

MONTESSORI NEWS



Whole Child ★ Whole World

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From the Executive Director

By Patrick F. Sheedy III

Wow!

Did you know that...



- ...American youth now spend more time using the internet than any other type of media?
- ...in 2010, accessible on-line data is expected to exceed a yottabyte or 1 trillion terabytes?
- ...there are 2.7 billion searches done on Google every month?
- ...the number of text messages sent each day exceeds the population of the planet?
- ...more than 1,400 books are published daily?
- ...it is estimated that 1.5 exabytes (1.5 x 10 to the 18th) of unique new information will be generated worldwide this year alone - that is estimated to be more than the last 5000 years combined?
- ...the amount of new technical information is doubling every 2 years (for a student entering a technical 4 year degree, half of what is learned in the first year will be outdated by the third year)?
- ...the amount of new technical information is expected to double every 72 hours in the year 2010?
- ...according to former Secretary of Education Richard Riley, the top 10 jobs that will be in demand in the year 2010 did not even exist in 2004?
- ...the U.S Department of labor estimates that today's learners will have between 10-14 jobs before the age of 38?

If these facts are any indication of what is to come, it means **“We are currently preparing students for jobs that do not yet exist, using technologies that haven't been invented yet to solve problems we don't realize are problems yet.”**

There are many schools that strive to prepare children for the future. The individuals who work with the children of Rochester Montessori School go way beyond this limited understanding of education by NOT limiting themselves to preparing children for the next grade level, college, or even for life as we know it. While our curriculum includes, and often exceeds, the “reading, writing, and arithmetic” standards that we must consider for each child's future, we do not get caught up in looking at what children will or may be doing a year from now or many years from now to determine how we work with them today. It is obvious, from the above facts, that we do not know what kind of world our children will inherit. Rather than focus our energies there, we base our practices on the immediate developmental needs of the children RIGHT NOW, here, today. This concept was as revolutionary 100 years ago as it is today.

Children are malleable and adults are powerful. It is easy for many of us to believe that we can and even should mold and shape children by prescribing a specific regimen of education. The Montessori classroom, though providing a very structured environment, is designed to allow the child's inner nature to express itself. We know what the general nature of all human children is (that is how we know how to arrange our environments), however we make no claims as to what any given child's specific nature is. That is what we are here to discover and allow to flourish.

Alan November, a prominent educational leader has said that the above facts (and more) mean “...that we need to teach our students how to deal with massive amounts of information...and we need them to be more self directed and understand how to organize more and more of their own learning.” We believe this and have been doing it for **40 years** here at RMS. We prepare children to face an unknown future by focusing on the emerging developmental needs of the child in general and each of your children specifically.

RMS Human Resources

At RMS we have a great resource base and, like most organizations, it is our human resource base that is the most important and has the most impact on our “product” - that being the wellbeing and development of our children. It has been said time and time again that the best of facilities cannot make up for a deficient staff but the best of staff can make up for deficient facilities. At RMS we are lucky to have both stellar facilities AND a stellar staff. Together this combination is incredibly powerful.

As you may have noticed, a significant amount of work has been done to the RMS outdoor environment in the last six months. What you cannot see is that a significant amount of work has been done to improve the staff as well. Most notably are several individuals moving through various stages of Montessori training:

- Andrew Saunders received his Elementary 1 Certificate from the Center for Contemporary Montessori Studies after successfully completing his orals this past summer.
- Christine Raash completed the coursework for her Elementary II Certificate at the Center For Montessori Teacher Education, New York. She will attend several seminars throughout the year and complete her orals next summer.
- Patrick Sheedy completed the first summer of a two summer program in Montessori School Administration. He will take several seminars throughout the year and complete the program next summer.
- Mark Seifert completed the summer coursework for his Children’s House Credential at the Center for Contemporary Montessori Studies. He will be taking classes throughout the year and complete his orals next summer.
- Many staff members attended a variety of classes over the summer ranging from General Early Childhood classes to Outdoor Education Workshops.

Recognizing the importance of continuing education of the staff, the Board of Directors approved a significant increase in the Staff Development Budget this year. This, combined with the PTSA’s contribution of food (so we do not have to use budget money for that), we are able to do even more training and professional development than ever before. This is in direct opposition to what is happening at most other schools where budget cuts often first hit the human resource development. Rest assured that at RMS we believe that the children are worth every penny we put into staff development. The better our staff is, the better they are able to serve the child.

Green Committee

Did you know each Minnesotan creates over 2000 pounds of garbage every year? The RMS Green Committee, comprised of staff volunteers, is working to motivate our staff and students to become environmentally responsible at school and at home. Our current focus is reducing paper waste. According to the MPCA, Americans throw away enough office paper each year to build a 12-foot high wall stretching from New York to San Francisco—that’s about 10,000 sheets per person! We are trying to reduce the amount of paper used at school by encouraging children to write on both sides of paper, to reduce cutting waste, to keep a scratch paper basket or bin, and to recycle used paper. Practice today by recycling this newsletter!

