



# The River Current

## A Message from our Executive Director

Dear River Montessori Charter Families,

Big things are happening in our world. Conversations abound regarding the environment, food, wars, politics, human equality, children's rights, and more. "Hot topics" are addressed seriously and cavalierly on radio, television, magazine covers, landing pages on-line, as well as in our cars, marketplaces, and homes. How do children negotiate these topics? They look to the adults in their lives. As Montessori families, we well-know that children follow the models in their environment, so the real question may be, "How do we negotiate these topics?"

We have to do our own work first?  
Yup. Do we have to have it all figured out? No. World events can be awful—painful, ugly, and unacceptable, and intolerable for us as adults and yet our children observe these things without our life-experience and big-picture perspective. We have to be aware of our own

fears and hopes so that we can navigate these tough topics with our children cleanly and supportively. Here are a few keys to the child...

Children observe our actions constantly—they watch, listen, and when ready will ask. How are we to respond? Honestly. First and foremost. We need to know our own mind, be thoughtful, and *fully-present* (often easier said than done in our fast-paced lives). There is always a truth to tell that will support a child and can be delivered in a developmentally appropriate way. Then, we must respect the child's development—what is their lens at this stage of development, how do they cognitively process information, how do they interact with knowledge and these complicated abstract ideas?

Children from 0-6 years of age operate from a concrete perspective. They absorb *everything* they see and hear in



## RMCS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### February

- 2 Coffee with Kelly, 8:30am
- Prospective Parent Meeting: 6-7:00pm
- 8 Lincoln's Birthday, NO SCHOOL (River Crew Closed)
- 9 RMCS Board of Director's Meeting: 6:30pm
- 11 **Community Conversation Meeting – Montessori & Technology**, 5:00pm
- 15 NO SCHOOL (River Crew Closed)
- 18 TK/K/Lower El-Spring Music Celebration: 6-7:00pm
- 19 Parent Coffee: 8:15am; RMF Meeting 9:00-10:30am (River Crew Room)

### March

- 1 Prospective Parent Meeting: 6-7:00pm
- 2 Open House, 5:30-7:00pm
- 4 Watch Me Work: Lower Elementary 9:45-10:45am  
Upper Elementary 10:45-11:45am
- 8 **Community Conversation: Tough Topics/World Events**, 5:00pm
- 17-18 Parent/Student/Guide Conferences
- 17-4/1 Spring Break / River Crew Open

### April

- 1 Return to School
- 12 Board of Directors' Meeting, 6:30pm
- 18 NO SCHOOL – Teacher Work Day
- 19 **Community Conversation: What's Wrong with Testing**, 5:00pm

**YOU CAN ALSO VISIT RMCS WEBSITE'S CALENDAR**  
(Click on link above)

\*\*\*\*\*SAVE THE DATE\*\*\*\*\*  
**River Spring Gala & Casino Night**  
Saturday, April 30, 5:30-11pm

The environment must be rich in motives which lend interest to activity and invite the child to conduct his own experiences  
- Maria Montessori

their environment and try to make sense of it and organize it in a concrete and hands-on way. Elementary students are in a sensitive period for the acquisition of culture. They are primed to see, hear, and be insatiably curious about these bigger issues happening in their world.

Our words and actions affect the child deeply. They watch our example whether we are aware or not—every word, every comment, every judgement. As adults, we are setting the example constantly and they will follow our lead. Puts a bit of pressure on, right? Indeed.

Unlike the disagreements, conflicts and challenges during the school day, these larger community issues cannot be resolved with one or two questions and one visit to the peace-table. They are challenging to us as parents, i.e., how much information is appropriate, what perspective to take, etc. But the question of whether to address them is unnecessary—they already know something. They know because they see and hear us as adults, and they see and hear their world; we need to provide developmentally-appropriate context and support.

