



# The River Current

August 2014

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear River Montessori Families,

Welcome to 2014-15! We are so delighted to be back in session— and right on schedule, the children are so beautifully engaged in their work. It is wonderful to see the children so eager and engrossed and it also provides lofty inspiration for faculty and staff as we strive to provide the best Montessori learning environment possible!

Beginning anew is a special time of eagerness and uncertainty. Some things continue and some change, some friends have graduated and new friends are joining our community. Here's to everyone for embracing and maintaining this community of thoughtful folks who seek a holistic, peaceful, and Montessori education for their children and a welcome space for partnership between family and school. We are so honored to work with our families who are the undisputed experts about their child at home, in the family, and social scenarios. In conjunction, we are privileged to be able to share how your children express themselves at school, in their academic and social collaborations at school. Together we make a rich support system for your child and we take that relationship very seriously.



There are many opportunities to share in this work together and we hope to see you often! Whether you choose to volunteer in the classroom, in the office, with the RMCS Board, on a committee,

or with the RMF Foundation, we hope that you find your role of participation here at RMCS. We very much enjoy

the synergy of the shared experience and demonstrating to the children how an uplifting and supportive community operates!

So as we begin again, may we together set the intention that our new year be one of better understanding our students, our parents, our Guides, and each member of our community. May we all utilize Montessori best practice by observing, listening, and reflecting, before we act, thereby setting a thoughtful model of communication for our children. As a community, may we have the best year of authentic implementation of Montessori methodology for our children— after all, it is why we are all here!

Peace, peace,  
*Kelly*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>August 5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Finance Committee Meeting</b>	6:30 p.m.
<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Parent Orientation</b>	
	Transitional Kindergarten/Kindergarten:	5:15 – 6:10 p.m.
	Lower Elementary:	6:15 – 7:10 p.m.
	Upper Elementary:	7:15 – 8:15 p.m.
<b>12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Board of Director's Meeting</b>	6:30 p.m.
<b>15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>RMF Coffee &amp; Tea</b>	8:15 – 9:00 a.m.
<b>27<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Dine &amp; Donate @ Mary's Pizza Shack</b>	(flyer required)

## September

<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Labor Day</b> (School & River Crew closed)	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>RMF Meeting</b>	8:15 a.m.
	<b>Finance Committee</b>	6:30 p.m.
<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Parent University</b>	5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>RMF Playdate in the Park</b>	12:30 p.m. @ McNear Park
<b>9<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Board of Director's Meeting</b>	6 p.m.
	<b>Community Forum</b>	7 – 8 p.m.
<b>16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Portraits</b> Levels 1-6	
<b>17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Portraits</b> TK/K	
<b>19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>International Day of Peace Celebration</b>	
	<b>RMF Coffee &amp; Tea</b>	8:15 – 9:00 a.m.
<b>25<sup>th</sup> &amp; 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Parent/Guide Conferences</b> (School closed.)	
	River Crew open.)	
<b>29<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Fall Break Begins</b> (September 29 <sup>th</sup> – October 13 <sup>th</sup> )	
	River Crew open Monday – Friday (camp rates apply)	

“Our care of the child should be governed not by the desire to make him learn things but by the endeavor always to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence.”

~ Dr. Maria Montessori

## ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL, & TRAFFIC

We've made it through our first weeks! Much like the classroom, it takes some time for everyone to get into the swing of things individually and as a cohesive community. Thank you for keeping all of our children safe with your patience as children and adults learn the procedures, for maintaining 5 mph on campus, refraining from cell-phone use while driving on campus, and preparing your children well for an efficient exit and entrance to their cars on the driver's side/landing strip. Please watch for children at all times and leave enough room that you can pull out of the car-line if your family is ready to go before the car in front of you.