The Green Committee hosted the first “Fun Friday” of the year on Friday, September 12. The theme for the event was “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.” Elementary and Children’s House students were introduced to the global garbage dilemma through song, video, skits, poetry, stories, and games. Children learned that waste is a critical problem in our environment. The three R’s would be a worthy topic for discussion at home. We appreciate the efforts of all involved and commend the Elementary students for their leadership. It was a fun way to learn on a Friday afternoon.

Thank You to Michael Cleary of MCP, Michael Cleary Photography, for his donation of time & talent toward the RMS school calendar. If you haven’t purchased your calendar, be sure to stop by the office and pick one up! Calendars are \$20 and all proceeds go to RMS!

Letter to the Editor: Parking Lot Safety

As a board member and concerned parent, I have some concerns over parking lot hazards that I have occasionally seen. What occurs on a daily basis is that a parent drives up after the staff has gone inside and parks their car at the clearly marked yellow curbed, coned, designated NO PARKING area in front of the school. They get out to walk their child into school or retrieve their child from school, leaving their vehicle unattended.

This area is no parking because it is necessary to keep it open for fire trucks and other emergency vehicles to park if we should have a fire or other emergency at the school.

Now, you might think, 'OK, if that were to happen, I would run outside and quickly move my car out of the way to allow room for the fire trucks.' What you may not be aware of is the entire student population, including YOUR child/children, exit out the front door and proceed to stand in the center median area. In their frequent fire drill practices, all the children, attended by staff members, exit the building within 3 minutes.

So, while you are thinking you will have time to drive your car safely away from the NO PARKING area allowing the fire trucks to get in, instead you will be moving your car while children are walking/crossing in front of your moving vehicle.

HOW SAFE IS THAT?!

Please take the extra minute to park your car in the designated parking spaces EVERY time.

By ALL parents observing the no parking regulation, we can ensure the greatest safety for all of our children.

Thank you,
Michele Bleskan

Outdoor Environment

IT'S FINISHED!

On Friday, September 19th the last details for the RMS Fitness Trails were wrapped up and the Trail was finally completed! After many months of hard work, a big planting on the 2008 Outdoor Environment Family Day, and some final tasks, the Trail is ready for the children to use.

Over the next couple of weeks the PE Specialist, LuAnne Nicholson, will be introducing the children to the safe and appropriate use of this grand new addition to the RMS environment. After patiently watching the Vault, Caterpillar, Climbing Wall, Slalom, Chin-Up Bars, Four-Rope Climb, Peg Climb, Long-Jump Pit, and Trail being completed since the start of school, the children will now be able to enjoy these features. Currently, most of the area around the Trail has oats (an annual) planted to control erosion. In November a mix of native grasses and forbs will be planted as part of the ongoing, multi-year effort to re-establish native prairie on the RMS grounds.

Thank you to everyone who, over the past three years, has helped with the planning, fundraising, and construction of the RMS Outdoor Environment. What a gift to all current and future children in this 40th Anniversary Year of RMS!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Picture day is October 14th. Volunteers are needed to help with the children! It's a fun few hours and a great way to get to know the children at RMS. Please contact Julie office@rmschool.org if you can help.

Welcome New RMS Staff

Name: Tracy Flemke

Family members: Husband- Michael

Role at RMS: Ginkgos Assistant

Hobbies/Interests: Reading, watching movies, spending time with my family, planning trips.

Vacation of choice: Hiking a mountain or lying on a beach? Hiking a mountain.

Chocolate, vanilla, or strawberry? Strawberry.

Favorite book: Anything by Agatha Christie.

Name: Tricia Christensen

Family members: Husband (Jared), Children (Sara, Tallen, Kyra)

Role at RMS: Elementary 1 Assistant

Hobbies/Interests: Tennis, Biking, Music

Vacation of choice: Hiking a mountain or lying on a beach? Lying on the beach at the top of a mountain. (Ask me about my 30 mile backpacking trip.)

Chocolate, vanilla, or strawberry? Neopolitan

Favorite book: A Little Princess by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Reason for being at RMS: To learn from the children, and for good lunch company. :-)

Name: Mark Seifert

Family members: Kelly (Wife), Koda (Sheltie), Parker (Australian Sheppard), Jenni (Tabby Cat), and Eva (Cockatiel)

Role at RMS: Birches Children House Guide

I recently was a long term substitute for Becky Schumacher in the Franklin Montessori program for half of last year, and before that I was a general education paraprofessional with the Ben Franklin/Montessori at Franklin school. My first year of teaching experience was at Gilbert Middle School in Gilbert, Iowa, where I was a fifth grade instructor with an emphasis in mathematics and reading and a ninth grade paraprofessional at the high school in Gilbert. I also volunteered as a junior high football coach and a varsity wrestling coach. In May of 2006, I received my Bachelors in Elementary Education from Iowa State University.

Hobbies/Interests: I really enjoy relaxing with my family and watching movies or reading a book. I also enjoy sports especially anything that has to do with the Vikings or Twins. I also love taking care of my animals and listening to any type of music.

