



Montessori Children's School

Board of Directors ~ Barb McGrath, President

Spring
2009

Newsletter

On behalf of the Board of Trustees I write to you in sincere appreciation for all the huge accomplishments MCS has made this year! It amazes me to see the dedication, sincere compassion and understanding that each facet of this school demonstrates. Every year brings higher expectations that are met with great success.

We have the privilege of a dedicated Administrator, Barbara Kincaid, whose leadership, great insight and direction has kept our school sound. She has been instrumental in guiding the Board in many decision making ventures which have all proven to be positive.

Our entire staff has once again shown they are focused on individual student achievement and growth. They are strictly adherent to the Montessori guidelines. The participation in all school activities, promoting that integral piece of family involvement has been key this year. Once again they have taken the ball and ran with it. Thank you all!

Family participation and involvement will always be the key to successful education in children. We have been very fortunate this year to have the successful chairing of our auction *Starry, Starry Night*, by Cathy Pfaff and Kelly Bova.

Board Parent Rep, Lisa Havemann, initiated and coordinated the technological advancement of receiving school happenings, updates and newsletters via Email. Thanks Lisa!

The school's success could not happen without the students. I am assured by the applications for next year that you the parents are also in agreement that MCS is the best when it comes to educating children. We are focused on the future and it shows.

It is that time of year when the Board is requesting "Letters of Interest" from parents considering a commitment to volunteer as a Parent Representative on the Board of Trustees.

Please send your letter of interest via Barbara Kincaid if you are interested. I Look forward to receiving your letter of interest.

I wish to thank the Board of Trustees for your participation and dedication. You have all made a difference in the life of a child. It has been a privilege working with such a positive team!

Looking forward to the "end of the year" picnic on Saturday, June 6th See you there!



Barb McGrath, President
MCS Board of Trustees

Notes & News from Barbara Kincaid, Administrative Director

Welcome Back & Welcome Spring! We hope you enjoyed Spring Break and are ready for the busy months ahead.

Many thanks to all of our generous families for your support of our *Starry, Starry Night* fundraiser in February. Nearly every classroom had 100% participation with their

classroom theme baskets. Kudos to our event chairpersons *Cathy Pfaff*, and *Kelly Bova* and many thanks to all of our wonderful volunteers for supporting our children and our school in such an extraordinary way! Please see out thank you pages elsewhere in this newsletter. Even during these difficult economic

times we met our fundraising goal and earned nearly \$18,000.00! These funds are an integral part of our operating budget and allow us to continue to provide our children Library, Spanish and Music programs at no additional cost to our families!

We hope you enjoyed our musical program "With My Own Two Hands", our children and staff put forth an extensive amount of time and effort to bring you this spectacular program. Many thanks and to our amazing music teacher, *Brenda Calovini* for the beautiful concerts!! Again, we thank you for your patience and

(Continued on Page 2)

Notes & News from Barbara Kincaid (continued)

see so many of our families and friends enjoying the entertainment! Your generous donations of paper products were shared with many needy families in the inner city of Cleveland. "Grateful beyond words" is the best way to describe the response when the donations were delivered. We again express our sincere appreciation to our MCS families for the kindness and generosity that your children shared with those less fortunate - many hands touched many hearts!

The mere mention of road construction causes us all to reach for aspirin.

The project on Hilliard will be ongoing for at least 2 years. We thank our families for your patience as we adapt as best we can to these major inconveniences in our arrival and dismissal procedures. Thank you for understanding that we have no control over this project ... If you have any suggestions for alternate arrival and/or dismissal—please let me know!

As you were previously notified, registration for the fall 2009/10 school year Elementary and Kindergarten classroom openings is FULL! Needless to say, we are very proud and excited that even in these complicated economic times our families have committed to continuing their child's education at MCS. We have limited morning and afternoon preprimary classroom openings. If you have a neighbor, friend or relative who may be interested in our school, please have them contact our office soon. Your "Word of Mouth" recommendation is our best advertisement and we always appreciate having your referrals join our MCS family!

they were sharing this special time with you demonstrating their favorite classroom work!

As the end of another school year arrives we would like to acknowledge the many wonderful volunteers who have devoted extensive time and efforts to help our school operate. Special thanks to our Board Members, *Barb McGrath, Kevin McLaughlin, Debbie Dean Espie, Jim Boyer, Lisa Havemann and Rajshree Bhandari* for their continued support and commitment to our school.

As our Board President mentioned in her note, we are accepting applications to fill the Parent Representative position. If you are interested in volunteering on the Board as a parent representative, please deliver your letter of interest to our office and you will be personally contacted with further details.