## ATTENDANCE

We all know that consistency is integral for children but sometimes life gets in our way. Please know that we understand that on the odd occasion any one of us might find ourselves late or absent from school. Please also be aware of the following:

- As a Montessori school, we champion independence, competence, confidence, and collaboration. Consistent on-time arrivals and attendance ensure your child can access his or her potential with ongoing Montessori lessons and experiences
- As a public school, we are required by the CDE to maintain specific records regarding attendance, timeliness, tracking, and communication with parents to eliminate any concerns
- As a charter, our public funding is solely based on attendance. We appreciate your efforts to support our school budget by advising us of independent study well in advance to allow Guides time to prepare packets and for the school to capture the funding.



## VOLUNTEERING

We are ever grateful for you! The immense support from volunteers with prep., maintenance, repair and such, allows the school to direct more funds to classroom experiences rather than operational costs. RMCS families are endless in their volunteering and even at a low rate of \$10 an hour saves the school approximately \$40,000 every year!

The test run of Volunteer Spot went well, so please watch for the full launch in September. Look for the links on the individual classroom pages. *Coming soon!*

For now, if you have time or talent, here are our latest needs...

- Assemble new math cabinet
- Assemble new shelving
- Tighten current umbrella stands
- Drill umbrella holes in the new picnic tables
- Gate for Copper Creek
- Planting in the front of school
- Assembling the new sports storage area
- Painting new storage cabinets
- Cut & laminate new materials



Thanks, thanks, thanks!

## BOARD BANTER

Check here for important communication from the RMCS Board of Directors during the school year. We are very honored to have such a dedicated group of volunteer board members who give an immense amount of time to ensure state and financial requirements while prioritizing the integrity of Montessori Methodology. Public meetings are held monthly, typically on the second Tuesday of the month. Dates are posted on the website for your reference. Don't miss the upcoming Board hosted event...

Come meet your Board of Directors and weigh in on what you'd like to see in the long term vision of RMCS!

### RMCS Community Forum

September 9, 2014  
7-8 p.m.



## COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

*Community Conversations* are monthly discussions I host before RMF meetings to talk about child development, Montessori philosophy, and any questions at all. This is an open agenda meeting for feedback, questions, and concerns. Over the years we have covered a gamut of topics from happenings at school to parenting books to middle school transitions.



## PARENT UNIVERSITY

September 4, 2014 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.  
**What Happens in a Montessori Classroom?**  
*Why & How it Works*

November 13, 2014 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.  
**Geography, History, Science, Oh My!**  
*Montessori Cultural Curriculum*

February 27-28, 2015 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Friday  
8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Saturday  
*Special Two Day Workshop Experience!\**  
**The Montessori Journey: Tour Transitional**  
*kindergarten through Upper elementary*  
*through the Eyes of a Student*  
(\*Space is limited; registration required.)

April 9, 2015 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.  
**Cell phones, video games, and labels:**  
*What Does a Child Really Need?*



## ROWING WITH RIVER CREW...

River Crew has started another great year with a refreshed new look and plans for new fun! Morning care opens at 7:00 a.m. and afternoons begin at the end of each school day until 6:00 p.m. Check out the website for details or drop in for a look and to meet the staff.

<http://www.rivermontessoricharter.org/river-crew.html>

---

## WISH LIST- THANK YOU!

Kitchen cabinets  
Patio umbrellas  
Umbrella stands  
Tree stumps  
Area rugs  
Carpet samples

---

**INTERESTED IN CARPOOLING?**  
Contact Sara Peracca at [speracca@hotmail.com](mailto:speracca@hotmail.com)

## MONTESSORI MATTERS

### An Ordinary Life Extraordinarily Lived

by [Paul Gutting](#) | [Maria Montessori Blog](#)

#### **What do you want for your child’s future?**

The other day I took a call from a prospective parent. I had not given her tour, and she was calling to talk to the director and ask a few questions. She wanted to know if I knew the national average ACT or SAT scores for Montessori alumni. I had to admit that I don’t, and I am not aware of anyone who has narrowed down that population for that sort of study. I asked her what she was looking for in that question. She told me that what she really wanted was for her daughter to be happy.

