

Family Newsletter

December 2017/January 2018

A NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL...

Dear MCH Families,
Dr Maria Montessori said, "Preventing conflicts is the work of politics: establishing peace is the work of education". Now more than ever, living peace each day in the school community is the most important work of Montessori education.

Children in Montessori environments are encouraged to know and love the feeling of inner peacefulness, being aware of the stillness they can create for themselves. Children are guided to appreciate silence, relaxation, visualization, yoga, and beautiful music. The children help prepare and maintain the peace table, a place for quiet contemplation. With the aid of concrete symbols such as the peace rose, the children realize that they can bring about peaceful resolution to conflict with sincerity, honesty and words.

The children develop an awareness of the Fundamental Needs of People, and through that they learn about the interdependence and inter-connectedness of all things and that each of us has a part to play in creating a peaceful, harmonious world, and that together, we form one whole community. Each child contributes to the wellbeing of the classroom and school community. Issues that are bothering people or creating disharmony can be discussed and mended as a group. Our older students realize that they can contribute in a meaningful way to the wider community by doing community service projects.

Thank you, MCH parents, for choosing to surround your child with an environment that values peaceful individuals.

Wishing you peaceful holidays and a peace-filled new year,
Marsha
Marsha Hirschhorn, Principal

[Click Here for the monthly calendar](#)



MONTESSORI
CHILDREN'S HOUSE
Educating the Whole Child

EVENING KINDERGARTEN INFORMATION SESSION – 12/13/17 (new date)
Parents of children eligible to enter our Kindergarten program in September, 2018 are invited to join us for a Kindergarten Information Session on Wednesday, December 13th at 5:00PM. The third year, the Kindergarten year, in a Montessori classroom is a wondrous time. Parents of our five and six-year-olds find quiet awe in the maturity and confidence that emerges in these children who seemed so small when they started school! You will hear a description of our full-day Kindergarten program at MCH, how we prepare your child to move on to public or private school, and how we guide your child to benefit most from this culminating year of their education at Montessori Children's House.

PARENT OBSERVATIONS

Observations will continue to take place on December 4-7. Observations take place through the one-way windows and are scheduled in 20-minute periods. Sign-up sheets were posted earlier outside each classroom. If you are unable to observe during your scheduled time, please speak to your child's teacher.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher conferences will be held on two Thursdays, December 1st and 8th. There will be no school on these days (supplemental care available by registration only; see below). Conference sign-up sheets were posted outside each classroom. If you are unable to attend your scheduled conference, please speak to your child's teacher to arrange an alternate time.

SUPPLEMENTAL CARE ON CONFERENCE DAYS- SIGN-UP SHEETS

Supplemental care will be available on both Thursday conference days. **Registration is now closed. You must be registered if your child will be attending, even if it is only for the time of your conference and even if your child is regularly scheduled for supplemental care.** If your child is regularly contracted for supplemental care **on Fridays**, there is no additional charge for these days (although registration is still required). If your child is not contracted for supplemental care, you will be billed per hour or portion of the hour your child attends. (There is no charge for attendance during your scheduled conference time only.)

CHESS CLUB FOR KINDERGARTENERS BEGINS IN JANUARY

Our Kindergarten students will begin weekly chess lessons designed specifically for young children in January! The children love learning this game of strategy, and we look forward to the return of our chess coach, Mr. Carl Bady!

Blue Bell Montessori Children's House
Marsha Hirschhorn, Principal
marsha@mch2learn.org
215-646-6816

ART WORKSHOPS FOR PRIMARY STUDENTS

We are excited to again offer a 10-week art workshop series for afternoon Primary and Kindergarten children! The art workshops will be held Tuesday afternoons for the next 10 weeks, starting January 9th. The program was designed by and will be led by artist Michele Laverty. Some of you may know Michele, whose son, Jack, graduated from MCH a few years ago. Kindergarten children (Miss Brenda's P.M. class) will participate in the workshops each week. The afternoon children in Miss Pauline's class will participate every other week, beginning January 10th. The afternoon children in Miss Chandana's class will participate every other week, beginning January 16th. What fun!

