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Edited by Eloise Rochelle

It's a first! Grandparent's and Grand-friend's Day

On Grandparent's day, all our Early Childhood students will welcome their grandparents and grand-friends to the school. The children will show them all their favorite class work and give an energetic tour of the playgrounds.

This big event will take place on Saturday morning, November 21, between 9 and 10:30 AM. And, of course, there will be snacks to share, too.

Evening Learning Programs coming up

Every year School of the Woods hosts five get-acquainted evenings for anyone interested in learning about Montessori education. The events are publicized and draw people from the general public, as well as parents whose children are already enrolled here. These programs are structured as full-evening events.

The first two are held in November -- Middle School on November 9 and High School on November 10. The Middle School program should be especially interesting to parents of children now in both elementary levels. They can learn how Montessori tenets blend seamlessly from elementary grades to middle school years and how the curriculum is organized at this level.

Likewise, the High School program concerns the same matters as they pertain to the older adolescent student.

Evening Learning Programs for Early Childhood, Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary levels are held in January. Reservations are not required. All programs start at 7 PM.



Saturday
February 27

We have a fine selection Of art exhibits this fall

On the home front, the **Museum of Fine Arts, Houston**, at 1001 Bissonnet, is offering several interesting exhibits. Check website for admittance information.

Pleasure and Piety: The Art of Joachim Wtewael (1566-1638) opened on November 1 and will be on view through January 31. He was considered a great master of the Dutch Golden Age. There are 35 paintings and a selection of



drawings in this show. It was organized by the Centraal Museum Utrecht, the National Gallery in Washington, DC, MFAH, and the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation.

An exhibit titled *Contingent Beauty: Contemporary Art from Latin America* will open at MFAH on November 22 and run through February 28, 2016. It features a selection of major works by 21 established artists from Argentina, Brazil,



Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, and Venezuela. Using a variety of media, these contemporary artists convey their social, political, and environmental concerns. Primarily from the Museum's permanent and

comprehensive collection of modern Latin American art, nearly all of the 32 works have been acquired over the last five years.

A third exhibit at MFAH is *Arts of Islamic Lands: Selections from the al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait*. It opened in January of this year and will continue on exhibit through January 29, 2017. The Collection is one of the greatest privately-held collections of Islamic art in the world.



This exhibit follows a similar one in 2012, but triples the number of objects to 250. They were made from the 8th to 18th centuries in North Africa, the Middle East, Turkey, India, Iberian Peninsula and Central Asia.

Houston's **Menil Collection** offers two interesting exhibits. *MicroCosmos / Details from the Carpenter Collection* of

Arctic Art is an extensive collection of artifacts from the Old Bering Sea cultures of coastal Alaska and Siberia ca.



250 BCE-1000CE. Included are Paleo-Eskimo object and masks from the Yup'ik people. This collection was assembled by Edmund Carpenter and his wife, Adelaide de Menil, and will close on February 21, 2016.

This museum also has another exhibit of great interest. Anyone who's ever done any cemetery-hopping is familiar with

rubbings. This exhibit is titled *Apparitions: Frottages and Rubbings from 1860 to Now*. In Britain there has been enthusiasm for rubbings since the early 19th century, but evidence for it elsewhere too has been traced back to the 6th century CE. *Apparitions* was co-organized by the Menil and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles.



The Menil Collection is located at 1523 Sul Ross and is open from Wednesday through Sunday, from 11 AM to 7 PM. Admission is free.

RAMBLE OUT OF TOWN: Several exhibits would make fine excuses for weekend trips. The **Blanton Museum of Art** in Austin has an intriguing show - *Re-envisioning the Virgin Mary; Colonial Painting from South America*. It ends on July 3, 2016, and is located at 200 E. MLK Jr. Blvd.



The **Kimbell Art Museum** in Fort Worth is showing *The Brothers LeNain: Painters of 17th Century France*, a first for the three brothers in the US. Closes on September 11, 2016. Organized by the Kimbell, the Museums of San Francisco and Musee du Louvre-Lens.

The **Amon Carter Museum**, also in Fort Worth, has a fine show, *Self-Taught Genius: Treasures from the American Folk Art Museum*. More than 100 works highlight the role of folk and self-taught artists in American history. Ends January 3, 2016.



Knowing who your child is

Wouldn't it be great if we had an internal compass to let us know what direction we were headed?