Ah. Now that I can address.

I told her my current favorite alumna story. A few years ago, a young woman visited the office. She had been an early student at Campbell, and in my early years as an assistant, I had sat with her in the classroom, chased her around the playground, and put her down for nap. She went on to become one of our first elementary students. Now, she was a couple years out of high school, and she told me this story. She had left Campbell and attended the local public schools – a very ordinary sort of thing to do. She graduated and enrolled in the local community college – again, a very ordinary sort of thing to do. She told me that when she was about half-way through the first semester she realized she wasn’t happy. And then, she said this extraordinary thing: “I knew if I wasn’t happy, I wasn’t going to learn anything.” So she pulled herself together, transferred to a four-year college at the semester, moved out of her parents’ house, and was working hard in pursuit a double major – and she was quite happy.

Who would be disappointed in that? What parent would be disappointed in an eighteen-year-old child who could perform that kind of assessment of her situation and have

the wherewithal to get up and change it? In a time when we hear more and more stories of kids ‘returning to the nest’, isn’t that what we want for our children? Self-awareness and self-knowledge, confidence in the face of uncertainty, courage enough to make necessary changes – these are signs of strong character and a productive life. These are characteristics school can and should support. These are goals we should have for our children.

Montessori schools often focus (and with good reason) on the famous Montessori alumni – people like Julia Child, the co-founders of Google, Amazon, and Wikipedia, and so on – people who live extraordinary lives. But it isn’t always about living an extraordinary life. Sometimes it’s about living an ordinary life extraordinarily well.

Paul Gutting has been the Executive Director at [Campbell Montessori School](#) since 2011. Prior to that, he served as Campbell’s Associate Director for two years. His career in education began in 1992 when he started as an assistant at Campbell, and he has worked in both public and private schools since that time. Paul has served as assistant, teacher, drama specialist, and administrator including service as Dean of Academic Affairs at [The Fulton School at St. Albans](#). As a child he attended a Montessori school run by his mother, Miriam Gutting. He is a graduate of Truman State University (B.A. English/Theatre 1999), Washington University (A.M. Drama 2004), and the AMI Orientation Programme to Adolescent Studies (2011). Paul and his wife, Heather, have three children eight and under, all of whom attend Campbell Montessori School.



**Don’t Forget to like us on Facebook**

## RIVER MONTESSORI FOUNDATION NEWS

The Foundation Thanks You! Parents, friends, extended families have participated in so many events and volunteered in so many ways - we appreciate your help... The 2014-2015 school year has started off with a few wonderfully successful events.

Beginning with River Town Revival - where a dedicated group of RMCS parents led by Tammy Cleland raised just over \$3,000 for the school - year after year this event manages to bring an amazing amount of money for our children and their school and we appreciate everyone's efforts this year! A wonderful example of how we can raise funds within our RMCS community while strengthening and supporting our greater community of Petaluma.

We were thrilled that so many RMCS parents and caregivers came out to the Welcome Back Coffee. How nice it was to not only see all the familiar faces but also meet some of you for the first time - we look forward to seeing all of you at our monthly Morning Coffee hours held the 3rd Friday of every month in River Crew! Our August Morning Coffee will be on Friday the 15th.

How fun was last Sunday's Annual Back-to-School BBQ & Dessert Auction?! We thank the Ott family for once again stepping up to oversee this event and to everyone that helped support them! Your participation made it a great success, with the dessert auction bringing in just over \$1,000 and close to \$1,500 in T-shirts sales! Thank you, thank you, thank you for supporting our school, the teachers, the classroom assistants and, most of all our children! It's the beginning of something beautiful...

We ask you again to consider setting up monthly contributions to our Bridge Fund program or just a one-time contribution. The Bridge Fund is a program that has been in existence since the school's conception. Its purpose is to help bridge the gap between the funding RMCS is given from the state and what it needs to flourish. 100% of this money benefits the school and its students - last year we raised enough to fund an assistant in each classroom! Let's make this year one where we are able to fund classroom assistants and more!

