

# The Montessori Lexis

February 12, 2009 The Montessori School of Bowling 515 Sandridge Road Bowling Green Ohio 419-352-4203

## This Week's Focus: Cultural Diversity

**“The needs of mankind are universal. Our means of meeting them create the richness and diversity of the planet. The Montessori child should come to relish the texture of that diversity.”**

**Maria Montessori**

Maria Montessori believed that social reform was possible through children and developed a special curriculum and materials to succeed in this endeavor. This curriculum is based on the needs of humans. All humans have the same basic fundamental needs. Fundamental needs are divided into two areas, material needs and spiritual needs. Material needs include food, clothing, shelter, safety and other factors that contribute to a secure and comfortable existence. When all the basic needs are provided, humans have a desire for artistic, cultural, social and religious expression and interaction. These needs transcend all cultures and all times.

Maria Montessori spent much of her later life developing her curriculum while exiled in India. Montessori was exiled by Mussolini mostly because she refused to compromise her principles and make the children into soldiers. In the year 1939, the Theosophical Society of India extended an invitation asking Maria Montessori to visit India. She accepted the invitation. During a teachers conference in India she was interned by the authorities and lived there for the duration of the war.

She felt that world peace could be attained by educating young children about different cultures. “When children are accustomed, from earliest childhood onwards, to consider those who surround them as a source of help to explore the world, they are not tempted to adopt a wary or hostile attitude towards men who belong to different races or religions. At a later date, children raised according to these principles will be of great help in the construction of a peaceful society.”

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Our school is participating in a community service project called “Jump Rope for Heart” to benefit both the American Heart Association and our school. On February 18<sup>th</sup> 2008, as a part of a physical education class, we will hold a Jump Rope for Heart Event. The students will be able to compete in different jump rope activities. Students have received a letter and envelope for their donations. Please consider supporting this cause, this year, by returning the donation envelope by **March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009**. Last year

Montessori children jumped rope and raised over \$1500.

Thank you, Miss Antonia

## Alumni Focus

## Duncan Gromko

I attended the Montessori school in Bowling Green from kindergarten until the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. It was a formative experience in my life and I am very grateful for it.

When I changed schools in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, the difference between the other students and I was obvious. In terms of testable skills like math or reading comprehension, I was definitely above average, but that wasn't the most striking difference. What made me stand out at Maumee Valley Country Day was that I was excited about learning. Whenever a teacher asked for participation or engagement from their students, I was the first one with my hand in the air. I enjoyed the challenge of complicated math problems and the books we read. More than anything else, at Montessori, I learned to like learning. Sadly, as peer acceptance became more important to me, I slowly became aware that it wasn't cool to be so excited about school. But even though I may have internalized my excitement back a little bit, I have never lost my enthusiasm for learning new things.

That quality has served me well during my subsequent education. In 2003, I went to Swarthmore College, one of the best liberal arts schools in the nation. Swarthmore was very demanding and my excitement for learning was critical to my success there. As the tedium of higher education wore on and distractions presented themselves, I was still engaging myself in my studies and other activities outside the classroom. My junior year I joined a newly founded college radio program called War News Radio. We reported on the war in Iraq from Philadelphia, PA. Despite the physical distance, I think we had some of the most in depth reporting of the war at that time; we were picked up by over 500 radio stations. I graduated from Swarthmore with High Honors.

Another quality instilled in me by Montessori was empathy for others. The teachers at the school (the now retired 'Miss Marie,' in particular) were interested in the development of the whole child, not just his/her formal education. This has led me to my current employment: serving in the Peace Corps in rural Morocco. I have been living in my small (400 people) mountain village for eight months. My work title here is "health educator," but that does not begin to describe my work. In order to be an effective health educator, I have had to integrate into the community and learn the local language (Tamazight, known as Berber). I think that by winning the trust and appreciation of my community, I can better serve them. The project that I am most proud of so far is the Traditional Birth Attendant training that I put on with another volunteer. Being isolated from professional health care, women give birth in their home with the help of women. The goal of this training was to equip the women who assist in these births so they can better help their community. As a man in a Muslim culture, I was limited in helping with some of the technical aspects of the training, but it was very rewarding nonetheless.