As a Montessori community, we have immense faith in the child. We know that children construct themselves through work and interaction in their environment. We are well-aware that this does not mean without obstacles and challenges for our children or ourselves! If you find that you would like to discuss negotiating the larger picture or the detailed questions that come with a specific topic, please join me at a Community Conversation. We all have something to enrich the conversation about the work we do at school and at home and how we support our children, and I'd like to know what you think!

Peace, peace,  
Kelly



## Communication...

Newsletters and emails and signs, oh my! Can we ever keep up with everyone's preference for communication? While the answer is a resounding "no," it does not prevent us from trying! As always, should you have questions, please feel free to ask!

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Check out our River Communication Flow [link here](#)

## MONTESSORI MATTERS

### Will a Montessori Education Prepare My Child for the "Real World"?



### Will a Montessori Education Prepare My Child for the "Real World"?

*This is a common question I hear as I meet with prospective parents and take them on a tour through our community at The New School Montessori.*

This is a difficult question to answer considering the "real world" is a relative term. Do they mean the "real world" of professional pressures, deadlines, and aggressive competition? Or do they mean the "real world" of emotional intelligence, engaged citizenry, compassion, joy, and relationship to one's environment? If I were to be honest with myself, I'm pretty sure they're asking about the former – the "real world" of work. Fortunately, no matter which version of the "real world" they are referring to, my answer is the same, a resounding "Yes!"

**Multi-age classrooms and emphasis on time management prepare in "real world" ways.**

For those of you who are not familiar with Montessori education let me briefly explain that it is a philosophy and pedagogy based on the scientific research of Dr. Maria Montessori. Children are grouped in multi-aged classrooms, where students are engaged in hands-on, self-paced, collaborative work. Multi-aged classrooms allow older students to be leaders and mentors while providing opportunities for younger students to work with older classmates on group projects. In addition, Montessori teachers do not stand in front of a class giving lectures while asking students to work on the same thing, at the same time, in the same way. Rather, they walk throughout the classroom working one-on-one with students or in small groups. At the core of the Montessori philosophy is the belief that all students have a natural desire to learn, explore, and joyfully work toward independence through knowledge and discipline.

Now, keeping all of that in mind, I want you to ask yourself:.....(Please continue to page 6 of the River Current for more from this interview)

Our task is to educate their (our students) whole being so they can face the future. We may not see the future, but they will and our job is to help them make something of it. ~ Sir Ken Robinson



## Technology/Digital Citizenship

Most sincere apologies for cancellation of the January Tech/Digital Citizenship meeting. If you are interested in being a part of the Tech/Digital Citizenship team at RMCS – please contact Julie Carolan: Jcarolan@rivermontessoricharter.org.



## A Little Help for our Student Entrepreneurs...

**Burrito Thursday Help:** [We still need help!](#) If you can spare 30 minutes on the occasional Thursday, please click [here](#) to sign-up for pick/up delivery of Burritos (*or check in with Erica*).

The students of Klamath thank you for your support.



"Munchy Monday" Continues through Spring!

Have you been enjoying the weekly fundraiser hosted by our 6<sup>th</sup> year students? Fill yourself up with some delicious baked goods while helping to send our 6<sup>th</sup> year students to Astro Camp. Look for our bakers at Monday car line.



## Testing News

While we are currently utilizing the opportunity of Interim Block Assessments (internal use, gives us indicators, practice and familiarity with test format), State Summative Assessments will be hosted for our students between April 11- May 13, 2016.

For more information about these assessments, please see the latest family handout from SCOE:  
[https://www.scoe.net/statetests/Documents/family\\_guide\\_1/testing\\_guide\\_part\\_1\\_english.pdf](https://www.scoe.net/statetests/Documents/family_guide_1/testing_guide_part_1_english.pdf)

## Children are Moving Up!

Kindergarten children move up to their first year of elementary, third-Year students to fourth year, and our beloved Sixth Year Graduates Move on to Middle School. How are children prepared for their next classroom level? What is the process for our students who move from one level to another? Here's the flow of support and events:

- ✓ Every experience in current level sets the foundation for the next level with social, emotional, cognitive developmental preparation
- ✓ Welcome Visit - Older students invite the transitioning children to visit their classrooms and show them the world of the new level
- ✓ Move-Up Meeting for Parents- Guides present the keys to the new level and how incoming students learn the culture and expectations
- ✓ Bridge Program- New students at every level come before school begins to enter their new environment



MontessoriCompass.com

Our roll out of this Montessori record-keeping program continues well with...