Actually we are born with a tendency to attach positively to the people, objects, ideas and nature that surround us. Our preferences for interaction with our environment create our compass.

Unfortunately, we can't read this compass easily until we are older. Too often by the time we have the skills to read our compass, fulfilling the wishes of others rather than achieving our own desires has diminished our sense of direction. What we choose to do determines whom we become. Our choices make us who we are.

As a baby, did you prefer to sit and watch, or did you want to be in the middle of the hubbub. Were you a picky eater or not? Did you climb trees, or were you down on the ground telling others to be careful? What does your child love to do? What does he or she avoid? Why?

As we observe our children and their choices, we begin to see who they truly are. Conversely, if we are retrospective about our own choices we can see more clearly who we are.

Mindful observation can help us gain valuable personal insight.

When we know what we like to do, and do what we like to do, we fall into a lucky group of people who has a sense of purpose. When we possess a sense of purpose and focus on that purpose, we develop passion.

With passion we want to grow and know. We want to do the work of getting where we want to go. We want to do the job we are meant to do. Our self-awareness allows us to feel fulfilled in our day-to-day efforts and relationships.

As we observe our children at work and play and see their preferences, we begin to understand our children in powerful ways. We begin to see who they really are, and how we might be of help to them in order for them to find purpose, passion and fulfillment.

Accomplished people have a strong sense of their unique abilities and what they would like to do next. They know who they are and where they are going. They are the CEO's of their lives.

Once we know what we would like to do, we have direction. Our direction helps us develop skills and develop opportunities to grow. Being aware of our direction-what we want to do-we plan, we seek advice, we use our time, energy, money and more in order to reach our goals. We acknowledge our strengths and lead with that power. We use our

awareness to help us overcome weaknesses that might become obstacles to our growth.

As we follow the child, we help that child make choices within limits of responsibility and safety. For the 18-month-old whose beginning vocabulary and activities includes the word "ball", perhaps we'll see a love of ball-playing that leads to a love of coaching as an adult, not only sports, but by helping people problem solve and see themselves as valuable.

Perhaps the ten-year-old who spends hours making patterns out of colored wooden shapes, finds purpose in her twenties by designing and creating quilts.

Perhaps the five-year-old's requests for you to read to them about animals leads to more desire to learn about animals, with him or her becoming a vet, an animal trainer, or pet owner.

Once we become aware of what we like to do and why, our purpose follows. Know who your child really is.

Watch.

Maren Schmidt, M.Ed.
www.kidstalk.com

Putting Your Trust in the Process

Margot Garfield Anderson
(The Montessori Foundation)

One of the first things I do each morning when I start my workday is to read *Google Alerts*. This is a search engine I have entered into my profile that sends me links to any major newspaper articles or blogs from around the globe that contain the keyword *Montessori*. I recently read this interesting article written by a Montessori teacher named Pilar Lozano, who teaches in California. I talked with Pilar about this article and received her permission to share excerpts with our readers.

Nurturing and sustaining community is a prevailing theme, not just in this issue of *Tomorrow's Child* and at our November Florida conference but in Montessori in general. We achieve this by making certain that our school families have a solid understanding of how Montessori is best practiced at school and at home; however, since most of our parents have non-Montessori educational backgrounds, it is often challenging to ask them to put aside the 'known' and just let the process work the way it was designed.

Pilar speaks about how to achieve the balance between parent expectations and best Montessori practice and how we need to encourage and educate parents to put trust in the process. Here are some scenarios that often confront administrators, guides, and parents – with some suggestions as to how these might be best addressed.

Scenario 1: "Montessori education allows the child to explore with the materials, get stuck, make mistakes, work through challenges, and ask for help if necessary (preferably from an older child)."

Parents often wonder why the teachers don't step in to 'help' or correct a child's mistakes.

A Montessori response: By letting the children go through this process they gain a tremendous sense of accomplishment that leads to more self-confidence and independence. When a parent can see that as the end-game result they tend to relax enough to allow this to happen. The teachers are trained observers and know when they need to intervene or not, as the case may be.

Children need to learn how to work through a frustrating or difficult task in order to master a skill set or lesson. If a teacher or parent is always on hand to rescue or complete something for the child, there is no real lesson learned.

