



Montessori Matters



Outdoor exploration, play, and fun in the snow is all part of the daily life at Rochester Montessori School!

Congratulations to

Myles Fisher, Martin Gardner, and Christopher Kane who took on the academic challenge of preparing a science fair project and presenting it in the 2011 GATEway Science Fair. The fair took place in the Landow Atrium of the Mayo Clinic Gonda Building. The scientific professionals who reviewed the projects were absolutely delighted with the enthusiasm for science that these students demonstrated.

Montessori on the Web

Sergy Brin, co-founder of Google, speaks about the positive influence of his Montessori experience.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=3OCAdXjILBA&feature=related

Stephen Hughes, professor of pediatrics and neurology, discusses the lasting benefits of a Montessori education.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=faYco1b-IJI&feature=related

Rochester Montessori School

Because how children learn influences who they will become.

Montessori Week 2/27-3/5

In recognition of Dr. Maria Montessori, February 27—March 5 has been officially proclaimed “Montessori Education Week” by Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton. (Please see page three for a copy of the declaration.)

“Montessori” refers to a person, a curriculum, and a profession. As we honor Dr. Maria Montessori, her legacy, and the educational work that happens here, you may wish to view two video-based websites. You will hear Sergey Brin, co-founder of Google, credit his Montessori education as a part of his success. On another website, Dr. Stephen Hughes, pediatric neuro-psychologist and assistant professor of pediatrics and neurology at the University of Minnesota Medical School, discusses the astonishing and lasting benefits of a Montessori education for the kind of world children are growing into.

Maria Montessori was born in Chiaravalle, Italy in 1870. Her family relocated to Rome when she was ten. Instead of attending the more traditional school programs for girls, her interests in mathematics led her to studies in engi-



Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952). From left to right: age 10; addressing a medical congress during her graduation from medical school; presenting geometric shapes to a young child; reading to children in London, 1951.

neering. She attended a boys' technical school. Later she became the first Italian woman to enroll in and graduate from medical school in 1896. Montessori's medical work involved her as a physician and teacher with the University of Rome's Psychiatric Clinic. Her duties included tending children committed to insane asylums throughout Rome. As her interest in special education grew, she discovered the works of two French educators, Jean Itard and Edouard Seguin. From their writings, Montessori began to understand the importance of hands-on-learning materials for children. She also began to understand how to design and a prepared environment – a classroom in which children could find specially prepared learning materials that matched their learning styles and learning interests. In 1907, Dr. Montessori was invited to establish a day care program at a housing development in San Lorenzo, a suburb of Rome. The learning successes that took place in just one year attracted world-wide attention. The discoveries Montessori made about young children led her to abandon her medical career. She would devote the rest of her life to establishing Montessori schools and programs of Montessori teacher education throughout the world.

In 1907, Montessori's first successes in San Lorenzo drew international attention. By 1909 three schools were open, in San Lorenzo, Milan, and Rome. That

same year the Italian portion of Switzerland adopted Montessori's method for all its orphanages. She also published her first book, *The Montessori Method*. In 1912 Montessori made her first visit to the United States for a national lecture tour. She spoke at a White House reception and lectured at Carnegie Hall. An American Montessori association was formed with Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell as President and Miss Margaret Wilson, daughter of President Wilson, as secretary. The first American Montessori school was established in Alexander Graham Bell's home. Montessori made only two more American visits between 1912 and 1918. During this time she gave a training course in California and sponsored a model demonstration Montessori classroom at the San Francisco World's Fair. It is estimated that there were some 250 Montessori schools operating throughout the United States by 1918.

Although there were some 250 Montessori school in America by 1918, World War I prevented Dr. Maria Montessori from returning to the United States. Due to her absence, the war, and later the great depression, American Montessori schools were not able to continue.