Montessori isn't responsible for everything that I've become, but it had a large impact. The unique teaching style at the school empowers children and makes them more independent. Rather than being asked to memorize dates and facts, students are challenged to understand concepts. By engaging the child, Montessori makes learning exciting.

### Calendar of Events

No School February 13, 2009  
 Professional Development  
 No School February 16, 2009  
 President's Day  
 Wolf Den, Cub Scouts February 17, 2009  
 Chess Club February 18, 2009  
 Brownies Troop 470 February 19, 2009  
 PTO/State of the School Address  
 6:30 pm February 19, 2009  
 Egyptian Wax Museum 3:00 pm  
 Open to All February 20, 2009  
 Egyptian Themed Dance 6:00 – 8:00pm  
 Grades 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> February 20, 2009



### Calendar of Events

Cub Scouts Pinewood Derby  
 9:00 am February 21, 2009  
 "Open House" at Wood County Library  
 2:00 – 5:00 pm February 22, 2009  
 Montessori Education Week Feb. 23-27  
 Monday Parent Appreciation  
 Tuesday Staff Appreciation  
 Wednesday Student Appreciation  
 Thursday School Appreciation  
 Friday Community Appreciation  
 Chess Club February 25, 2009  
 Brownies Troop 1031 February 26, 2009  
 Montessori Gala February 27, 2009

## Early Childhood

### Room 204

For young children learning about cultural diversity is important to help eliminate stereotyping and become aware of the idea that being different is good. Just as they are beginning to talk a mile a minute they are also beginning to notice how they are similar and different to their peers in the class. In order to appropriately address their questions about those who may not look and act the same we have taken joy in actively exploring other cultures.

Before winter break we learned about the different holidays celebrated in December. We explored Kwanzaa, Hanukah, and Christmas through stories, crafts, and pictures. We were very fortunate to have Julie Albert come in to discuss the history of Hanukah and the traditions and celebrations that occur during the eight days of celebration. We were fortunate to get to taste potato Latkes and make some of our own! Martin Luther King Day had occurred very close to the inauguration, giving us a wonderful opportunity to really discuss the value of cultural diversity.

These past few weeks our class has been exploring the excitement of the Chinese New Year by reading stories, making crafts and parading around our school in our dragon headdresses.

Your children are becoming more aware of the world in which they live in each day. We know and understand that diversity may be a large concept for them to completely comprehend but we are hoping to spark questions so that we can address them in a safe and comfortable environment. We are looking forward to exploring more cultures in the months to come.

Pax and Family

### Room 206

There are many things that we do in the classroom to widen your children's experience of our world. One way to do that is to introduce them to cultures and traditions that are new to them. Exposing children to other cultures and traditions allows them to be more accepting and tolerant of those that are different from themselves. Recently, we have been learning about the Chinese New Year. We have discussed many of the traditions and experiences that go hand in hand with Chinese New Year. For instance, it is celebrated for 15 days with the last day ending in a large parade of dragons. The dragons are used to scare away all of the bad luck so everyone will have a good rest of the year. To make this more concrete for the children we too got ready for a parade. We made paper lanterns and decorated our classroom. Finally we each made our very own dragons and had a parade throughout the school to scare away any bad luck to ensure a good rest of the year for our whole school community.

We also talked about Martin Luther King Jr. and how he wanted a world where everyone would be able to get along with each other. It doesn't matter what color your skin, hair, or eyes are. It only matters that we care about each other. For this we traced everyone's hands and then I cut them out. Ms. Christy made a map of the world and turned it into a poster. At circle we passed out our hands. One of the hands went onto the world and then we used the other to give our hand in friendship to the person next to us. Our hands around the world poster is a great addition to our classroom. Stop in and see. It is on the wall by our culture area.

General classroom updates:

Please provide your children with healthy snack choices. Their growing bodies work better on fruits and vegetables than they do on cookies and pudding.

When picking up your child we are asking that you go to the side door of the school from the playground and not back through the classroom. This keeps our floors clean and dry.

We are also in need of small paper plates for snack.

In Peace,

Miss Brenda, Miss Christy and Miss Jennifer

## Room 208

Happy Valentine's Day to all of you! The children have been busy decorating their Valentine's Day bags. They were so excited to pass out their valentines to all of their friends.

