**Movement Enhances Learning**

"If you wish to give the means to the child for his development you must give them in such a way that the child can, and must move". In all her books, lectures and conversations, Montessori incessantly returns to this great theme of the importance of movement.

—E.M. Standing Maria Montessori, Her Life and Work

At parent visiting day you may have noticed a great deal of organized movement by your child and other children. The purposeful way in which they chose, carried, presented and returned a lesson back to its proper shelf is orchestrated by the lead teacher when designing the environment.

Of course, we all need to move to get through life, but how children learn is intimately connected to their movements. When movement is involved, the brain is stimulated differently than it is when one is passively watching and listening. Especially in the face of our sedentary lifestyles and our "addiction" to all types of screens, it's important to ask ourselves: What kinds of activity do children really need?

The brain depends on all types of movement to develop. Consider, for example, how the pathways in the brain control the movement of my fingers as I type this. When I learned to type as a teenager, it took conscious effort to move my fingers onto the correct keys. But, practice makes perfect. It takes practice to learn to hold a pencil, then to write letters, and finally to have them all mean something. Remember your child's first steps, and how he tumbled and stumbled until he could hold himself upright?

Joy and self-esteem are not measurable on an IQ or SAT test. Intelligence and creativity develop as children explore the world, figuring out on their own how things work.

Ty, Chris and Irene are extremely thoughtful and spend a great deal of time observing and contemplating movement within their classrooms and generating environments with well thought out movement.

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**INFORMATION**

- **Banking** is every Thursday.
- **Wednesday, November 11th**
  - VMS is closed in celebration of Veteran's Day.
- **Saturday, November 14th**
  - from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. is Truckin' MV. Volunteers are needed to help the day of the event. Please consider volunteering, even 1 hour of your time is helpful. Let Kim or Debbie know if you are available.
Miss Chris and Miss Holly’s class

What a wonderful Special Visitors day we had in our class. We had an excellent turnout and the children were very excited to be able to be the “teacher” for the morning. I loved watching the children show their visitor how to roll up the rugs, how to wear a blindfold and which lessons to choose. I even heard one child tell his mom, “You have to put your hands behind your back when you watch me do my lesson”. The children seemed proud to be able to show you what they have learned.

I want to welcome a new student in our class, Luiz Magri and his parents, Andressa and Gustavo. Luiz started coming to VMS this week and will be joining us for the remainder of the year. When you get a chance, please introduce yourself to our new family.

The children had the opportunity to study a giant sunflower this week with Miss Emily. They plucked the seeds out from the head of the flower and then planted them into small pots. We are hoping to use the sunflower shoots along with the greens that we have been growing to make a salad next week.

Miss Ty and Miss Rebecca’s class

You may have heard the term “normalization” when talking to me or to another Montessorian. What is this mysterious term? When the children freely choose their work, concentrate, and are working blissfully on their own as members of a respectful, peaceful community – that is normalization. It is something each Montessori teacher strives for, when the children are all working peacefully and joyfully, engaged in learning whether they are using the simplest practical life exercise or a complicated mathematical lesson. We hope to provide an enriched, stimulating environment from which the children can choose lessons, one that fosters order, coordination, concentration and independence – thus contributing to normalization. Maria Montessori herself said, “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.’ “

I am happy to say that normalization has arrived in my classroom! The older children, who work in the afternoon with Ms. Chris and me, were talking at one of our afternoon meetings this week. I told them the famous story about Maria Montessori, who was late for school one day in the early days of the Casa de Bambini. There were some visitors who had come to observe this very innovative school in Rome. The children had also gathered around the door, but… no Signora Montessori! The students shrugged, quickly unlocked the door themselves, and led the visitors inside the classroom. There they began their working day, to the amazement and wonder of the visitors. When Dr. Montessori finally appeared, breathless and apologetic, the visitors said that they had witnessed a wonderful, orderly and peaceful morning of work and joy.
**Elementary**

Last week the elementary students were busy helping Emily clean out the garden beds. They weeded, added compost and planted some more garlic. It looks great and is ready for winter. We are excited for next week when we will be learning about traditional Wampanoag food.

Joyce has been working hard preparing the students to get into their characters for their winter play. Most of the students already know their lines so we will begin blocking the play. This process will involve the kids helping to decide where they will enter the stage, what they will be doing with their bodies and where each character will be standing.

Our older students began their country research for their United Nations trip. Their topics of study and discussion will be on cyber-security, small arms trafficking, the situation in Syria and the situation in Israel. These sensitive and serious world issues are sparking the interest of our students and we’re proud that they are eager to learn more about them.

I will be away this Friday through Sunday for my upper elementary fall seminar participating in additional classes that are required as part of my training. I’m thrilled to learn how to present lessons on Advanced Sentence Study, World Political and Economic Geography, Chemistry, and Cube Roots. Most of these lessons will be given to 6th year students.

**Late Day**

We have enjoyed exceptionally beautiful fall weather lately. Outdoor activities, including walking to art class, are easier without the need for bulky clothing and footwear. This week we paired older students with younger partners for our walk. This "ability to help others" is part of our philosophy of gaining independence. The result showed improved body awareness and organization as well as new friendships. Miss Pam extended last week’s lesson with clay and use of the potter’s wheel. By now, each student who chose to participate, had a chance to work with Bill. We also created clay "monsters" at the work tables.

Books we read this week included: **Building With Dad**, **Bear on the Train**, **Black Cat**, and **I’ll Always Be Your Friend**

Weezie