

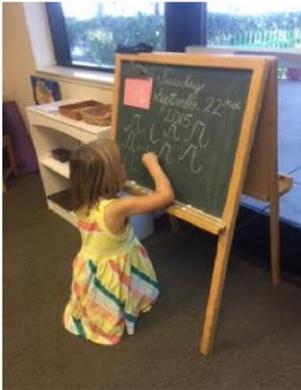


The River Current

October 2015

Dear River Montessori Charter Families,

Welcome Back! We hope that the summer-like weather during our Fall break made for some delightful times for all of you. We are, of course, so happy to welcome you and the children for another quarter of inspired learning. Work periods after breaks in a Montessori environment are famously focused and so very beautiful to watch~ it's as if the children cannot get enough work! Of course, as Montessorians we are honored to assist your children in their individual interests and personal growth and appreciate your trust in that work.



Thank you, dear parents, for your thoughtful collaboration with conferences! Doing something new can sometimes cause discomfort and yet we were able to embrace the Montessori practice of children participating and leading their conferences with great

success. The anecdotal feedback has been positive so far (watch for this Friday's parent survey for more quantitative data) and we are again affirmed by the Montessori philosophy of children leading their own learning, how greatly it deepens their learning and their possibilities, as well as how the role that they play in communicating such with each other, guides, and families inspires them even more as they coordinate their own supportive feedback loop. It serves as a good example of why we do things differently in a

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October

- 1st – 9th. Fall Break Continued. School closed. River Crew camps available Monday thru Friday.
- 12th Return to School
- 13th Prospective Parent Meeting 6 p.m.
- 15th RMCS Board Meeting 5:30 p.m.
Board Hosted Community Forum 7 - 8 p.m.
- 16th RMF Coffee 8:15 -9
Foundation Meeting 9-10 a.m. in River Crew
- 22nd CalSkate & Donate 6 – 8 p.m.
- 23rd International Family Festival 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.
- 30th History's Mysteries

November

- 2nd Professional Development Day
School closed. River Crew available.
- 6th Ice Skate and Donate, Snoopy's Home Ice 4-5:30 p.m.
- 9th Registration Deadline for Thanksgiving River Crew
- 10th Prospective Parent Meeting 6 p.m.
- 11th Veteran's Day School and River Crew closed.
- 17th RMF Dine and Donate: Mary's Pizza Shack

On the subject of communicating about work in the Montessori classroom, please allow me a moment to apologize for the delay in the roll-out of *Montessori Compass*. We are equally excited and daunted by this on-line lesson/record-keeping program to

"When dealing with children there is greater need for observing than of probing"

Dr. Maria Montessori

maintain a longitudinal database for each student and communicate it well. However, quite simply, it is taking longer than we thought for us to familiarize ourselves with the expansive program, input all the historical academic and individual work/data for students, and simultaneously move forward live-time. A few technological hiccups have not helped the situation either~ the first set of tablets arrived with only a one-way camera which meant only selfies were possible and we are fairly certain you would enjoy pictures of your children at work rather than photos of the guide!

While we have a few ideas about the best way to proceed, we'd like to welcome you to the discussion to ensure that we have considered all perspectives; specifically, a *Community Conversation* about communicating a student's work, progress, and growth in a Montessori Classroom. For all those who are interested, please join us to learn more, share your perspective and experiences with parent portals, and to collaborate on a meaningful solution to communication about work in a Montessori environment!

Community Conversation:

Communicating about Children's Work in a Montessori Classroom

October 27, 2015

5:00-6:00 p.m.

(Childcare Provided - RSVP)

I hope to see you there as we very much appreciate your feedback about the parent experience at RMCS!

Additionally, we hope to see you at the RMCS Board-Hosted *Community Forum* on October 15, 2015, at 7 p.m. This was a great inaugural town-meeting type event last year and we look forward to more dynamic discussions about all things public Montessori at RMCS!

With sincerest gratitude,

Kelly

PROSPECTIVE PARENT MEETINGS

Thank you for sharing with others the benefits of a Montessori Education through RMCS! Many families are looking for a place for their children who love learning but may not realize how this is readily available through a public school. As RMCS families, you know that the best way to understand Montessori is to see it in action... prospective families are welcome to come visit and learn about our school... thank you for inviting your friends and families to give us a call to find out more!

Tell a friend to call- we are always happy to talk to parents! 778-6414

Upcoming 2015 Meetings:

October 13th at 6pm

November 10th at 6pm

Check out the new calendar page on the website.

All school, foundation, and board events can be found in one convenient place!

www.rivermontessoricharter.org/calendars.html



Please remember to park in front of the office or on the street when visiting RMCS. The spots on the east side of the parking lot are

reserved for Cypress Primary School.