In the classroom we celebrate the cultural diversity of the people around the world. During the month of December we celebrated Hanukah, Kwanzaa and Christmas. Your children know a lot about these holidays and shared their knowledge with all of us. We explored many activities that were associated with these special days.

In January we talked about Martin Luther King, Jr. and what he did for African-American people and our country. The children realized he was a peacemaker and was a great man. We also talked about how we were all a part of history with the election and inauguration of Barrack Obama on January 20<sup>th</sup>.

The children have been enjoying the celebration of the new Chinese New Year. Our room is decorated with colorful paper lanterns the children have made. They are festive! Each child has created a Chinese dragon mask complete with a colored tail. We have read several books that have explained activities and customs celebrated during Chinese New Year. We know that parades are common with colorful dragon costumes. On Wednesday the children paraded through all the classrooms with their colorful dragon masks. What fun we had!

Every opportunity we have we talk about cultural diversity in our world. When children are exposed to differences among people we hope they will begin to think outside of themselves. Your children know even though we may be different we all have the same "lovelight."

Miss Cindy, Miss Erin, Miss Sarah

## Lower Elementary

In Lower Elementary, learning about cultural diversity is often through celebrations. We are lucky to have families with diverse backgrounds that are willing to share information about their traditions and celebrations. In past years we have celebrated St. Luca Day, Hanukah, Kwanzaa, Divali and Las Posadas.

Each year we study two continents. Through a variety of materials we explore the geography and cultures of each area. Foreign exchange students from BGSU have often shared information about their country through photos and artifacts. Past presentations have been from Africa, China, Canada and Japan. Parents and local community members have also visited and shared their knowledge of Italy, Sweden and Australia. Each presentation helps the Lower Elementary students see the similarities and differences they have with people in other places and countries.

In addition to classroom work and presentations, Miss Amanda works hard to incorporate the arts and traditions of the cultures we are studying. Our music curriculum includes a wide variety of songs, dance and instruments from around the world.

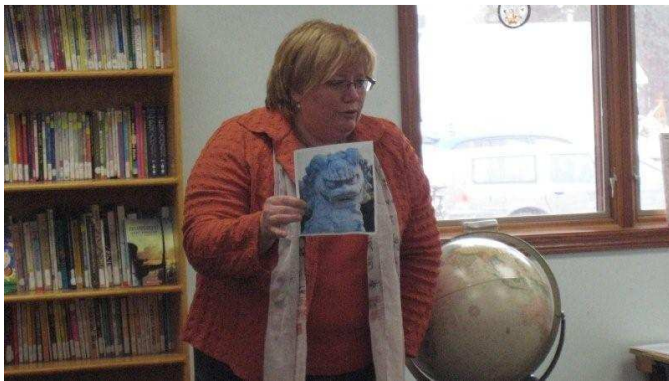
Currently, we are celebrating Black History month through a variety of biographies of famous African-Americans. Some of the biographies include stories about Marian Anderson, Jackie Robinson, Harriet Tubman, Jesse Owens, Shirley Chisholm and Duke Ellington.

## Upper Elementary

Did you know that the Chinese New Year lasts two weeks? On January 26<sup>th</sup> Sandy Rogers and her friend Cynthia came to the classroom and gave us an informative lesson on the Chinese culture. We ate traditional foods and heard the story of a mythical monster that has the body of an elephant, the face of a lion, and the legs of a cheetah. This tale explains the root of traditions that are associated with the Chinese New Year.

Our 4<sup>th</sup> year students do a yearlong study of world biomes. In this study the students look at world climates and the people and animals that live in these climates. This work looks at the needs of humans and how we meet these needs in the environments that we live in. All people need food, shelter, and clothing and we use materials that are available in our environments to meet these needs. People and animals that live in polar regions live and look different than people in tropical regions. Maria Montessori hoped that if children understood that people of all cultures are fundamentally the same, we could live together in peace. This study of the needs of humans permeates all areas of the cultural sciences in the Montessori classroom. The study of history does not go from war to war. We study the needs of humans in ancient cultures too.