Vacation of choice: Hiking a mountain or lying on a beach? Hiking a mountain

Chocolate, vanilla, or strawberry? Chocolate

Favorite book: I Am America (And So Can you!) by Stephen Colbert

Reason for being at RMS: I was looking for a great place to work with wonderful children and a great staff.

Name: Randa Mickelson

Family Members: Robert E. Banks

Role at RMS: Receptionist

Hobbies/Interests: Playing with my dog, Indiana; talking politics, selling homes, and antiquing

Vacation of choice: Hiking a mountain or lying on a beach? Beach

Chocolate, vanilla, or strawberry? Vanilla

Favorite Book: Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell

Note: Look for Shawn Bauer's profile in the next newsletter!!

Nationally Known Speaker to Address RMS Parents

“How to Foster Your Child’s Self-Esteem: Practical Strategies That May Surprise You”

As a parent, have you ever wondered

- what to do when you don’t know what to do?
- what is self-esteem, really?
- how to elicit your child’s cooperation?
- how to maintain consistency between school and home?

SAVE THE DATE
October 15th at 7:00pm

Come to the parent meeting on October 15th for a lively discussion about your child’s self-esteem. Our speaker, Donohue Shortridge (who gave the parenting talk here last winter), is back again with more strategies for you as parents. Donohue is a parent, a Montessorian, and a family coach who also teaches parenting classes. She’ll offer some tips and take your questions. Don’t miss this one!

When: October 15th at 7:00 pm

Where: In the RMS Piepho Multi-purpose Room.

Classroom News

On September 29, the E2 class left to spend three days at the Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center. While there, the students participated in a variety of classes and learning experiences.

They took two science classes; one class was about amphibians and one was about fungus. In each of the classes, the students had a chance to learn about the living things and then find specimens in the woods and lakes around Eagle Bluff.

There were also classes that promote team work and overcoming challenges. This year, the students participated in a high-ropes course where they maneuvered through a series of towers and ropes while 30 feet in the air! They also took an Orienteering class where they worked in groups to navigate a course through the woods using only a compass and a map. The days ended with campfires, songs, and games. The students came home with memories and experiences that they will remember for a lifetime!

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING SUPPORTERS OF THE RMS OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT

Kelly Kirkpatrick of **Green Spirit Gardening Design** for her talent, time, and dedication to the Outdoor Environment. Kelly, a RMS parent alum, is a Master Gardener and played a critical role in the design of the OE. **507.271.1081**

Jay Maier & team of **Maier Forest and Tree** for their donation of wood chips! **507.286.TREE**
<http://forestandtree.com/>

Dave Mueller Tree Moving Service. **507.876-2866**

THANK YOU - the Outdoor Environment is BEAUTIFUL!

2008-09 Board of Directors*Jeff Piepho**Ben Brinkmann**Bryan Neel**Richard Wright**Jackie Emery**Sarah Field**Todd Humphrey**Janine Yanisch**Zelalem Temesgen**Nathan Hauber**Michele Bleskan**Sherry Jester**Patrick Sheedy III**Kari Stonelake-Hopkins*

PTSA News

PTSA Meeting: OCTOBER MEETING DATE CHANGED TO OCTOBER 14, TUESDAY, 9 am, in the library!

Usborne Book Fair: The week of October 13 is the yearly Usborne Book Fair. A booth will be set up throughout the week to purchase these great books for your children and/or friends. Please visit the Usborne webpage and set up a wish list of the books that you would like Karman, our Usborne representative, to bring. Regardless of the books on the wish list she will bring plenty of other books for you to look at. Additionally, if you are unable to attend the book fair, you can order your books through her website on the RMS e-fair. When placing your order, you can have them shipped to you (and pay shipping) or pick them up during the book fair (and pay no shipping).

To add books to the wish list:

Visit the website: www.ubah.com/C2241

Go the tab entitled wish list

Enter in the email: jks223@msn.com

Enter the password: RMS

Begin your shopping

To access the e-fair:

Go the tab active e-fairs Rochester Montessori School and begin your shopping

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email jks223@msn.com.

HYVEE Smiles for Education: Finally, we would like to remind you of HY-VEE Smiles for Education! On your next shopping trip be sure to sign up your K-12 child in the Hy-Vee Smiles for Education Program at the Customer Service Counter. Each week a store is selected for a drawing: the child wins a MacBook laptop and the child's school receives \$5000!! You may enter weekly-the boxes are emptied each week no matter whether or not the store was selected. You may enter at EACH Hy-Vee you visit and as many times as you wish. See the Hy-Vee.com website for more information.

About Us

Rochester Montessori School is a nondenominational, not-for-profit organization serving children from 18 months to 12 years old. Our diverse community is open to children of all cultures and backgrounds and we frequently serve children from the international community. We are alive with the spirit of acceptance and inclusion. We currently have approximately 160 student from 120 families and 28 staff members to serve them.

Newsletter Contributors

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