



Montessori Matters



Children's art work adorns the front lobby at Rochester Montessori School including individual student collages to showcase our logo.

Currently ...

Smart Board. Many thanks again to each of you for supporting our winning effort for obtaining a Smart Board through Hy-Vee. We look forward receiving this important piece of instructional technology in January.

Annual Fund. Thank you, too, for your generous contributions to the School's Annual Fund in support of our redesigned library/media center. We are still accepting donations.

Enrollment. Look in January for re-enrollment information for the 2011-2012 school year. You will receive this at the beginning of the month with a return date of January 20th.

On the Calendar

For calendar dates, go to www.rmschool.org

Rochester Montessori School

Individualized Instruction • Academic Study • Spanish • Environmental Education • Technology in Instruction • the Arts and • becoming an International Baccalaureate Middle School program.

Because how children learn influences who they will become.

Holiday Greetings!

By Paul Epstein, Ph.D.

During this holiday season, my thoughts turn to a particularly wonderful aspect of parenting – love. Love of course names special feelings of affection and intimacy. At the end of a long and very full day, we are often filled with love and peace when we quietly watch our children sleep. I remember watching my children (who are rather grown now) and being enamored by their smallness. I was struck with how perfect and complete each was. I still am.

While our children sleep, how often do we say a silent prayer of thanks for the miracle of their existence and for their protection? How often do we feel inspired and determined to provide our children with everything they need for their perfect growth and complete happiness? This kind of love is a call to action. It is part of Dr. Maria Montessori's educational vision. She wrote, "Whoever touches the life of the child touches the most sensitive point of a whole, which has roots in the most distant past and climbs toward the infinite future."

Love, in Montessori's vision, unites and inspires us



(left) E2 students researched elements and then placed cards in order, forming the Periodic Table of Elements. (right) A first rehearsal of the RMS band! Classes are taking place now for band instruments as well as for violin. Contact the office for more information. (below) A kindergarten student engaged in geographical research.

to join together to make the best possible Rochester Montessori School community. We continuously educate ourselves to more fully understand how children develop and learn. We strive to provide the best possible classroom environments in which children can discover, explore, and learn.

Montessori’s vision goes further. She discovered love enables and empowers children. She wrote, “Love fills the child’s consciousness and affects his self-realization ...” When children respond to love from caring adults, we see natural kindness, respect, and dignity. Each child more fully develops her or his unique human potential. As this occurs, adults are affected as well and turn their efforts to making peace.

Dr. Maria Montessori’s idea of unique human potential is often misunderstood. Unique refers to “one of a kind.” It does not, however, mean extraordinary, or extra special, or gifted. Dr. Montessori’s vision is for adults to guide each child to become who she or he is supposed to become and in accordance with the natural time frame in which she or he is meant to grow. Dr. Montessori asks us, in other words, to accept and love children for who they are. She asks us to trust that children will respond to our guidance. Each will naturally learn and, as a result, grow.

Dr. Montessori wrote, “A new education from birth

onwards must be built up. Education must be reconstructed and based on the law of nature and not on the preconceived notions and prejudices of adult society.”

Nationally-known clinical psychologist and educator Dr. Wendy Mogel echoes this view. She writes in her book, *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee*, “A paradox of parenting is that if we love our children for their own sake rather than for their achievements, it’s more like-



ly that they will reach their true potential. If you place too high a value on straight-A report cards and a slateful of extracurricular activities, your child may feel that she needs to excel in all areas in order to retain your respect. But if she senses that you respect her for the qualities with which she's been naturally endowed, she'll gain the confidence she needs to truly shine..."

For me there is a clear answer to this paradox: We must educate children to know who they are, develop their unique capabilities, expand their creative abilities, and act kindly and respectfully. This is the kind of education our teachers daily strive to offer your children here at RMS. Thank you for your confidence and trust.

This holiday season I wish you joy; I wish you peace and love. As we welcome 2011, may each of us slow down and concentrate on the great works growing in our lives – our children. More than any gift you plan to purchase, your children want but one- you! Truly, your

children want your full and undivided attention. Remember, it's not how much time but the quality of your time together. Your children need you to

- Understand.
- Accept them for who they are and for how they go about being in the world.
- Instill values.
- Provide limits; it is okay to say no without having to justify why.
- Let them make mistakes.
- Let them learn in their way, not yours.
- Let them pursue their interests and discover their pursuits, not yours.
- Let them be, in other words, who they are meant to be.

You know your children love you, and they can't hear often enough how much you love them too.

Happy holidays!

(below and right) December has become the month for research in E1 and E2.

