remember, the next Board meeting is on Wed., March 21st at 7:00, and you are welcome to attend!

Respectfully submitted to the RMS community by Janine Yanisch

26 Discovering French 3:00 – 4:30 pm for 4 & 5 year olds

28 Math Masters at 7:30 am

28 French Club for E1 & E2 from 3:15 – 4:45 pm

29 Oaks Morning Visit 8:00 – 8:30 am

30 NO SCHOOL – Conferences

30 Daycare available for Children's House & first year E1 students from 8:30 am – 3:30 pm

PTSA

The Annual Winter Gathering at Quarry Hill was a true celebration of Winter this year! Approximately 15 families braved the elements to enjoy a fine winter day of snowshoeing, an owl talk and munching goodies!! We visited with the Quarry Hill resident Screech Owl, observed "owl habitat" and an owl nest in the woods which were picture perfect with new snowfall. The snowshoeing was a new adventure for many of the children (and some adults) who all seemed to enjoy it!



We have many exciting events planned for the remainder of the year. Thanks to all the volunteers who make these events so much fun for everyone. There are many opportunities for you to have fun, get involved, volunteer and fundraise. Find one that suits your fancy and join us!

Upcoming Events

Scholastic Book Fair March 26-30, 2007

This annual event will feature a family activity and a parent coffee as well as the sale of educational materials in our multi-purpose room. Please consider volunteering to help staff the event. Contact Jennie Joa for more information or to volunteer.

Parent Connection Coffee

The last of our coffees will be held in conjunction with the Book Fair, exact day is yet to be determined. Come join us in conversation and book browsing! Contact Janine Yanisch for more information or to volunteer.

RMS "Garage Sale" April 21, 2007

Save the date and save the goods! The RMS PTSA is planning the 1st Annual RMS Indoor Rummage and Bake Sale on Saturday, April 21st. Please start collecting those CD's, DVD's, golf clubs, toys, children's clothes, and other items in good to excellent condition that you wish to donate. Proceeds will benefit the Outdoor Environment Committee's 2007 projects, the Treehouse Pavilion and In-ground slide. We will keep you posted as the plans for this exciting event unfold! Please contact Nathan Hauber (nhauber@mac.com) or Sarah Field (sfield@ramsp.org) for more information or to volunteer.

Cinco de Mayo Springtime Revelry May 5, 2007

Plans are underway for this fun, festive, fundraising event which will be open to the general public. Plan to bring your friends! Currently the event is planned to be off-site and catered with a Mexican theme. It will again include a silent auction, food, dancing and entertainment. Featured will be a regional well regarded Latin Band: The Robert Everest Expedition (<http://www.rkeverest.net>) "a Minneapolis-based Latin-American and Mediterranean influenced group whose music ranges from American jazz to Brazilian funk, Spanish flamenco to Italian folk, Cuban *Son* to Mexican *Huapango*, and several original compositions in many different musical styles and languages. This music cannot be classified, and therein lies the magic that the audience experiences. The musicians are united by their exploration into world music and their constant hunger to grow individually and as a group." Contact Marina Ramirez-Alvarado or Lisa-Ann Wuermsler for information or to volunteer or donate items/baskets for silent auction.

Staff Appreciation Week May 7 - 11, 2007

The Staff Appreciation Committee is again planning a car wash for the teachers during this week to culminate our staff appreciation activities. Contact Nathan Hauber or Michaela Park for more information or to volunteer.

End of Year Picnic June 1, 2007

Just as we welcome in the New School Year, we celebrate the Completed School Year with a "good old-fashioned" picnic complete with hot dogs, brats, baked beans, salads, and baked goods. We are still looking for a coordinator for this well attended event. Contact Sherry Jester or Marianne Couser for information or to volunteer.

Please visit the RMS website PTSA link (<http://www.rmschool.org/ptsa.php>) for updated information.

PTSA Leadership:

Marianne Couser – Marianne@productiveMentality.com 282-2610
Sherry Jester – hcloft@charter.net 536-9492

From the Office

Summer program enrollment is due by Thursday, March 8th. Summer program brochures are available in the RMS office.