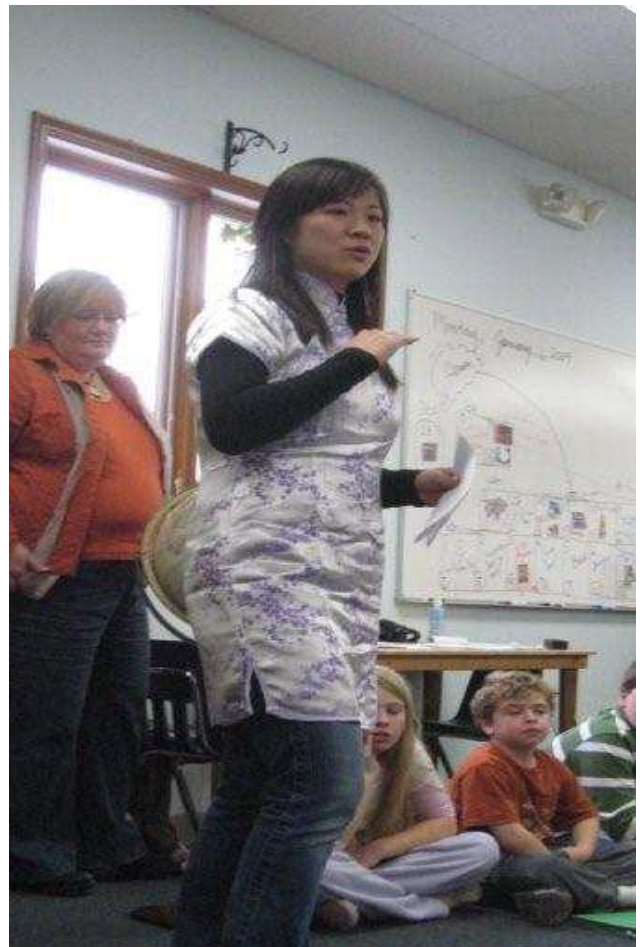
Deb/Megan



Sandy Rogers shows a Chinese monster.



Our class had a fun time learning about Chinese culture.



Cynthia in traditional Chinese dress.



Early Childhood students paraded throughout the school, weaving in and out of classrooms wearing their Chinese masks and waving their long dragon tails.

### MSBG Community

On February 19, 2009 at 6:30 pm there will be a PTO meeting/State of the School Address. If you don't normally attend PTO meetings, this is not one to miss. The Board President, Rob Kleine and Miss Natalie will be giving a picture of the school's overall health.

### Open House To Be Held At Public Library

On February 22, 2009 from 2:00 – 5:00 pm we will be hosting an “open house” for our school at the Wood County Public Library. In the past, it has been customary to have an open house at our school however this year we have been looking at building synergy into our events. In honor of our upcoming Montessori Education Week along with the desire to reach out to the community at large, we selected the public library. We will have a short presentation titled “Montessori in a Nutshell” followed by demonstrations of our manipulatives. Teachers and staff will be on hand to educate, answer questions and advocate for our exceptional teaching philosophy. If you are in the decision-making process concerning where your child will attend school next year...or if you are just curious and want to come out to support the school...please join us! It's always exciting to see our teaching philosophy in action. Also, please check out our beautiful display in the glass cases near the front entrance of the public library. We hope you will consider joining us to learn more about the incredible gift of Montessori education that you are giving your child.

-Miss Natalie



# Montessori School of Bowling Green

Presents

## Montessori in a Nutshell

**Sunday, February 22, 2009**

Wood County Public Library

**Hear a short presentation on Montessori education.**

**See a live demonstration of Montessori materials.**

**Touch the possibility of something more for your child's education!**

**Ongoing presentations start at 2:00 pm.**

Students at the Montessori School of Bowling Green (MSBG) enjoy a peaceful environment that emphasizes the use of natural curiosity to develop a lifetime love of learning. Classrooms stimulate all of the senses...student to teacher ratios are low...foreign language starts at age 3...time management is mastered...and more!

**See why our students test multiple grade-levels above their peers!**

Teachers and staff will be on hand not only to present but also to answer any questions you might have regarding a Montessori education at MSBG. All are welcome to sign up for a personal tour of the school which is located at 515 Sand Ridge Road in Bowling Green. Enrollment for the next school year will begin in March.

*"First the education of the senses, then the education of the intellect."  
--Maria Montessori*

**For more information please contact the  
Montessori School of Bowling Green at 419-352-4203**