Thank you for helping us be good neighbors!



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE ("Peace Day")

was observed

around the world September 21st. River students and staff celebrated with song and story, finishing around RMCS's Peace Pole.



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

Dr. Maria Montessori

RMCS SUPPORTS VALLEY FIRE VICTIMS

Prior to Fall Break, RMCS students gathered change in a "**River of Change**" campaign, with proceeds going to the Lake County Valley Fire victims. **Thank you** to all who have brought in jars and bags of change!



ROWING WITH RIVER CREW...



Welcome River Crew Before & After School Care

Greetings and Salutations!

Please find some general information about our service below, if you would like to know more please do not hesitate to contact River Crew Director, Luis Villacreces at rivercrew@rivermontessoricharter.org, or talk to one of our River Crew Educators. Newsletters will be posted at River Crew and distributed to parents with more information as the program evolve.

How your children get to After School

River Crew Educators will be waiting to meet your children at "River Crew" at the end of the school day, when the "bell rings" at approximately 3:15 pm and after car line has finished. Children sign themselves in, and River Crew Educators then mark the roll. If a child is not in attendance without notification Educators will call Parents and/or Emergency contacts to locate your child. If your child is going to be absent from the service for any reason please call (707)778.6414.

Afternoon Tea

We supply a healthy snack and fresh drinking water every afternoon. This consists of a selection of fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as crackers, wraps, pasta and other menu items as suggested by the children. This is generally served at around 3.45pm.

Weekly Program

Our program is structured in Plan Activities for the week. Plans include structure, with play and leisure being main



components. We plan activities based on children's interests, educator's skills and community events. We also run specialized activities that are presented once a week for a term; these may include our Outdoor Adventures, Chess Club and Sign Language, Spanish, cooking, Gardening, Art, and structured Sports Skills sessions. All activities are evaluated on a daily basis by educators and children. Past Programming and Evaluation documentation is available for you to look at any time. Our weekly program and menu is displayed every week near the sign out area. Please visit River Crew on the RMCS website for more information.

Reminders:

- * If for any reason your child is not going to be attending the program, you need to call the After School Program Office directly at (707) 778-6414 **before 3:00 p.m.** that day.
- * It is recommended that toys, games, and electronics be kept at home.
- * September 28 to October 9 we will be offering two fall camps:

- Spanish Immersion Educational Program
- Cooking Camp

Cleaning out??

Any donation of board games, including chess, craft materials, or books to the program would be greatly appreciated!

Respectfully,

River Crew Educators:

Maddy Condon-Lorenz, Azucena Quiñones, and Cordelia Kritz.

WISHING FOR...

Carpet squares/samples
Dining Room Hutches/TV Cabinets
Indoor Trees/Plants
Outdoor Tables/Chairs/Umbrellas

"Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment."

TOUCH-A-TRUCK / ALEX'S LEMONADE STAND

Our September 12th event was fun for all! Lots of different trucks and vehicles. What a wonderful beginning to what we hope will be a recurring event for the River community.



RMCS was able to raise \$700 toward our \$2000 goal in helping with a cure for childhood cancer. You can still visit and donate

through www.alexlemonade.org. (Search for the RMCS Stand on the site).

MONTESSORI MATTERS

Self-Direction is the Key to Mastery

By [Christopher Chase](#), the Art of Learning
posted: February 17, 2014

"What you love to do you will do well." ~Japanese proverb

What do Thomas Edison, Vincent Van Gogh, Maya Angelou, Bob Dylan, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, John Lennon, Steve Jobs, Jimi Hendrix, Albert Einstein, Abraham Lincoln and Malcolm X have in common? What's shared by all of them- and key for many who we call "gifted" or "genius"- is that their learning was highly self-motivated and self-directed.

They didn't develop their skills in schools, and much of what they learned did not come directly from teachers. Yet they were students and learners, who learned by imitation and absorption from talented people who went before them, then applied themselves tirelessly to what motivated and interested them.

Bob Dylan was obsessed with folk songs and the music of Woody Guthrie, listening to his records endlessly and imitating his style. The poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning educated herself by reading literature and studying Shakespeare on her own.

Einstein was bored and frustrated in school but studied at home and thought about physics all day long as he worked in a post office. Jimmy Hendrix imitated the styles of blues guitarists he loved and walked around the house with his guitar, practicing non-stop throughout the day.

Malcolm X initially did well in school, but then dropped out after being told by a white teacher that his dream of being a lawyer was "no realistic goal for a nigger." He got into crime, was arrested, and then continued his education on his own, with the help of the prison library.