Children's House News

From Oaks Guide, Nikki

This month we have been talking about primary colors and have been working on making secondary colors with the color mixing activity on the art shelf. We will continue and extend this work and our discussion into the color wheel in the coming weeks. We have also been reading and learning about artists Georgia O'Keefe and Claude Monet.

As usual, our practical life area has been very busy; but particularly the stitching work with some children framing their finished work, some making it into pillows and one even turning her beaded snowflake stitching into a bag!

We have also been working on "body stuff" in the science area and took advantage of two children's unfortunate bone breaks to learn about our skeleton and bones and using a book we borrowed from the Birches, had the opportunity to look at some real x-rays.

And most recently, we have really enjoyed being able to get outside and enjoy the fresh air again!

Specialist News

From Art Specialist, Sharri Juhnke

The Elementary children have been keeping in the art room... With both E1 and E2 having their Writer's Cafes, we've worked on frames, costumes and sets. Both groups did a great job, by the way. And "thank you" to the E1 for letting us display their paintings in the hallway for so long, everyone loved looking at your artwork!

Both groups have been doing some mask making. The E2 got to try making plaster masks. It was messy but fun! The E1 is in the process of finishing their papier mache masks. There's been a lot of creative thinking going on in that room!

We've studied a couple of artists famous for their work with portraits. E1 looked at pop artist Andy Warhol's colorful paintings and prints of famous people like Marilyn Monroe and Queen Elizabeth. They then drew their own self-portraits, copied them, added color, and made their own Warhol-like reproductions to hang in the hall. E2 took a look at photorealist Chuck Close and the huge portraits he did of himself and his friends that almost look like

photographs. We saw how he sometimes uses a grid to create his realistic looking faces and then we tried it ourselves.

Coming up, we most likely will be working on some printmaking, recycled art, something for the Springtime Revelry and much more.

...and, finally, just to toot our own horns some of the RMS staff competed in an art trivia contest at the Rochester Art Center in early February...we took second place, losing by one point! It was a great time, and if they do it again try it, it was challenging and fun!

Specialist News

From Music Specialist, [Connie Jelatis Hokes](#)

What's so special about specialists?

RMS provides such a wonderful environment for students to work and learn. Specialists expand that environment in many ways.

Music requires listening and group work. Very few, if any, musicians succeed or work alone. Very few, if any, people succeed or work in a vacuum.

Through music, people can learn to listen to themselves and one another, to work together, to create, to expand personal and group understanding, and finally, to take satisfaction and joy in the process and the results. Ultimately, music is a pathway to building community. And, just as building a peaceful community and world is fraught with obstacles and challenges (including pride, ego, fear, insecurities, disagreement, etc.), so can be the process of making music together.

In music class, I provide many opportunities for students to develop group skills. (At some times they are more successful than others.) Hopefully, they will also develop a better understanding and appreciation of music as well. Minimally, I hope that music is something that can and will always be a part of their lives in one way or another. As a teacher of mine stated, "Every man or woman should be able to sing lullabies to their child and to dance at their child's wedding". In other words, as in the past, music can enhance families' life experiences and joys.

As the students prepared for our "Muffin Munch", we spent time focusing on how to work as a group while advancing musical skills and performance protocol. During this time, the students encountered great successes as well as problems to be worked through. We will make use of these skills most immediately for our upcoming Comeallya's. Hopefully, they will also help in the long run, to make all of these terrific young people better adults, community members, and peacemakers.

Specialists at RMS open your children's eyes and ears to new experiences while providing opportunities for them to work with each other in larger groups. Each specialist area has its own, unique approach, but we all hope to enhance and improve the lives of your children.

From the Director, Patrick Sheedy

Arguably, one of the most intelligent people in the world today is Noam Chomsky. He is the 8th most quoted person in history and the most quoted person alive. The fact that a person of such intellectual prowess is alive today is amazing. His work spans just about every topic under the sun from linguistics to politics. One of his oft discussed topics concerns the meanings of words commonly thrown around in the media - words like democracy, freedom, and peace. He doubts not the value of such concepts but poses the question "How much time does one spend thinking about what these words mean?" Clearly everyone wants these things but what are we talking about when we used these words?

