Welcome fellow Montessorians from Bloomington, IL

On Thursday, October 8th VMS welcomed Barbara and James Broach, owners of Montessori Children’s Centre. They were visiting the Vineyard on vacation, and as many other Montessorians have done in the past, they chose to visit our school.

School Banking
The first banking day was Thursday, October 8th.

Thank you to Cassie and Emily for volunteering to be the parent bankers.

Alaina and Azi complete the 45 layout together.

“"It is true that we cannot make a genius. We can only give each individual the chance to fulfill his potential possibilities to become an independent, secure, and balanced human being.""  
Maria Montessori

Information

- Monday, October 12th school is closed in observance of the Columbus Day holiday.
- A few children have presented with symptoms of Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease. Please visit http://www.cdc.gov/hand-foot-mouth/index.html or stop in the office for an information sheet.
- Banking is every Thursday.
- The next Fun Friday is October 16th. 2:30—4:00.
- School picture day is Tuesday, October 20th!
- The next PTO meeting is Tuesday, October 20th from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Child watch will be available.
- This fall weather is unpredictable, it can be hot one day and cool another. Please send in extra long sleeve and short sleeve clothing, extra socks, etc with your child for their cubby and/or locker. We go outside every day.
**Miss Chris and Miss Holly's class**

Our class had their first gardening lesson with Miss Emily this week. She talked with the children about how our gardens are slowing down and not producing as much due to the cooler weather of the Fall season. She built a small greenhouse and is allowing our class to use it on the back deck. The children planted some seeds, kale, spinach and lettuce, that will hopefully sprout in the next few weeks. Next week she will be having the children put our outside gardens to rest for the winter. We will be having lessons along with a cooking project on cranberries to tie into our fieldtrip to Cranberry Acres planned for the end of this month.

We had our first emergency drill of the year. I talked with the children prior to the drill about what was going to happen and to help ease any fears or concerns anyone may have regarding the drill. It can be a stressful event due to the noise of the alarm, the quickness of transitioning outside and then remaining quiet so directions can be heard and followed. I have to say that I was very proud of the children at how well they each handled our first drill. New lessons are being put out weekly and this week we are starting lessons on parts of the tree and leaf. We will be observing signs of Autumn and noting the changing colors of the leaves. The children and I took a nature walk and collected items found in nature that were signs of Autumn. We found many different colored leaves, pinecones, acorns and seed pods.

**Miss Ty and Miss Rebecca's class**

I’m starting out this week with a quote from our great Maria Montessori herself. She writes, “When children have access to an environment built around the three-year age grouping, nature and nurture work hand-in-hand. The main thing is that the groups should contain different ages because it has great influence on the cultural development of the child. This is obtained by the relations of the children among themselves. You cannot imagine how well a young child learns from an older child; how patient the older child is with the difficulties of the younger.”

I have witnessed countless acts of kindness and caring among our children in the past week that totally confirms what Montessori states. The younger children naturally spill more often, as their muscles and coordination are still developing. The older ones race to help pick up the beans or the popcorn kernels, or they are quick to help mop up a spill. Rebecca and I sometime sit back and watch in amazement when we witness this sweet caring.

I have also asked a more mature or experienced child to guide another child in a lesson, only to see the older one, once a timid newcomer him- or herself, proudly show the younger child the large decimal layout, or the letter sound review boxes. Older, stronger children help carry trays or rocks, or adjust an apron for a younger one. This all goes on quietly and without the need of recognition. While all this happens I know that those same younger children will some day be the guiding helpers of others.

PS: We still need flowers. And it would be nice to have someone volunteer to be class parent and arrange field trips!
Afternoon program with Miss Ty and Miss Chris

For the past two weeks Miss Chris and Miss Ty’s afternoon class has begun each day with chapters from The Magic Tree House book series by Mary Pope Osborne. These short chapter books involve the main characters Jack and Annie, traveling to remote places and times in history. So far we’ve explored dinosaurs and medieval castles. Currently the book has a theme of Ancient Egypt. With these books, Chris and Ty bring in informative books about those subjects. These books are very popular and have sparked some independent research by some children.