- Report Cards created with Montessori Compass-based language
- Live-Training for Guides on how to negotiate the scope of the program
- Incremental agreements about manageable tasks and follow-up at faculty meetings
- Guides currently recording lessons and inputting historical data for each student
- A pilot group of parents ready to collaborate on delivery to the larger community. This concept was established at the Fall meeting. If you are interested in participating, please contact Kelly.
- An upcoming schedule of release for the larger community (Based on the completion of data input from our guides (here's to our guides for adding this to their very long list of things to do!) and the experience/information from the parent group.

**"We then become witnesses to the development of the human soul; the emergence of the New Man, who will no longer be the victim of events but, thanks to his clarity of vision, will become able to direct and to mould the future of mankind."**

**~Dr. Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, 1952**



## **Community Conversation Meetings**

**Montessori & Technology:** February 11, 2016 @ 5:00 p.m.

**Tough Topics/World Events:** March 8, 2016 @ 5:00 p.m.

**What's Wrong with Testing?:** April 19, 2016 @ 5:00 p.m.

(Child Care Provided. Registration required)



## **RMCS BOARD NEWS**

Dear River Montessori Families & Community:

As we embark upon a leap year, we're reminded that times change. And yet it appears that everything stays the same. However, as we focus on our work over the next month, many things will continue to progress as well as we look to our service to the students. Their growth and development is most premier.

One point I wish to draw to your attention is this newsletter itself. This is a wonderful resource for making time in your busy schedule to read and reflect upon the many passages that connect each of us with the big picture of Montessori while also reading about the details of what make River a special place. You're invited to sharpen your own sword in reading about the many facets of Montessori and what it has to offer. Ultimately, it is the foundation work of the Montessori principles that evolve the children's thinking into leadership skills. This in turn advances their work as they progress across elementary, and into secondary and higher education. In fact, here is an article you may be interested to listen to from Sal Khan of the Khan Academy - A Bit Of A Montessori 2.0: Khan Academy Opens A Lab School

<http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/01/05/461506508/sal-khan-on-learning-coding-and-why-virtual-ed-is-not-enough>

What is interesting about this article is Montessori like and the balance between private and public. The open source development is one of our visions. As a public Montessori school, we are bound to the state system policy and procedures, yet as an independent charter, encouraged through the legislation to empower experimentation. We support our students in exploring dynamic ways of learning. Food for thought!

The board continues their work in the practical sense of managing the overall organization. We will conduct our February meeting on the 9th. You are more than welcome to attend. Beyond the daily operation we will hear about, we will continue to infuse the value of our January meeting concerning our Strategic Plan and discuss the features of it across our calendar for the remaining year and the next two years. This will lay a good foundation for further work.

Have a productive February.

Dr. Norman Lorenz,  
Chair, Governing Board  
[nlorenz@rivermontessoricharter.org](mailto:nlorenz@rivermontessoricharter.org)

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## **UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS**

February 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

March 11<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.

April 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

May 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

June 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

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## **JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

Subs, Assistants, and Montessori Guides Wanted! The awareness and expansion of Montessori in the public and private sector has put increasing demand on the supply of Montessori teachers/leaders. If you are interested in learning more about this meaningful and satisfying career, RMCS provides support for training and is interested in you!

Please contact Kelly for more information.



## RIVER FOUNDATION NEWS

Have fun and build community through activities and events that River Montessori Foundation has planned. There continue to be lots of opportunities to get involved with both some familiar and some new events. No matter how small a block of time you have to lend a hand, your participation is welcomed and encouraged. And, it's fun!