To sign up for a monthly or a one-time donation, please fill out the paperwork you received in your welcome packet or visit our website at <http://www.rivermontessorifoundation.org> to sign up online! With your generous support, you are playing an important role in helping create an amazing educational

experience for our children.

Thank you again, and we look forward to your continued support and participation.

With much appreciation,

### The 2014-2015 River Montessori Foundation Board

Javier Alverde, CHAIR

Eden Belov & Nancy Feldstein, CO-VICE CHAIRS

Brian Cochran, TREASURER

Julie Compton, SECRETARY

Beth Laurence, ADVISING BOARD MEMBER

Matt Hautau, ADVISING BOARD MEMBER

Forgot to sign up for Pizza Lunch? It's not too late... Be sure to get your child's order in as soon as possible so that they don't miss the first pizza day on Monday, August 11th. You may order pizza anytime during the school year - please refer to the Pizza Pricing Chart on the foundation's website to view prorated pricing. Orders & payments should be turned in by the Wednesday before pizza day to ensure your child gets on the list. *Remember to 'like' River Montessori Foundation on Facebook to get news and updates!*



## WITH GRATITUDE...

**Meredith Brown** (and family) for making materials  
**Stacey Byrne** for lending her nursing expertise for training and health requirements and painting Klamath  
**Gen Churchill** for laminating materials  
**Lacey Currie** for water cooler procurement  
**Gary Guest** (and Grason) for many repairs and maintenance jobs and for painting Copper Creek  
**Betsy Hall** for cutting and making materials  
**Kevin Isetta** for picking up and assembling picnic tables, painting, assembling shelves, computer/wiring support, and several dump runs  
**Jana Leon** for cutting and making materials  
**Mike Mannion** for picking up and assembling picnic tables, picking up furniture  
**Bear McGuinness** a thorough clean a fridge in desperate need of good care!  
**Rama Mejia** for translating all of our enrollment documents into Spanish!  
**Scott Nielsen** for his many hours of computer expertise  
**Danielle Orthwein** (and Captain America) for laminating and making materials  
**Jen Oryn** for assembling picnic tables  
**Celso Puch** (Angelo and Zac) for anything and everything that had to be done over the summer  
**Paulina Telderer** for painting, sprucing up Copper Creek and donating cabinet knobs  
**Ashli Sumner & Luis Escobar** for painting Copper Creek  
**River Montessori Foundation** for a great Family BBQ, support packets for families, and thoughtful leadership  
**Rosa Wylie** for making materials, purchasing plants and planting them in the Peace Garden  
**Deb Thomas** for hours of laminating  
**John Zimmerman** hauling, pick-ups, furniture moving, delivering, and assembling  
Alumni Brooke Chandler, Ruben Garnica, Ellie Hall, Madeline Hoorn, Trinity Orthwein, Alejandro Puch, and Olivia Zimmerman for volunteering in various capacities in classrooms and for teachers and staff to help get the school ready for our new year!



## WASC NEWS

We continue on our path with WASC this year with a *Self-Study* in order to maintain our accreditation. With specific groups to meet the significant responsibilities of recording - in WASC format - our regular practices of reviewing, analyzing, and improving all areas of our school. From students to parents to staff, all stakeholders are included so we have the whole community's perspective and input. Watch for meetings and tasks in this newsletter column, on the bulletin board when you volunteer on campus, and in targeted emails as necessary.

This is from the WASC website to give you an idea of their work...

The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC) is one of six regional accrediting associations in the United States.

The philosophy of the Accrediting Commission for Schools centers upon three beliefs: (1) a school's goal is successful student learning; (2) each school has a clear purpose and schoolwide student goals; and (3) a school engages in external and internal evaluations as part of continued school improvement to support student learning.

*Please let us know if you are interested in this work~ we'd love to have your help!*