Late Day

We have appreciated the lovely Indian Summer weather this week. Children enhance their gross motor skills and strengthen their muscles with daily outdoor activities.

Our books this week included a particular favorite, Harold and the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson. Children took part in telling the story by using a purple marker at our white board. They took turns drawing additional parts to Harold’s imaginary adventure. We truly enjoyed the process! I recommend the Story Stretcher series, by Shirley Raines, activities to expand children’s favorite books. These are available for several age levels and abilities. Weezie
It was a very busy week in our class. On Monday, Rebecca worked with the students for their first violin lesson. They learned the names of the parts, which parts are too fragile to touch, and how to take it out of its case and hold it properly. The students were so excited to tell me that Felix is the name of Rebecca's violin which is 101 years old. They are thinking of names for their own and are ready to start playing next week.

Silas returned from his trip to Puerto Rico on Wednesday. He presented the research that he did about this commonwealth of the United States. It is the second largest cruise port in the Western Hemisphere. It's home to the world's largest single-dish radio telescope and it's unofficial mascot is a tiny tree frog only found on the island. In addition to other findings that are too long to list he included drawings of the state bird, the Spindalis, their flower, the Hibiscus and their flag which is red, white and blue like ours. Thank you for teaching us Silas!

To compliment our studies of early Americans, we headed up to the Aquinnah Cultural Center for a tour by Linda Coons. The small museum which is a house that was built in the late 1800's contained many artifacts donated by family and friends. Marysol learned that the magazine rack at her house is actually part of a cranberry rake similar to the one at the museum. There was a lot of artwork and clay pottery made by some of the very talented Vanderhoops and relatives. There was a partially finished dug out canoe and a whale blubber boiling pot outdoors. It was well worth the trip up island and the students showed a great deal of interest. This weekend is their last weekend open if you are planning on heading up.

Today was our first day of tennis! Scott and Mike were very impressed with how much the students have remembered since last fall. They should make a great deal of progress given that they are not having to re-learn everything.

Enjoy your weekend!

The elementary violin program began on Monday. All the students were enthusiastic about their instrument, enjoying Miss Rebecca Laird’s program. When asked if they enjoyed the class by Miss Debbie, Matthew responded “It was really fun and educational too!”
Praise and Punishment

“Eventually we gave up either punishing or rewarding the children.”
—Maria Montessori, The Secret of Childhood

It’s a new year and many of us make resolutions. As parents, in spite of our best intentions, we sometimes get stuck in patterns that are no longer working or may not be the most beneficial for our children. What are some new ways to deal with the normal day-to-day challenges of being a parent?

Re-Thinking Some Common Practices
No one is really taught how to parent. We do what our parents did, or the direct opposite. Some practices enter the mainstream and are implemented by parents without much thought.

How often do you use the phrase “Good job”? Do you use a “time-out” when your child is challenging your patience? Changing some of these rote responses can make a huge difference for children and parents alike. We can communicate to children in ways that help them feel more secure and independent.

Unearned and Unnecessary Praise
The “good job” comment which seems to roll off the tongues of parents, teachers, and by-standers is said with good intentions, but gives very little acknowledgement of what went into accomplishing the “job.” Similar to every child getting a trophy whether the team wins or loses, this empty praise may discourage children from trying new activities at which they might fail. They also may get an inflated sense of self-importance and entitlement.

The adult becomes the judge, and motivation becomes external rather than internal. This "conditional parenting" teaches children to behave in a certain way in order to be loved. It becomes another method of control, just like punishment.

It’s more meaningful to have adults understand a child's feelings and communicate appreciation of the effort and natural hard work involved in learning. Practice, trial and error, and persistence in the face of failure help your child's brain develop.