I believe a similar question can be asked about the word "education". Clearly each of you reading this values education or you would not be at RMS but what do you mean when you think about education? I believe it is vital to the child to be very clear what we mean when we talk about education because different schools have different understandings or definitions which, in turn, lead to different focuses, practices etc. For us, we work with a clear understanding of what that means and we base our actions on specific understandings of the child that were derived from direct observation and experience with children. We do not simply say this is what we want from education and then go about crafting a curriculum around that. No, we craft our curriculum on what we understand about the nature of the child.

For us, a central concept in how we conceptualize education is that of NORMALIZATION. This is not to be considered the opposite of abnormal but rather as the natural state of a child who is growing and developing into an adult unhindered by outside forces. After all, that is what children do...that is their work, to become an adult. In order for a child to become "normalized" several needs must be met (beyond some of the low level hierarchical needs like food, shelter, etc.). The needs a child has in this respect are: the need for movement, the need for language development, the need for independence, the need for love and security, the need for discipline, and the need for order. A full discussion of each of these points is beyond the scope of this piece but suffice it to say each could be addressed at length – it's just that sometimes we can forget, back off, or over look some of these basic needs and then wonder why our children don't seem to be responding as we would like them to. If, and when, children have these needs regularly met before the age of 2 or so, they arrive at a Montessori Toddler's room ready to continue along the path of meeting those needs or to the Children's House ready to advance in the self constructive process unhindered by unsatisfied needs. These needs can be satisfied at home and/or in coordination with a Montessori Infant/Toddler environment and are prerequisites for normalization. These children, once said needs are satisfied, begin to normalize by displaying a love of order, a love of work, a love of silence and of working alone, regular and mutual aid and cooperation, profound and spontaneous concentration, obedience, independence and initiative, self-discipline, an attachment to reality, sublimation of the possessive instinct, and pure and simple joy.

When a child's energy is not used for the innate self-creative process, we say that child is deviated (not to be confused with devious). We can tell a deviation exists simply because a child does not display the above mentioned characteristics (it should be said that these characteristics are general ones and not absolute – meaning that children can venture in and out of that state – what we look for is the general pattern). The child's energy is deviated from the natural purpose of self-creation because it has been directed and allowed to latch onto something else. Sources of deviation can be easy to identify and, at other times, difficult to identify. One large source of deviation comes from the world of fantasy or the imaginary (not to be confused with the imagination). When a child below the age of 6 is exposed to and latches onto fantasy figures, superheroes, princesses, cartoons, etc. they cease to use their energy as effectively in the self creative process and begin to deviate from what is expected and necessary for full development. This idea, this concept, this understanding is not simply based on belief; it is based on observable fact and has been witnessed over and over again by Montessori practitioners all over the world. So, when we talk about this stuff, when we make suggestions, when we talk about concerns we have about children and/or their behavior, we are speaking with good reason, we are speaking from a philosophical and experiential base.

Many parents in those schools all over the world claim that they want Montessori education for their children and that they believe in the Montessori method. However, I suspect that some parents want the *results* of a successful Montessori education but may not understand and/or want the aspects of the philosophy behind the education itself. The former success cannot and will not exist without the latter understanding and support. Our efforts will be fruitless unless you, whose impact on the child is the greatest, truly understand and approve of our purposes and practices. Our search for a more peaceful existence and a cure for societal ills must turn eventually to the evolution of the individual and his/her orientation to life.

Montessori said, in her last published work, *The Formation of Man* that “It is possible to conceive a universal movement for human reconstruction which follows a single path. Its sole aim is to help man preserve his balance, his psychic health, and build up a secure orientation in the present conditions of the outer world. In the light of this, education should be a social and human endeavor of interest to all. It must be based on psychology in order to safeguard the individuality of the child. It needs a syllabus which can give an understanding of the conditions of man in modern society, with a cosmic vision of history and the evolution of human life.”

A child's basic needs allow him/her to become “normalized” and use his/her energy to successfully self-create. A child, around the age of 6, begins to change his/her focus and use of energy – from self-creation as an individual to creation of self as a social being. This is the time for acquisition of culture and the understanding of the interconnectedness of all things. Next month: What about Elementary? Answer: The Five Great Lessons.