Van Gogh was a Christian minister and art seller who (inspired by the paintings around him) didn't start to paint himself until he was in his twenties. He then began by imitating a wide range of artists, including Japanese prints and Impressionistic pointillism, out of which he eventually developed his own unique and expressive style.

Maya Angelou absorbed countless works of literature and learned several languages on her own. Without any previous experience she wrote, produced and narrated a highly acclaimed documentary series in the late 1960's. Shortly after that she wrote her first autobiography, published in 1969.

Abraham Lincoln failed in business before he started to study law, with only one year of formal schooling. Most of his learning came either through reading books or his own efforts and life experiences.



Steve Jobs went to college and quit after 6 months, though he stuck around the campus and took classes that interested him for a while longer. Much that he learned after that came from work experience, independent study, collaboration with others and his own self-directed efforts.

Thomas Edison did terribly at school, but once he put his mind to a problem he didn't give up.

John Lennon also was a failure at school, but with the Beatles he practiced tirelessly, imitating songs from other bands, learning what kinds of beats and rhythms excited people by watching audience reactions during live shows.

The essential factor with self-directed learning is the time and careful attention put in to master what one enjoys or has an interest in. Talk to anyone you know who is great at sports, music, cooking, art, reading, mathematics or science and you will find that the time, care and effort they put into their passion was absolutely key.

There is no short cut to mastery, as only practice makes perfect. Schools have an essential part to play in helping to educate children, but I think we need to pay much closer attention to the role that a child's own motivation and self-direction play in learning and mastery.

The greatest gift a parent or teacher can give to a child is to encourage them to pursue their passions and show them how to develop their skills. Give them the support, guidance and tools they need but be careful not to get in their way.

FROM RMCS's BOARD CHAIR

Dear River Montessori Community:

As we approach fall and the changes this season brings, we are appreciative of the many developmental changes occurring among our student body. As families and the broader community shine on River Montessori Charter School, development and advancement take shape.



Strategically, I would like to share a few governing board highlights across the first session of our school year that will continue to forge our path as a change agent in education.

Programmatically, our plan proclaims core values that first and foremost, speak of collaboration. To this effort, the governing board and River's Foundation, where parents are assembled and act to support the overall school have met twice this term with a focus on our priorities of Community, Program, and Operation. The board's work has focus on maintaining a sense of open communication regarding the progress we have made this year as well as

addressing the goals and strategies necessary to carry the school forward.

Community:

In our partnership with the Old Adobe School District, the autonomy we continue to experience from them enlightens us as to the trust they have in our capabilities. The outreach we have made across neighborhoods and families are certainly demonstrating themselves with much support in building our program as we expanded TK into a second class this year. The results of this class will truly foster growth in the long range planning our school community. We will also continue building community across all classrooms as they solidify their relationships school wide. As we prepare to enter into our 2nd session time frame of our school year, we will begin to plan for the retreat coming up in January to review and update our strategic plan while inviting the community to be involved. Please see the calendar for dates and invitation times.



Program:

With regard to our program's Montessori curriculum and instruction, the classrooms appear to have normalized rapidly over the past two months. Although we see ourselves with anticipation to follow a continuous improvement model, faculty, staff, and administration are always open to observations around student achievement. Everyone's involvement assures our focus on Montessori pedagogy and ways to increase effectiveness. In light of reporting, we are moving forward with the "Montessori Compass" as our primary communication tool. Pilots have been set up and you'll hear about the progress at upcoming parent-teacher-student conferences as well as the October Forum.

Operation:

With concern to the overall operation, where finances and facility are important, we certainly are pleased with a balanced budget with prospects of potential new revenues as the State continues with our local control funding formula. Our finance committee will keep us abreast of this information as it becomes available. We continue our relationship with the Cypress School, owners of the building and feel their

"Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed."

María Montessori

support as we plan discussions for future expansion, which will also be offered as a talking point at the October Forum.

Finally, in relationship to our ongoing effort to be inclusive with community, the Open Forum is scheduled for Thursday, October 15. Both the governing board and the Foundation will be present to continue the discussion around each of these strategic areas. We trust that all families will enjoy the first break and take respite with your children to reflect on



goals achieved as well as upcoming objectives students and families wish to set for themselves. Meanwhile, happy Fall! As always, your feedback is always encouraged at admin@rivermontessoricharter.org and you're certainly always invited to our governing board meeting for public comment, the first Tuesday of every month with the exception of every other month, when they are on Fridays after school. Once again, thank you for entrusting your children with River Montessori Charter School.