HOLIDAY STORYTELLING

Bill Wood, our favorite storyteller, will be visiting us on December 21st to present "A World of Giving: Holidays Around the World". Our Primary and prep classes will be entertained by Bill's engaging and interactive storytelling, just in time for the first day of winter!

"TIDEPOL TODDLERS" PROGRAM FOR OUR PREP CHILDREN

The Center for Aquatic Science will be visiting our Prep A and B classes on December 14th to present their "Tidepool Toddlers" program. The children will hear an exciting story about ocean life and then meet the LIVE animals from the story! We can't wait!

WINTER VACATION

School will be closed from Monday, December 25th through Monday, January 1st for Winter Vacation. For those who need it, supplemental care will be available December 26, 27, 28th until 6PM and **December 29th until 3PM**. Both school and supplemental care will be closed December 25th and January 1st.

WINTER VACATION SUPPLEMENTAL CARE

Sign-up sheets for supplemental care days during winter vacation will be posted outside the school office in December. **Remember, you must register for winter vacation supplemental care days even if your child is contracted for regular supplemental care.** Children who are not contracted for regular supplemental care may be accommodated at the hourly rate only if space and staffing allow.

COLD WEATHER CLOTHING ALERT

- It's time to take home those shorts and tank tops! **All parents need to check and refresh their child's extra clothing supply to make sure it includes clothing appropriate for colder weather, including long-sleeved shirts, long pants, underwear, socks, and an extra sweatshirt.** We suggest two sets of extra clothing be kept at school; of course all items need to be **labeled** with your child's name. Please take inventory of your child's extra clothing so they have something warm to put on if their clothing gets wet. Our school supply of MCH extra clothing is very limited; if your child does come home wearing a school item labeled MCH or an item belonging to a classmate, please wash and return it to us immediately.
- We go outside most every day, so please be sure your child is prepared for cold weather at all times:
- Send your child ready for outdoor play with a warm jacket, hat and mittens.
- Please send mittens, **not gloves**, unless your child is able to put on gloves independently.
- **Do not send scarves**; they can be dangerous if caught in playground equipment.
- Do not send special or expensive hats and mittens since these items have a tendency to get lost.
- **LABEL ALL CLOTHING** including jackets, hats and mittens. If you don't have name tags, a silver Sharpie works well for writing names on dark clothing.

IMPORTANT SNOW/EMERGENCY CLOSING INFORMATION

In the event of snow or other bad weather, we will use our emergency closing system to keep you posted on school closings, late openings, or early closings. Our school closing number is **384** in Montgomery County. You can access our information in the following ways:

- KWY newsradio (1060AM) will announce our school closing number of **384** in Montgomery County.
- Register at CBSphilly.com to have text alerts sent to you in the event of a school closing or late opening.
NOTE: Even if you registered last year, you will need to re-register this year.
- Go to the CBSphilly.com website and click on "school closings"; look for our school number, **384** in Montgomery County.
- T.V. channel 6abc Action news will list our school information (listed as Blue Bell Montessori Children's House)
- TV channel NBC-10 will list our school information (listed as Blue Bell Montessori Children's House)
- Call the school telephone (215-646-6816) and listen to the message.
- Check your email for a message from the Principal. (Don't make this your only source since emails are not always received)

GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

Please review the health guidelines and procedures in your 2017-18 Parent Handbook. **Do not send your child to school if he or she is too ill to comfortably take part in all regular school activities (including outdoor play) or if he or she will infect other children. Children who are ill may return to school after being fever and symptom free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.** Thank you for doing your part to keep our school community healthy.

DRIVEWAY SAFETY

We remind you to maintain a slow, safe driving speed when entering and exiting our driveway and parking lot, and to **discontinue cell phone use BEFORE entering the school driveway. Please SLOW DOWN in the driveway, and come to a COMPLETE STOP at the entrance to the parking lot (where you see the stop sign).** We all know how quickly a child can dart out from behind a wall or parked car; your full attention and caution is required. Please do your part to help avoid a tragedy.

DOOR SECURITY

Anyone who does not have a door key fob needs to ring the bell to be admitted. Please do not hold the door open for people you do not know. It may feel like you are being rude, but if you explain that it is the school's security policy, they will understand. Everyone wants to be safe!

