

September

School News

We are starting off 2011-2012 year as a South Dakota certified private school. We have come a long way since enrolling our first few students back in 2009.

Two of our first families, the Fischer's & the Vogels, are still with us and I'm sure they can attest to many the many changes that have taken place since their first tour of the school back in 2009. Alice Vogel & Ezra Fischer are now on to public school and have left their siblings Coen & Ari to finish their Montessori experience with us. Even parents who were with us in 2010, the Duffy's and the Battests' have seen (and helped with) progress within the program, the facility and outside environment.

Our school would not have been able to grow, as we have these past three years, without parent involvement and participation. Tracy Vogel has been working on the website, Nicole Fischer has helped with art instruction & projects, Sean Duffy and family have started on the landscaping. Alissa Battest put in many hours in preparation and completion of our garage sale. In addition, there have been many other parents who have helped by donating items for the garage fund raiser and to the school itself. Last, but not least, so many parents have helped in the transporting and supervising of children on field trips throughout the year - we could not have done it without you.

*We hope you all consider this as **YOUR SCHOOL** and see how valuable your contributions are. You are all instrumental in helping to make this school a success. If it was not for all of you, we would not be the finest educational learning environment for young children in the Aberdeen area. **Thank you!***

Miss Susan & Miss Jillian



Thank You Thank You, Thank You

There was a close to perfect attendance at the Parent Meeting on Monday night. We went through introductions, the parent handbook, and passed around a volunteer sign up sheet. Honestly, with busy fall schedules, I was not sure anyone would have time to volunteer to help our school.

I didn't even check the signup sheet until the next morning and . . .

Wow – How impressive – Check out the Volunteer List for fun Parent Involvement Activities for the year!!!

There are many of you who were unsure of your schedules, so we'll check with you later. We don't want anyone to feel left out! What a wonderful way to get to know the other parents and support the school at the same time. **This is so exciting!**

THANK YOU SO MUCH

DR. MARIA MONTESSORI QUOTE

*The child can only develop by means of experience in his environment.
We call such experience work.*

—Maria Montessori



Parent Involvement Activities

Library Committee

(Inputting books into computer system): Amy DeVries
Ashlee Johnson

(Labeling books): Andrea Kost & Bridget Herceg

Special Occasion Helpers

(Help with refreshments, decorating, or pictures)

- Thanksgiving Feast Andrea Kost
- Christmas Program Bridget Herceg & Tracy Vogel
- Valentines Day: Jaragoske's & Lyndsee Cross
- Mother's Tea: Terri Fites
- End of Year Picnic Potluck: Justin & Lyndsee Cross

Outdoor Maintenance

Staining playground climbing structure
Sean & Cassie Duffy, Justin Cross

Fund Raising

Andrea Kost

Other: (You don't have to sign up for this one!)

*Logging onto our website www.montessoriberdeen.com

*Writing a positive comment on the DexKnows Site

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sept 1st All students start 8-11:15 /11:30-2:45
After school program begins.
- Sept 5th Labor Day **NO SCHOOL**
- Sept 23rd First Day of Fall (bring a leaf to school)
To be announced – Picture day, group & individual
- Oct 14 Apple & Pumpkin Picking Field Trip
- Oct 17th Parent Meeting 6:30-7:30
- Oct 18-21st Observations & conferences

NOTE: New Parents, if you feel the need to set up a conference to touch base on your child's transition progress before October, please let us know.

Montessori Magazine

A part of your enrollment fees this year are going towards each family receiving the **Tomorrow's Child Magazine**. This is a magazine from The Montessori Foundation which seeks to nurture, inspire, and support the development of strong, successful Montessori schools around the world.

We hope you enjoy the magazines. The first one will arrive within the next week.

September

Today the importance of the formative first six years of Montessori School life is common knowledge. During this time a child becomes fully a member of her particular culture and family group, absorbing language, attitudes, manners, values, of those in which she comes in daily contact. A child, who spends the first six years in a loving and supportive environment, learns to love herself and feels safe in the world. A child who has experienced the joy of making a contribution to her family or group, learns to love making an effort, and feels needed. Every child, by instinct, wants to learn and grow to the limit of his abilities. In the first six years of life he does this by imitating those around him. To support this need we must carefully prepare the physical and social environment, provide tools that enable the child to work to create himself, watch for those first tentative moments of concentration, and get out of the way, following the child as his path unfolds.

The traditional work of the family is referred to in Montessori as practical life work. It is the single most important area of an education for life. The activities of practical life are generally thought of in three main categories, and looking at the child's life in this way helps to keep a balance in the activities we offer children to master. These areas of practical life depend on the culture in which the child is growing up, and may include, but are not limited to:

- (1) **Environment**—cleaning, sweeping, polishing, hanging up clothing, washing clothes, gardening, putting away toys.
- (2) **Person**—bathing, dressing, brushing teeth, cooking, setting the table.
- (3) **Courtesy**—walking carefully, carrying things, opening and closing a door, tucking in a chair when finishing work, rolling up a floor mat, offering food, saying "please" and "thank you" and so on.

It is in learning to do such seemingly mundane activities as dressing, dusting, sweeping, preparing and serving food, and fixing or building, work that the child sees going on around her all day long, that she learns to use her body and mind for a purpose, to concentrate, to complete cycles of activity, to finish what she started, and most importantly to contribute to the important work of the family, the social group. Practical life activities provide superior groundwork for physical, mental, and social development, and teach the work habits that lead to success in all later academic work. Practical life work provides practice in eye-hand coordination, the control of large and small muscles, the ability to walk and to carry objects with control, and to behave with knowledge of good manners. These are the activities that bring the child's attention to his own progress and development, and that open up a world of important work. Learning to look a person in the eye when speaking, to listen patiently, to exhibit thoughtfulness through good manners, enables the child to be welcomed into a social group, to be happy and to make others happy.

Children have for eons shown an interest in daily life through make-believe cooking and cleaning. It was one of the pivotal discoveries of Dr. Montessori that, given the chance, children usually choose real work over imaginary. Allowing the child to participate in the daily work he sees going on around him is an act of great respect for, and confidence in, the child. It helps him to feel important to himself and to those around him. He is needed. We can empathize if we think about the difference in treatment of a stranger, perhaps a dinner guest in our home, who is served and waited upon, compared to that of a good friend who is welcomed in our kitchen to talk and laugh while we prepare the meal together. Children don't want to be the guest; they want us to help them to do it themselves.

The child's reason for, and way of, working is different from ours. Adults will usually choose to do things the most efficient and quickest way and to rush through or avoid anything labeled work. A child, on the other hand, is working to master the activity and to practice and perfect her abilities. She may scrub a table each day for weeks, and then turn her attention to some other activity to master. We must not look upon this method as inconsistency or laziness but rather cumulative mastery of abilities. The child's purpose is not to complete the task as much as to construct the self. Practical life activities may well be the most important work in the Montessori 3-6 class. By means of these activities the child learns to make intelligent choices, to become physically and mentally independent and responsible. She learns to concentrate, to control muscles, to act with care, to focus, to analyze logical steps and complete a cycle of activity. This lays the groundwork for sound mental and physical work throughout life.