Cordially,

Dr. Norman Lorenz,

Chair, RMCS Governing Board

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

- October 15th at 5:30 p.m.
- November 20th at 1:00 p.m.
- December 8th at 5:30 p.m.
- January 8th at 1 p.m.
- February 9th at 5:30 p.m.
- March 11th at 1:00 p.m.
- April 12th at 5:30 p.m.
- May 10th at 5:30 p.m.
- June 28th at 5:30 p.m.

Board Hosted Community Forum

October 15th at 7 – 8 p.m.

RIVER MONTESSORI FOUNDATION NEWS

Now that the school year is in full swing and families are back into their routines, the River Montessori Foundation has been busy looking ahead to the school year and working to solidify dates for upcoming events. Mark your calendars now for the Spring Gala Casino Night, which will take place on Saturday, April 30 and will be held at the Hermann Sons Hall in Petaluma. In addition to a silent and live auction, the Gala will have a casino theme, complete with fun, casino-style games. And, please refer the Google calendar on the school website often for all upcoming school and Foundation events, from Dine & Donates to board meetings, social gatherings, and more!

While the River Montessori Annual Fund is off to a solid start, we continue to need your help! Please consider donating today through the "Give" section of the Foundation website. No contribution is too small and every dollar you give goes back to our children and our school!

Please remember that the River Montessori Foundation monthly board meetings take place the third Friday of every month at 9:00 am. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Bring your ideas and suggestions!

Finally, many hands make light work. The River Montessori Foundation would like to thank the following:

Karen Orlandi for her continued help with submitting Box Tops as a Foundation fundraiser (\$200 worth!), getting the parent volunteer list in ship shape and for all of her time inputting family contact information for the RMCS Family Directory

Eric Turner for his help and expertise with graphics

Lorena Fernandez and **Eva Corrubias** for help with translating documents into Spanish

Lesli Frederick for scheduling and coordinating Dine & Donates and other retail fundraisers

Betty Li and **Eden Belov** for help with the Foundation calendar and donor list

*"The greatest sign of success for a teacher... is to be able to say,
'The children are now working as if I did not exist.' "*
María Montessori

Todd Franks for delivering pizzas, TWICE, every Monday

Erin Ayres, Dana Wade and **Eden Belov** for facilitating pizza lunch

Courtney Wolfe for facilitating wrap lunch, coordinating River Wear and updating the chalkboard signs

Julie Petersen for all her counsel and consistent updating of the Foundation portion of the Web site

Summer Stubblefield for updating the Foundation Facebook page and the **Stubblefield family** for donating cookies and sweat equity for our first Cookie Car line

Melissa Franks for handling all the pizza and wrap order forms, annual fund donations and the Foundation finances

Lissa Ferreira for taking on the Casino portion of the Spring Gala Casino night

Danielle Orthwein for picking up and delivering milk for pizza and wrap lunches

Heather Strong and **Jennie Kadrioski** for picking up, washing and returning pizza lunch dishes every week

Parry Wolfe for reinvigorating our chalkboard and egret signs

Eden Belov and **Nancy Feldstein** for their continued counsel

All the parents who attended the brainstorming meeting for the **Lagunitas Social**

All the families who have generously given to the **RMF Annual Fund**

Hope you had a great and restful break! Always be sure to read your weekly Foundation Flash emails for all the latest and greatest news from the RMF!

*What a wonderfully busy month...**MORE GRATITUDE** for our RMCS community:*

Tamara Norman, Karen Orlandi, and Ben McGuinness, for their unending commitment to the garden

Amy Atchley for providing reading help *AND* for bringing lemonade to Copper Creek on one of our very hot days

Betty Li, Eden Belove and **Dana Wade** for pasta lunch help

Deb Volat, help in San Lorenzo

Sean Fannin supporting San Lorenzo with P.E.

Jim Kimbel for chair donation to Copper Creek

Pauline Tilderer and **Eden Belov** for organizing art in San Lorenzo

Elizabeth Berkowitz and **Shamitri Perera** for organizing art in Yuba

Ruben Mejia for helping (putting film on) window to keep our students cooler

Lisa Baird and **Eric Turner** for help on Burrito Lunch day

Stacey Earl for reading help in Ellis Creek

Liz Rantissi for your continued help in Kaweah

Courtney Wolfe and **Andrea Friedman** for helping with Copper Creek class hike

Mark Edwards for helping Yuba students with cooking

Jessica Holten for reading help in Ellis Creek

Alexa Hicks for helping with Yuba food day

Rebekah Kreutz for help with pizza lunch and so many of the things you do for River community

Heather Strong for keeping our dishes clean and ready to use

April Rehberg for laminating help for Ellis Creek

Tom Robinson for help in Kaweah

Heather Hartley for P.E. help

