A NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL...

Dear BB-MCH Parents,

During January, the children learned about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a true peace hero. Dr. King’s life and mission are especially meaningful for us as a Montessori community. Having lived through two world wars, Dr. Maria Montessori was a strong advocate for peace; she firmly believed that the education of children was the key to future peace. In Montessori schools, the Peace Curriculum is based on the teachings of Dr. Maria Montessori and her son, Mario Montessori. “Avoiding war is the work of politics, establishing peace is the work of education” is one of the basic tenets of Maria Montessori. Her vision and goal was the reconstruction of society and the establishment of world peace through education. Her work, embraced by a worldwide community of educators, politicians and academics, earned her nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1949, 1950 and 1951. It is an honor for all of us at Montessori Children’s House to help realize Maria Montessori’s vision by guiding your children to become peacemakers in the twenty-first century.

Yours in peace,

Marsha
Marsha Hirschhorn, Principal

School Closing Date
Both our school and supplemental care programs will be closed on Monday, February 17th in observance of the Presidents’ Day holiday.

No Pizza on February 5th
Please note that due to the Book Fair lunch events, there will be NO PIZZA for Primary children on February 5th. Please send a lunch for your child that day!

Primary Book Fair Event: Lunch with a Loved One (Primary children)
Primary children are welcome to invite a loved one (grandparent, aunt, uncle, family friend, etc.) to join them for a bring-your-own lunch (no warm-ups, please) on a special day during our book fair! After lunch, your child and their loved one can enjoy some Book Fair shopping! RSVP forms were placed in parent mailboxes.

Book Fair Service Project: Cradles to Crayons
Each year our MCH children join together for a book fair service project. This year we will be collecting donations so we can purchase books for the Cradles to Crayons program in Philadelphia. (Part two of our service project is described under Pajama Day!) Cradles to Crayons is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide children in need from birth through age 12 with the everyday essentials they need to thrive at home, at school, and at play.

Here’s how you and your child can participate:

• Donate some dollars during the Scholastic Book Fair (Jan. 30 – Feb. 5). You will see a box labeled “HELP US BUY BOOKS” at the cashier’s table. All donations will be used to purchase books from the book fair for the Cradles to Crayons program. Children can also help by contributing some of their “piggy bank” money to help buy books for children in need.
• When you make a purchase, you will be asked if you'd like to "round-up" your total to the nearest dollar. The “round-up” earnings will be used to purchase more books for the Cradles to Crayons program.
• To learn more about the Cradles to Crayons program, go to www.cradlestocrayons.org.

New for Primary Students: The Mindful Experience for Children
The Primary children will be enjoying a new program, The Mindful Experience for Children, twice a month beginning February 10th! Mindfulness is a natural human quality and a practice that fosters inner calm, increased awareness and a sense of well-being. This uplifting and experiential class, designed specifically for children ages 3 and older, wonderfully complements the Montessori environment and classroom practices!

Valentine’s Day
We love Valentine’s Day! Be sure to check with your child’s teacher concerning the class Valentine’s Day party. If your child is preparing Valentine cards for his/her classmates, please make sure that you send in a card for each child in the class. Up-to-date class lists will be in provided by your child’s teacher.
Kindergarten Field Trip: Keswick Theater
Our Kindergarten children will be traveling to the Keswick Theater in Glenside on February 20th to see a production of “Pete the Cat”. The Theater Works actors always put on a wonderful show. We can’t wait!

Pajama Day and Pajama Collection celebrating Montessori Education Week – Friday, February 28th
Everyone is invited to come to school in their favorite pajamas and slippers on Friday, February 28th. We’ll have a cozy day in our pajamas as we celebrate Montessori Education Week. The Kindergarten children will be sponsoring a pajama donation day as well to benefit Cradles to Crayons! Our Kindergarteners are asking each MCH family to bring in NEW season-appropriate pajamas for boys and girls sizes 0-3 months through 18/20. What a special way to celebrate and honor Montessori education!

Montessori Education Week: February 24th – February 28th
Each year Montessori communities across the country honor the legacy of Maria Montessori during Montessori Education Week. This year we are celebrating 113 years of Montessori Education! Here at MCH, we will have a special display about Montessori education. The children will also be learning about Maria Montessori and her work that led to the existence of their beloved Montessori Children’s House!

Dental Health Program
February is National Children's Dental Health Month! The children at MCH will have fun learning about dental health when the “Tooth Buddy Tales” program visits us on Friday, February 12th. Through puppets and song, the children will learn about teeth, healthy eating, brushing, and flossing habits.

Kindergarten Leadership and Service Activities
During this second half of the school year, our Kindergarten children take on additional responsibilities that reflect their readiness for leadership! The Kindergarten students have already started weekly chess lessons with Mr. Bady, our chess expert. Learning this game of strategy takes concentration, patience, and the ability to plan ahead; quite a challenge but one that is embraced by the children. The children will also become library helpers, assisting our parent volunteers collecting library bags and books each Tuesday morning. The Kindergarten students will also begin one of their favorite leadership activities, monthly visits to the Prep classrooms, where they will give lessons and read to their younger schoolmates. The Kindergarteners will continue their very special community service project, enjoying their visits with the residents of Normandy Farms Estate, a retirement living community in Blue Bell. The children travel to Normandy Farms, where they join in special activities with their new senior friends. The children, and the Normandy Farms residents, love this intergenerational program!

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:
• CBSphilly.com and 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 (we will be listed as Blue Bell Montessori Children’s House)
• TV channel NBC-10 will list our school information (we will be 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 2019-20 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.
Spotlight on…Dr. Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori, born in 1870, was one of the first women in Italy to earn a medical degree. In her work at the University of Rome psychiatric clinic, Dr. Montessori developed an interest in the treatment of special needs children and, for several years, worked, wrote, and spoke on their behalf. Then, in 1907, Maria Montessori was given the opportunity to study “typical” children, by opening a school for the children of desperately poor families in the San Lorenzo slums of Rome. She called it “Casa dei Bambini” (Children’s House) and based the program on her observations that young children best learn to be self-motivated, independent learners in a social environment which supports and respects each individual’s unique development. Montessori believed that each child is born with a special potential to be revealed, rather than a “blank slate” waiting to be written upon. Montessori’s dynamic theories included such innovative premises as:

- Children are to be respected as different from adults and as individuals who are different from one another.
- Children create themselves through purposeful activity.
- The most important years for learning are from birth to age six.
- Children possess unusual sensitivity and mental powers for absorbing and learning from their environment, which includes people, as well as materials.

She carried her message throughout the world, including the United States, as early as 1912. Since her death in 1952, an interest in Dr. Montessori’s methods have continued to spread throughout the world. Her message to those who emulated her was always to turn one’s attention to the child, to “follow the child”.

“Supposing I said there was a planet without schools or teachers, study was unknown, and yet the inhabitants – doing nothing but living and walking about – came to know all things, to carry in their minds the whole of learning: would you not think I was romancing? Well, just this, which seems so fanciful as to be nothing but the invention of a fertile imagination, is a reality. It is the child’s way of learning. This is the path he follows. He learns everything without knowing he is learning it, and in doing do passes little from the unconscious to the conscious, treading always in the paths of joy and love.”

Dr. Maria Montessori