After the war Dr. Montessori traveled throughout Europe and Asia and opened schools and centers of



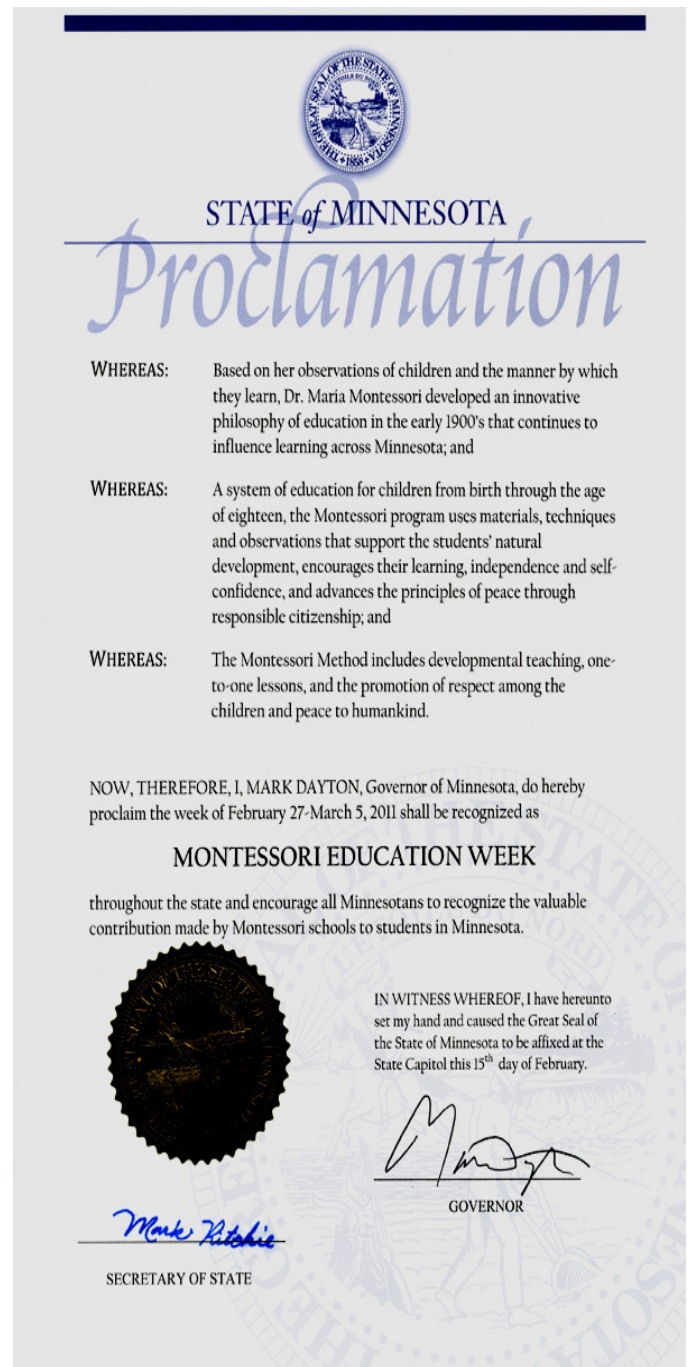
teacher education. She researched and developed curriculum and published a large collection of seminal books. In 1922, Dr. Montessori was recognized for her impressive accomplishments when she was appointed Government Inspector of all public and private Italian Schools by Italy's political leader. Within a few years, however, Montessori resigned her position. Her philosophy of education and school design proved to be incompatible with the dictates of Italy's Mussolini. Montessori was forced to flee Italy, and she relocated in Barcelona, Spain.

Montessori continued to establish schools while directing a series of international training programs throughout Europe. With the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, Montessori established permanent residence in Holland.

Between 1939 and the end of World War II, Montessori was interned in India because she was an Italian national. She trained thousands of teachers in India and Sri Lanka. Montessori also held meetings with Gandhi and other political leaders. Today, the world's largest Montessori school, the City Montessori School, is located in Lucknow, India and enrolls some 20,000 students. In 2002, the City Montessori School was awarded the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education.

Until her death in 1952, Dr. Maria Montessori gave lectures throughout Europe and Asia. She was nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize. American Montessori schools began to reopen in 1957. Today there are some 8,000 private and close to 350 public Montessori programs found just in America. Last year, the Clark Montessori High School in Cincinnati, Ohio was runner-up in a competition of over one thousand high schools. These schools competed for President Obama's commencement address. Montessori is also recognized by the Bill and Melinda Gates' Foundation as one of the top leading models for school innovation and student success.

During Montessori week, you may wish to further your understanding of the curriculum, instructional approaches, and the educational experiences happening here at RMS. Please give us a call.



A copy of the Minnesota state proclamation of Montessori Education Week.