We could never find enough words to express our appreciation for all that our Parent Club volunteers do for our children and our school, thank you to all of our parents, grandparents and friends who have helped throughout the year in so many ways. Although our volunteer list is too numerous to acknowledge each of you by name, we want to express our gratitude for all the hard work and time you so generously shared with us this past year! Please join us on Wednesday, May 27th at 8:45 am for our Volunteer Thank You Tea!

Get Ready ... our annual Year End Picnic will be held at Clague Park on Saturday, June 6th from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. Each participating child will receive a "Passport" to visit game stations then end the picnic with a keepsake medal!

We anticipate a fun-filled event! Registration forms and further information will be forthcoming in your child's Friday Folder.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find a special May/June calendar outlining our many upcoming scheduled events. As always, the year end is a very busy and fun time for our entire school. We hope you can participate in as many of these offerings as possible!

The school office is open throughout the summer break. We ask that you call ahead prior to visiting to determine if the building is accessible since painting, carpet cleaning, etc. may be in process.

Thank you for your continued support of our children and our school - we all take pleasure in your family being a part of our MCS family!



Best wishes to all of our children and families for a very Safe & Spectacular Summer ...

Barbara Kincaid

Earth Day News

So many exciting events unfolded as we prepared for our Earth Day celebration at school ! We are thrilled to report that each classroom had average collections of \$150.00 in coin donations for our "Change the Earth" fundraising campaign. The children were very excited to bring their change to the classrooms – we have heard many stories of our students in pursuit of every coin they could find - These funds are earmarked for our exterior beautification projects. Thank you for helping to support this campaign!

On Earth Day, our children participated in planting a pansy in our newly created outdoor spiral. Maria Montessori believed in the children's ability for "Inner Silence", a calm that is not forced upon them from the outside world to discipline them, but a silence that comes from the inner depth of the human being. As hectic and fast-paced as our world is today, there is a growing need for "Inner Peace" that could help us to center our lives and ourselves. The "Walk to the Middle", representing the walk to the middle of ourselves and based on the ancient tradition of labyrinths and mazes, can be accomplished by following the spiral from beginning to the center. When you have a chance, please stop by and enjoy this lovely project. In the fall we will replace the pansy plants with daffodils that will bloom every year.

We gratefully acknowledge *Gaby Johnson* for all of the time and efforts she put forth to make this vision a reality; along with kudos to *Jean Hegarty* for her efforts on behalf of the exterior vegetable and herb gardens. We also thank board member, *Debbie Dean-Espie*, for sharing her expertise and labor on these projects!

Melissa Renta spent the entire day photographing each child when they planted their pansy. This year we will be selling these photos in conjunction with our year end projects. You won't want to miss these precious photos - order forms will be sent home soon. Thank you *Melissa* for sharing your time and talents with our entire school - we will treasure the photographic memories!

Last and certainly not least, we would like to express our gratitude to *Sherry Zapior* who volunteers endless hours keeping our campus weed free and flower filled ... We are so grateful for *Sherry's* dedication to our MCS landscape !

John Denver sang ...

And you wonder
where we are going
where's the rhyme
and where's the reason -
and it's you who cannot accept
it is here we must begin
to seek the wisdom of the children
and the graceful way
of flowers in the wind

For the children and the flowers
are my sisters and my brothers
their laughter and their loveliness
could clear a cloudy day...

*Thank you again for your
support of our school ...*

*Your children's laughter and loveliness
makes us happy every single day!*



2-Day/3-Day Toddler Classes~Sherry Donegan & Kris Barnes

Spring is finally upon us. The children have blossomed in so many ways since the first day of school. They are now showing readiness for the pre-primary classroom. The prepared environment helps each child feel secure. This allows the child to feel comfortable to move about the classroom independently choosing class materials that are visually pleasing to them. The toddler's day begins just this way. After your child enters the room, they hang up their coat and begin to choose work. Once the child has chosen the work, they will work to the best of their ability, then the child will return the materials to the shelf. Everything in the classroom has its own place which is very pleasing to the toddler's strong sense of order. Many of the children are choosing more challenging work such as pin-punching. When the work cycle is over, the bell is rung for the children to join their friends at the carpet. The toddlers have grown so much to understand and follow classroom routine and procedures. This is all part of their socialization skills.

Socialization is an integral part of the toddler classroom. Many new friendships have been formed over the school year. Now the toddlers are inviting others to join them where they used to work parallel to each other. Socialization has inspired more and more language for the toddlers. It is amazing to observe the increased amount of conversations since the beginning of the school year. The toddlers' articulation when speaking also has been strengthened. They have also shown a new interest for letter and sound recognition.