Scenario 2: "Montessori education is a process; some days are peaceful, some days are active. Some days are so beautiful, you wish they would never end; some days everything falls apart and you end up sitting everyone down and singing *The Wheels on the Bus* while counting the seconds until pickup time. "

Parents often expect that what they will find each time they visit the class will be similar to the last time they dropped in. If not, perhaps something is wrong!

A Montessori response. While consistency is a key factor and a real basic precept in the classroom, parents need to understand that the flow of the class will ebb and wane throughout the year. Pilar explains that if parents observe something different from one observation to the next, they should not fear that something has gone wrong. Again, trust in the process.

Scenario 3: Montessori education encourages the teacher to focus on the presentation being given and the child who is receiving it; she will observe any inappropriate behavior on the other side of the classroom and address it when she finishes presenting.”

Parents often expect teachers to “nip any negative behavior in the bud.” This prevents children from learning how to work things out amongst themselves.

A Montessori response: This, in no way, implies that a teacher would allow a situation that could cause harm or total disruption in the classroom to continue. Parents should expect a teacher to address the situation and help the child understand that there are consequences for actions and limits on unacceptable behavior in the classroom. Teachers are trained to figure out if there’s something else causing the behavioral issue and help the child understand what he or she may need.

Scenario 4: “Montessori education allows sweaters and lunch boxes to be left in the classroom by tots who are learning to be responsible.”

Parents are sometimes frustrated and concerned when their children leave things at school and wonder why the teachers do not double check that nothing is left behind.

A Montessori response: By the end of the year, parents will see tremendous growth in their child’s ability not only to care for the classroom environment but for their personal belongings at home, as well. When parents reinforce behaviors in the same way as the teachers, the message to the child is not just better learned but there is less frustration for all. Remember, a small child will, from time to time, forget or misplace objects such as lunch boxes and mittens. (I seem to lose my cell

phone and car keys on a daily basis.) But, by having a place for everything to go back to, such as the classroom, helps everyone in this scenario.

Scenario 5: Montessori education provides children with an inspiring environment in which to develop awareness, discover the joy of learning, and become increasingly independent – not just physically, but also emotionally.”

Sometimes, parents with children enrolled in Montessori wish the school would be different: more structured, more focused on predictable lessons and progress and teacher-directed learning. While this instinctive wish for a more familiar and more traditional approach may seem natural, it actually fosters children’s dependence on adults, rather than independence and self-motivation.

A Montessori response: We all want to believe that the parents who have committed themselves to providing a Montessori education for the families want the best for their child(ren). That is why they chose this dynamic approach to learning. When a parent first observes a Montessori classroom, what seems to draw them in is the ability of young children to develop the skills needed to become lifelong learners who are self-directed, self-sufficient, confident, and filled with joy and wonderment of the world and its surroundings. This is only possible when you put your trust in the Montessori credentialed teachers who lead your child’s class and the community to which you now belong.

In view of the fact that Montessori education is different from the traditional classroom, School of the Woods is committed to providing information on a regular basis to our parents so they can better understand the basic principles of the system.

... Adapted from the article in “Tomorrow’s Child,” March 2010

Let's all say thanks on Fibonacci Day, Nov. 23

This day, November 23, is unofficially celebrated in honor of one of the most famous names in mathematics because of its numbers – 1,1,2,3. The famous name was Leonardo Pisano, born in Pisa (1175-1250).



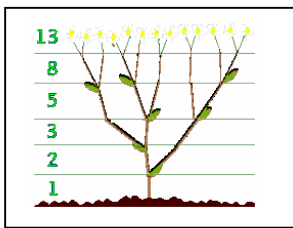
He became known as Fibonacci due to his father's name, Bonacci, and the complicated ways of naming in many cultures. Fibonacci grew up in North Africa where his father was a customs officer. He was educated by the Moors (probably in Algeria), and as an adult, travelled widely on business trips through Algeria, Egypt, Greece, Sicily and Provence. He seems to have absorbed tremendous amounts of knowledge along the way.

In 1200, he returned to Pisa and used that knowledge to write a book, *Liber Abaci*. This book introduced the Latin-speaking world to the decimal number system and the concept of a symbol for zero. Here are its first lines:

"These are the nine figures of the Indians: 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1. With these nine figures, and with the sign 0 which in Arabic is called zephirum, any number can be written, as will be demonstrated." (Note: the word zephirum means 'empty'.)