And, if you can't participate, consider a [pledge](#) to the River Montessori Annual Fund.

Please mark your calendars with the following events in 2016:

**Friday, February 15, Noon-3:00 pm**  
River Montessori Walk-a-Thon

**April 13-16**  
River Montessori/Copperfield's Book Fair

**Saturday, April 30, 5:30-11:00 pm**  
River Montessori Spring Gala and Casino Night  
Hermann Sons Hall, Petaluma

**Saturday, May 7, 1:00-4:00 pm**  
Creator Faire

We are so very grateful!

Need Tax Help?

**Earn It! Keep It! Save It!**  
**Free Tax Event Kick-off**  
Saturday, January 30  
from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
at Empire College

Trained tax preparers will provide free tax help to those whose household income was less than \$54,000 in 2015. Additional services offered at the kick-off event will include:

- On-site Health Care and CalFresh Enrollment
- Direct Deposit and Bank Services
- Virtual VITA (drop-off and pick-up services for returning filers)

To reserve an appointment time, call 2-1-1; for more information, visit [unitedwaywinecountry.org](http://unitedwaywinecountry.org).



Always, ALWAYS, we continue to be profoundly grateful to our volunteers. We know it

is so hard to capture the entire list of everyone who so generously gives to River.

This month here is a thankful shout to the following:

**Renee Hamley, Anouar & Urszula Dzir, Maureen Buckley, Deb Volat, Courtney Wolfe, Elizabeth Huang, Betty Li, Sean Fannin, Becky Kreutz, Liz Rantissi, Danielle Bolla, Sara Abuyen, Andrea Friedman, Elizabeth Berkowitz, Nancy Feldstein, Mark Edwards, Julie Compton, Karen Orlandi, Bear McGuinness, Stacey Gare, Josh Rosenfeld, Amy Powell, Heather Hartley, Anne Crealock, Sara Koenig, Megin Hallinan, Julie Peterson, Stacey Earl, Danielle Bolla, Jessica Holten, April Rehberg, Lorena Fernandez, Lauren Lutuvakula, Rama Mejia, Amy Loh, Tammara Norman, Danielle Orthwein, David Gomez-Rosales, and our River Montessori Foundation**

*And an extra-special thanks this month to*

**Karen & Tony Arendale** – for the Student Chair Repair, *yet another cycle of repairs!*

**Gary Guest** - For repairs and handywork *whenever* it is needed!

**Johnny Campbell & Tim Pratt of the LED Light Source** for repairing lights as we await the new Prop39-funded solar/ energy efficiency system.

**WISHING FOR...** Carpet squares/samples; Dining Room Hutches/TV Cabinets; Indoor Trees/Plants; Indoor & Outdoor Tables/Chairs/Umbrellas/ White Hydrangeas

**"Many of the key tenets of a Montessori education resonate with the principles of Motivation 3.0 — that children naturally engage in self-directed learning and independent study; that teachers should act as observers and facilitators of that learning, and not as lecturers or commanders; and that children are naturally inclined to experience periods of intense focus, concentration, and flow that adults should do their best not to interrupt. Although Montessori schools are rare at the junior high and high school levels, every school, educator, and parent can learn from its enduring and successful approach."**

...Daniel H. Pink, Drive

*Montessori Matters, "What is Montessori" continued from page 2*

Now, keeping all of that in mind, I want you to ask yourself:

- In any “real world” job, is everyone the same age?
- Are workers all sitting at their desks working on the same thing at the same time?
- Do workers often need to access memorized facts in a timed setting? Of course not.

In a “real world” job, one is expected to be able to work with people at different levels of experience, work well independently and in a group, set up work, concentrate on it, keep it organized, complete it, and put it away. Workers need to try things to see if they work and then learn from their mistakes. They need to be able to problem solve and to communicate effectively.

The top five types of knowledge and skills employers are looking for in the 21st Century were listed by a Gallup poll in this order and are all skills deeply embedded in the Montessori method:

1. Critical thinking and problem solving,
2. information technology application,
3. teamwork and collaboration,
4. creativity and innovation,
5. and diversity training.