After our daily circle time, the toddlers will venture to the gymnasium to work on gross motor activities. So much growth of gross motor skills has occurred over the past several months. Many of the children are successfully pedaling tricycles, walking toe to heel on the balance beam and the toddlers are playing catch with the adults and their peers. The "Blast Off" game is a favorite running game for all three classes. Gym time

will soon become more outdoor time so it is important for your child to always dress for the weather.

The toddlers have also become very independent about snack time especially when it comes to cleaning up their snack area. Several of the toddlers kindly remind their friends to clean up their own snack if someone has forgotten to do so before choosing work again. It is so fun to observe how each child has matured over the course of the school year. It has been my pleasure to be able to work with all of your children from all three toddler classes as well as getting to know all their families. I want to especially thank Mrs. Elios, Mrs. Boehringer and Mrs. Collieran who worked so hard on the "Starry Night" Basket and for all our families who generously contribute to all our projects, material cutting, and fund raising. Please enjoy those toddler days for it is such a short time in your life. Enjoy your summer!



Preprimary Class ~ Jean Hegarty & Barb Berndsen

As the change of the season has occurred, so too, have many experiences for our children in the classroom. We welcome not only the warmer weather, but also the opportunity to expand on areas of development and growth for the children. Speaking of "change"- thanks to all for your generous donations to our **Change for the Earth** project. The expansion of our **Peace Garden** is made possible through your generosity. More importantly, the children have learned how they can help in changing our environment from this very special project. Now, they will be caring for the gardens they helped raise the funds to develop. The classroom work in "Practical Life" (planting work at the transfer table) and art and science activities as well are presented as preparation for gardening success! As each child plants their pansy (just as they did with their bulbs last year), they feel a direct connection to our beautiful **Peace Garden**. As Maria Montessori stated, "free the child's potential and you will transform him into the world."

Just as a quick reminder, as the children will be helping with outdoor gardening upkeep and having outdoor gym as the weather allows, it is important that they wear clothing and shoes that are appropriate for these activities. We do not want any special outfits ruined and we hope the children will be comfortable during their play outdoors. Garden weeding will be shared by all (taking turns) during our gym time on Mondays. This would be the day to be most particular to have your child wear appropriate clothes and shoes to help in this activity.

A very special delivery will be arriving soon to our classroom - our **Butterfly**

Garden! The children have the opportunity to experience first hand the life cycle as we observe the changes involved in this process. And, releasing the butterflies when they are ready is a wonderful culmination to this unique learning experience. There will be many pin punching, pasting and art projects centered on this enlightening work. Many of the projects we have for the children would not be possible without the help of the parents who have volunteered in many ways. Particularly, those who have given time for material making - Kelly Bova, Shannon Dawson, Christie Ollerton and Cathy Pfaff - your help was appreciated more than we can say!

We had some very special visitors to our classroom during this past year. We would like to send out special thanks to Jim and Alice Hardy (grandparents of Rachel Ploenzke) who gave an interesting presentation to our classroom on their African trip. Also, we are very grateful for the beautiful pictures they donated to the classroom representing their experience. And, to Rachel's parents - David & Laura Ploenzke - thanks so much for the pictures they gave to each of our families from the Spring Concert. What a wonderful keepsake of such a memorable event! Another visitor we want to thank is Phil Dawson (Beau's father) for his special visit to our school. More than the autographed pictures, his generosity of time (particularly to the circle time in our classroom) was greatly appreciated! Also, thanks to Sonia Idnany (teacher asst. @ MCS) for her informative presentation on the culture of her native country of India. Her presentation was not only educational but beautifully presented visually as she wore her native dress!



We want to thank each and every family who so generously donated to **Starry Starry Night**. Your time and gift contributions are a real tribute to your dedication to your children. And, what an enjoyable way to show it! In particular, thanks to Shannon Dawson for her heading up the project for our theme table. Thanks to all who helped in the set up and coordination of this successful event. A note of special appreciation to Kelly Bova and Cathy Pfaff to their extra help in the work to make this event such a wonderful success!

It goes without saying that our gratitude goes out to each and every family for providing the snacks/food preparation that we need each week in the classroom. Without your commitment and consistency to providing these items the classroom could not run smoothly. And, a very special thanks to Christie Ollerton (Danny's mother) for all the "treats with a theme" provided at special times of the year.

And, so, as we come to another school year's end we wish only the best to those not returning as you will be greatly missed. We wish all a very enjoyable summer break and leave you with a quote from Maria Montessori to remind us why we educate our children the way we do: "The child has other powers than ours, And the creation he achieves is no small one; It is everything"