Think how important that statement is. No more wrestling with Roman numerals. Think about trying to do bookkeeping or al-jabr with Roman numerals. But this accomplishment was not his only one. Fibonacci also experimented with mathematical probabilities. He sequenced the lineage of a male bee, which showed one parent, two grandparents, three great-grandparents, five great-great-grandparents and eight great-great-great-grandparents: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8. For a female bee, these numbers are 2, 3, 5, 8, 13.

This is the Fibonacci number sequence: [0+1=1] [1+1=2] [1+2=3] [2+3=5] [3+5=8] [5+8=13], etc. 21, 34, 55, 89, 144, 233, 377, 610, 987, 1597, and so on. These numbers are found to be true in nature – plants, animals, any living creature – and also in chemicals and chemical compounds, and in the universe.



Although these advancements in scientific knowledge were the work of Fibonacci, the underlying mathematic precepts and number sequence originated with an ancient

mathematician named Pingala, in India. Personal information about this man is sketchy but his lifetime has been estimated at between 200 and 400 BC. And he is known as the originator of binary numeral system.

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Sources; All Empires History Forum, www.allempires.com, *Date of Pingala*; The Life and Numbers of Fibonacci, + plus Magazine, <https://plus.maths.org>, Dr. R. Knott, University of Surrey, UK, 2013.

What is your net worth?

Have you ever wondered just what it is that makes up the bag of skin and bones we lug around every day?

In case you have, you will be pleased to know that the U.S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils has anticipated the question and provided the answer.

They calculated the chemical and mineral composition of the human body and it breaks down like this:

- 65% Oxygen
- 18% Carbon
- 10% Hydrogen
- 3% Nitrogen
- 1.5% Calcium
- 1% Phosphorous
- 0.35% Potassium
- 0.25% Sulfur
- 0.15% Sodium
- 0.15% Chlorine
- 0.05% Magnesium
- 0.0004% Iron
- 0.0004% Iodine

Additionally, we have trace quantities of even more elements – fluorine, silicon, manganese, zinc, copper, aluminum, and arsenic.

Not too impressive a list, but the scheme seems to work pretty well.

One popular dollar figure used in evaluating these components is \$4.72.

Montessori - More Relevant Than Ever

by Elizabeth Stepankiw

Dr. Montessori must have been an incredible observer/ scientist. You may see her picture on Italian coins or paper bills. She was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and the first woman to become a medical doctor in Italy.

But more than anything, she should be known for her acute powers of observation. A scientist must have good powers of observation and must be able to ask questions based on observations.

Questions become hypothesis and then experiments are devised to prove or disprove the hypothesis. If you get the results you expected from your hypothesis, your ideas do not become fact. You create a theory. Other scientists must be able to repeat your experiments many times before theory becomes fact.

Dr. Montessori didn't have the means to test her theories of human development in the way we do today. She had no MRI's, CAT scans, or rats in labs. She did have incredible powers of observation-her genius was in her ability to understand the principles of human development from her observations. She defined some basic ideas about child development and how to maximize the human potential of our children and tested them out in specially designed classrooms.

She concluded that: the environment plays a pivotal role in human growth, learning is self-driven/directed, we learn to concentrate when we are working toward mastery, repetition is how we learn (the brain is like a muscle), we all want to belong to a group and learn by modeling after

those in our group, and we all go through what she called sensitive periods in our learning-times where we are primed for certain types of learning in a way that we will never experience again. All of these basic principles have become part of accepted brain science today after years of studies and research.

Dr. Montessori urged the teacher to be a scientist/observer in her classrooms. She called teachers directors to better define the role of the teacher in the children's houses (her term for schools).

Today, Montessori teachers spend many hours preparing a Montessori classroom before the children ever arrive. Materials are carefully sequenced to follow a logical order and furniture is carefully chosen and arranged to beckon the child towards active learning experiences. Attention is paid to the social order and mix of the class and record-keeping is designed to support and respect the child's learning. After all the preparations, teachers will observe the children and direct them to the learning experiences that fit the needs of each individual child.

The teacher's role is to look for something called the "match" where the child's activity and needs at that moment coincide. Rather than filling "empty vessels", as teachers do in a traditional role, the Montessori teacher seeks to help students develop from their own innate learning powers and drives-the child is the central figure and the teacher is there to act as a guide and a help in what we know today is the inborn human urge to grow and learn.