Montessori education has been proven to prepare children for the “real world.”

An article titled “Montessori Mafia” in the *Wall Street Journal* by Peter Sims, author of *Little Bets: How Breakthrough Ideas Emerge from Small Discoveries*, states,

“The Montessori educational approach might be the surest route to joining the creative elite, which are so overrepresented by [Montessori] alumni that one might suspect a Montessori Mafia: Google founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin, Amazon’s Jeff Bezos, videogame pioneer Will Wright, and Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales.”

Sims didn’t mention other famous Montessori innovators like Julia Child, Katherine Graham (Pulitzer Prize winning author), Gabriel Garcia Marquez (winner of the Nobel Prize for literature), Yo-Yo Ma (cellist and winner of 15 Grammy Awards), George Clooney (Academy Award winning actor), Helen Keller (who is considered one of the most widely admired people of the 20th Century), and the list goes on.

In 2004 Barbara Walters interviewed Google founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin, and asked them if having college professors as parents was the major factor behind their success. Page stated that more influential than having professorial parents was the fact that, “ We both went to Montessori school, and I think it was part of the training...being self-motivated, questioning what’s going on in the world, doing things a bit differently.”

In the popular magazine *Science*, Angeline Lillard published a study comparing the educational achievement performance of low-income Milwaukee children who attended Montessori preschools versus children attending a variety of other traditional preschools determined by lottery. Lehrer found that by the end of kindergarten, “Montessori students proved to be significantly better prepared for elementary school in reading and math skills than the non-Montessori children. They also tested better on “executive function,” the ability to adapt to changing and more complex problems, an indicator of future school and life success.”

What about Montessori at a high school level? Clark Montessori (a Cincinnati public Montessori school) provided these results of their 88 graduates in 2010: 100% graduation rate. 100% of the graduates went to college. 33% were first generation in their families to attend college, and 33% came from families in need of free or reduced lunches.

So yes, a Montessori education will prepare your child for the “real world” of 21st Century employment. But here’s the added bonus; a Montessori education will also prepare your children for the “real world” of life, learning skills like how to:

- resolve conflicts peacefully.
- build a relationship between themselves and their environment.
- remain curious and a life long learner.

**"There is in every child at every stage a new miracle of vigorous unfolding, which constitutes a new hope, and a new responsibility for all."**

**Erik Erikson**

- treat others with kindness and respect.
- be more interested in the joy of discovery than the value of a grade or paycheck.
- reflect and know how to celebrate their individuality while at the same time knowing how to sacrifice their own desires for the benefit of the whole.

These values have deep roots in Montessori education, and it just so happens they are also what prepare us for how to live fully in the "real world" of life.

So, will a Montessori education prepare your child for the "real world?"

Yes it will.



**Jeff Groh** has been a Montessori educator for 15 years. He taught 4-6<sup>th</sup> graders for 10 of those years in both public and private sectors. During that time he also worked as the Educational Director at the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company, and was the co-founder of a nonprofit theatre dedicated to building community through live storytelling. Jeff has toured the country for a year visiting schools and running teacher/student workshops on how to write, appreciate, and perform poetry. He has worked as an adjunct professor through the Montessori Department at Xavier University and was selected to travel to Seoul, Korea to teach Korean educators about Montessori methods and philosophy. He has received his Masters in Montessori Education and Administrative licensure through Xavier University. For over 10 years Jeff has been running a Shakespeare Club for 9 to 12 year olds and was recognized through the Cincinnati Enquirer as having the only traveling, child ensemble, Shakespeare troupe in the country. From 2012-2015 Jeff was the Assistant Director at The New School Montessori and is now the Head of School.

Please share with us, how are we doing? Is there additional information that you would like to read about in the monthly newsletter, River Current? We're interested!

Send a note to Julile Carolan ([jcarolan@rivermontessoricharter.org](mailto:jcarolan@rivermontessoricharter.org))