HONORING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. – ALL CLOSED JANUARY 15th

As a Montessori community, we are dedicated to educating our children about peace and peace heroes. We will celebrate and honor the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the month of January. **Our school and supplemental care will be closed in observance of Dr. King's birthday on Monday, January 15th.** We encourage you to use this as a "day on" rather than a "day off" by joining your child in a community service project that day. Some suggestions appropriate for young children include: making cards to deliver to children in the hospital, taking home-baked cookies or muffins to a senior center near your home, cleaning up a garden or local park, helping an elderly or infirmed neighbor with a home repair or errand, or delivering your old blankets and towels to a local SPCA or animal shelter.

2018-19 SCHOOL YEAR RE-ENROLLMENT AND NEW STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Look for your child's 2018-19 school year re-enrollment form in your parent mailbox in January! Current families have priority in reserving spots for next September as long as forms are returned by the priority deadline listed on the form. January will also be the time to complete new enrollment applications for younger siblings who will be joining us in September, 2018. After current families register, I will open registration to new families. (Camp Discovery enrollment will begin in February.)

SPOTLIGHT ON: HOLIDAY EXCITEMENT

We are coming into that time of year when life becomes more hectic and children are most excited. The holiday season can be a busy yet unsettling time for young children; here are some suggestions for keeping the holiday excitement from becoming holiday stress:

Set a calm example. The most important way parents can help ease anxiety in children during the holidays is by trying to keep things relaxed as much as possible. As with so many situations, the way parents handle an issue can set the tone for how their kids will behave. If you let holiday stress get to you, your kids will definitely pick up on it, and child anxiety is more likely to be a problem in your house. To minimize anxiety in children during the holidays, take steps to handle your own stress and anxiety.

Try not to talk too much about things to come. Children do not need to know weeks ahead of time about special events; one or two days' notice is sufficient and will go a long way toward reducing over-excitement and stress.

Limit TV watching. Select a few age-appropriate holiday programs to view together as a family. Choose TV programs with positive, feel-good messages.

Don't shop till' you drop. Shopping is a stressful event which often leads to tired, cranky children, so limit their involvement as much as possible. Avoid taking your child to places such as the mall or holiday gatherings when he or she is hungry or tired. It's hard even for grown-ups to deal with noise and lots of stimulation when they're not feeling their best; kids get hungry more often and become tired more easily. Children may understandably have a tough time being on their best behavior and are more likely to experience holiday stress when they are exhausted or hungry.

Remember the importance of routines. The holidays can throw a big wrench into household routines, and that can play a role in anxiety in children. To minimize holiday stress in your kids, try to get routines back on track once an event or party is over. For instance, if a school holiday or social gathering goes past your child's bedtime, try to stick to quiet, calm activities the next day and get your child to bed on time the next night.

Watch what your child is eating. Another thing that can fall by the wayside amidst the holiday hubbub is healthy eating. Between all the extra sugary holiday snacks and the lack of time to sit down to regular meals, it can be all too easy for kids to eat less healthy foods, which can contribute to holiday stress and anxiety in children. Try packing healthy snacks when you have to go shopping or run other holiday errands with your children, and try to minimize the amount of sweet treats at home.

Get your child moving. Fresh air and exercise are essential for boosting mood and re-setting the spirit, which can alleviate holiday stress and anxiety in children. Make sure you schedule some time to get you child outside to run around and play.

Avoid overscheduling. As tempting as it may be to accept every invitation from friends and family, try to limit your holiday parties and activities so that you and your child are not overwhelmed. A couple of events a week may be fine, but having an obligation every day can lead to holiday stress and anxiety in children

Schedule some quiet time. Having some peace and quiet with your child is more important than ever during the busy holiday season. Find a quiet corner and read a book with your child, create holiday pictures for the grandparents, bake cookies together, enjoy creating art together. Take a walk outside in nature, away from noise and crowds and obligations. Remind yourself that, like the Montessori classroom, the beauty is in the simplicity.

Remind your child - and yourself – what the holidays are really all about. A great antidote for holiday stress and the bloated commercialism of the season is helping others, whether it's by shoveling and elderly neighbor's sidewalk or by wrapping presents for needy kids at your local community center.