Alternatives to false praise:
- Talk about specifics: "That picture has so much red color." "You tried really hard to make that goal in soccer."
- Solicit the child's thoughts and feelings: "What did you do when you spilled the tray of food?" “How did you feel when you missed the goal?"
- Encourage persistence and hard work: "You sounded out that word all by yourself."

Punishment or Setting Limits
In The Discovery of the Child Maria Montessori says, “To tell a child: 'Stand still like me!' does not enlighten him.” She explains that such a demand is both physically and mentally impossible for a "still growing individual." What may appear obvious and understandable for adults is not always true for a child.

Some time ago, as a reasonable option to corporal or demeaning punishments, the "time-out" method became the discipline of choice. This prevalent form of discipline makes a child experience a feeling of rejection and learn that love will be withdrawn if she does not conform to our wishes.

Misbehaving is often a call for help or some added adult encouragement and understanding. Helping your child verbalize feelings often is enough for her to continue to problem solve. Sometimes physical holding is necessary to stop a tantrum and help a child learn to self-soothe.

Discipline is about teaching, not punishing. Rather than exclude a child, we want to encourage the development of empathy and insight. We want to set clear limits while helping empower children to understand and collaborate with us so that respect flows in both directions.
Changing Time-Out to Time-In
We want to convey love and respect, letting children know it is the behavior we want to change, not the child. "Time-in" means we know where the child is developmentally and can intervene before the child seriously misbehaves. If you stay calm and spend "time-in" with your child, both of you will feel more secure and in control.

These ideas may help:

- Anticipate and prepare for challenging situations. Have appropriate expectations for your child's behavior based on his age and abilities. Be willing to adjust your plans accordingly.
- Take games or quiet activities for those wiggly waiting times in the doctor's office, a restaurant, or on the airplane.
- Support your child by explaining the reasons for requests. Make clear brief explanations appropriate to the child's age.
- Spend 5 to 10 minutes with a young child when you notice frustration developing. Change the activity or just assist in making it easier to handle.

Look to the Child
What are reasonable expectations? Psychologist Madeline Levine reminds us that "the happiest, most successful children have parents who do not do for them what they are capable of doing." This leads to independence and a strong sense of self-esteem. We need to stand back while they figure out things on their own. We as parents can give up judging ourselves when our children don't live up to our expectations. We can instill positive values and encourage persistence while watching our children learn from the normal challenges in life.

"No one who has ever done anything really great or successful has ever done it simply because he was attracted by what we call a 'reward' or by the fear of what we call a 'punishment.'"
—Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child
Jeanine Fitzgerald

Wednesday, October 21, 2015
5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Different Children, Different Needs

“Children are not things to be molded, but people to be unfolded,” as the saying goes. This workshop will explore the unique pattern of influences upon a child’s behavior and development, with particular detail to inherited temperament and “the dance of interaction” between the child and the adult caregiver. This workshop is uplifting, empowering and fun, as described by previous participants.

Pre-registration required.
Limited on-site childcare.
Call (508) 687-9182

Presented by:
Martha's Vineyard Family Center & Martha's Vineyard Public Schools
Tower Foundation Grant

The MV Family Center is a program of Martha’s Vineyard Community Services Early Childhood Program funded by grants from Massachusetts Children’s Trust and the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.
Partners in Parenting
with special guest Jeanine Fitzgerald
Wednesday, October 28th
5:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Dinner & Childcare
MV Family Center

Parenting in a Busy and Complicated World
What kind of home and family life do we want to create? While the struggles may be ongoing, in the end of our parenting journey, what do we want to remember? The hope lies in the vision and the plan. This session will jump start our thinking so we give our best and get the best.

Pre-registration required:
508 687-9182

Partners in Parenting is a monthly opportunity for parenting partners to meet other couples with young children and share the rewards and challenges of raising young children. Facilitated by Marney Toole

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