



# January Newsletter

Montessori Day Schools

Mountainside Campus

January 14, 2011

## Removing Obstacles to Development

If we wanted to raft the Grand Canyon, how would we prepare for the trip?

Depending on our experience level, we might arrange for a guide to navigate us down the river. We'd want to learn about the nature and force of the river. We'd want to be familiar with dangerous parts of the river. We might practice some drills in case of mishaps, such as what to do if the raft flips. We'd want to be as prepared as possible.

In the course of our lives, we'll experience a variety of challenges, some as fast and treacherous as rapids, waterfalls, whirlpools, or hydraulics; or as monotonous and slow as pools and eddies.

Isn't life like that? We want it to be challenging enough to feel like an adventure. When events happen abruptly, things can become dangerous or overwhelming; too slow and we are bored out of our minds.

What are some of the hazards we'll meet in our children's development? There are two basic kinds of obstacles. One type is external to us, like the water, rock and boulders in a river. Internal factors, such as personality, knowledge, experience, attitude, character, etc. make up our other obstructions.

How do we recognize that a child is facing a challenge? If a child is not developing concentration or independence, we should begin looking for a source, either outside the child's control, or as part of the child's internal make-up. Lack of independence and concentration can take on a variety of forms, much like water in a river. For the child with high energy and strong personality, obstacles may precipitate turbulent and explosive behavior. For the quiet child, the obstacle may thwart the child's progress, as if he or she were caught in a backwater eddy.

**External factors.** Looking at external obstacles, we need to ask the following:

1. Does the child's environment offer an opportunity to work in peace and dignity to develop him or herself?
2. Does the environment offer a broad social experience?
3. Does the environment offer protection from physical and psychological abuse?
4. Does the environment offer adequate challenges for personal growth?

**Internal factors.** When considering internal factors, ask these questions:

1. Is your child an optimist or a pessimist? An introvert or an extrovert? Research shows that parental guidance can help a pessimistic or quiet child develop a cheerful or more outgoing life.
2. At what developmental stage is your child? About every three years in the growth of a child, there are profound changes in how and what the child learns. Be aware of these stages.
3. Is the child having a physical response to the environment? Is the lack of concentration or independence due to allergies, illness, learning or perceptual differences, hearing, vision, diet, sleep, changes in routine, visitors in the house, family member out of town, death in the family, birth of a sibling, arguments in the family, television viewing, or video/computer games?

Observe your child at work and play. Is the child's observable behavior inhibiting independence or concentration? If yes, examine the external and internal factors of the situation and decide a plan of action. What are the obstacles for the child? What can be done to help?

Johnny was failing math, until he started using graph paper to keep the numbers in line. Kayla missed weeks of school due to being allergic to the classroom rabbit. Kevin had given up trying to read because his best friend called him stupid. Mary's grades dropped in a nine-week period while she complained she couldn't see the chalkboard. Steven started a fight every night at bedtime with his father when his dad had been out of town the previous week. Deena threw tantrums about toilet training because she was afraid of falling into the toilet. Obstacles are common, varied, and frequent.

With planning we can avoid many obstacles, and there will be situations we cannot anticipate. Understanding the nature of obstacles, and the nature of the child, may help us "row, row, row our boat, gently down the stream."

-Adapted from *Understanding Montessori*, by Maren Schmidt

## Calendar Notes for January

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### LOOKING BACK!

Hope everyone enjoyed our Winter Program and Bazaar! This was a festive community event with plenty of singing, dancing and food for all. Thanks to all who participated!



### LOOKING AHEAD!

Jan 17--- (Monday) Martin Luther King, Jr. National Holiday—**SCHOOL CLOSED**—  
---NO EXTENDED CARE—

Jan 25—(Tuesday) **PARENT PARTNERS EVENING** 6:00-7:00pm

Jan 26—(Wednesday) **Early Release @ 11:30am**--Extended Care for those eligible—

## Junior Elementary News



### WAY TO GO!

We collected a total of **48 pajama** sets/gowns to donate. Scholastic Books will match this and donate 48 books to children in need. We should be proud of ourselves!



In the fall, Ms. Keller applied for a field trip grant through Target. She was recently contacted and given the good news...**We were chosen as one of the lucky schools to receive this grant!**

We will receive funding in January, which will be applied toward a Junior Elementary field trip to the **Science Center** in the spring.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

## Calling all parent volunteers!

**Our next MDS Parent Committee meeting is January 24<sup>th</sup> (Monday) 6:00-7:00pm**

**Child care provided: children 3 and up**

**Get involved in one of our Parent Committee "Support Teams"**

**-Garden Project: Katie @ [kt61180@yahoo.com](mailto:kt61180@yahoo.com)**

**-MDS Yearbook: Alina @ [cabezas.alina@gmail.com](mailto:cabezas.alina@gmail.com)**

**-Classroom parents: Michelle @ [mkjustin@aol.com](mailto:mkjustin@aol.com)**

**-Spring Auction: Eileen @ [emkinaz@hotmail.com](mailto:emkinaz@hotmail.com)**

**-Book Fair: Jennifer @ [jdowning@mdpdc.org](mailto:jdowning@mdpdc.org)**

**-Newsletter: Tammy @ [rhodewheel@cox.net](mailto:rhodewheel@cox.net)**

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## HELP...WE NEED YOUR OLD JEANS



**Students in JE1** are working on a classroom project and we need your old jeans. Also any kind of old COTTON clothing including blouses, shirts, dresses, PJ's, etc. Any condition is fine because we're going to cut them up!

**MDS art students** could also re-use old **holiday cards or calendars** for art projects

Look for a donation box by the office.

**Thank you.**

## Who's Who at Montessori Day School?

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Ms. Jeannie

I have worked with MDS for almost 4 years. I am currently the assistant to Ms Samia. However, during my time with MDS I have had the opportunity to work with several different teachers all at the Junior Elementary level. Every teacher has a different style and there is always something new to learn from each one. This has made my job interesting and I continue to learn MORE ABOUT Montessori every day, which helps me to be a more effective assistant. I hope to continue in Junior Elementary for many years to come.

Ms. Melisa

I was born and raised in Quito, the capital of Ecuador and the first city declared a Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO. I lived there with my parents, brother and sister until finishing school in May 2009. I received a certificate in Sociology and Political Science from Pontifica Universidad Catolica del Ecuador but I think my parents would have preferred that I study medicine like they did! I had the opportunity to work as a teacher assistant back in Ecuador and also as a social researcher for the Ministry of Culture and Education. I met my husband Nicholas in Quito while he worked as a volunteer teaching English. We moved to Arizona after I finished school and have lived here ever since. A few of the hobbies I enjoy are watching "novelas", crocheting, reading, hiking, cooking, dancing and soccer. And of course, I love all animals, especially my dog Che. I am so happy to work at Montessori Day School with Ms. Keller in JE II and look forward to the New Year!

THANKS TO THE 2 BUSINESSES THAT HAVE DONATED TO OUR GARDEN PROJECT!



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