



Boundary Bay Montessori House

Operated by MIND

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Message from the Academic Director

This past week I began reading the book "Creating the Conditions – Leadership for Quality Schools" by Diane Gossen and Judy Anderson. I was searching for information in order to begin the process of self-evaluation. My intention was to use what I might find as a framework both for my own self-evaluation and for the teaching team. I was surprised to find out what an important component 'self-evaluation' was in the process of becoming a Quality School. I was also impressed with the amount of background knowledge that is required in order to self-evaluate. As I read through the book, I once again reflected on the legacy left by Heather Main. She spear-headed the motivation of the teaching team at BBMH to embrace this methodology in our work with the children. Under her direction...

- The teachers have learned *Choice Theory*, by William Glasser M.D. through Professional Development Days
- Some teachers have studied *Restitution: restructuring school discipline*, a restorative justice model used as a management and conflict resolution tool and have 'trained' others to follow this method
- Our language has become one of a Quality School. Questions such as "How is this helping you meet your

needs? What can I do to help you so you can...?" "Do you want to figure out a better way?" "How can I help you?" are being asked in solving day to day problems.

- Glasser's theory of the five basic needs is taught in the classroom.
- Dialogue has become the preferred method for reaching consensus.
- Classroom beliefs have been established and using criteria-based Assessment students are able to define and self-evaluate quality work.
- Parent Education evenings given by both the teaching team and most recently FAC, have focused on the concept of needs-based behaviour

So, as I read through the book, questions arose such as "Where are we headed?" "Are we a Quality School?" and in my process of self-evaluation "Is this vision being implemented?" Gossen and Anderson write that "Leaders are only responsible for fostering a climate of cooperation, creativity and quality work. A leader needs to determine whether optimum conditions are established and then ask... Have I been the leader I want to be? Have I been both caring and courageous? Have I done everything I can do?"

Assessment of my role

involves observing the teachers and determining whether the conditions are optimum and in doing so, I believe, the 'climate' is telling. In my observation of the teaching team I consistently discover, over and over again, (when I conduct my weekly 'tours' of our classrooms in order to introduce people to our program), just **how** we are a Quality School and they – quality teachers. In the preschool-- *children sit raptly listening to Jana read a story that is just a picture book and she is making it up as she goes along... Andrea holds a 3 year old in her lap... two youngsters are listening while they 'clean' the remnants left by their busy classmates.* In the Primary room—the word of the week is *Quality* and a student writes "I show quality when I learn from my mistakes. I feel like a skilled expert when I strive for quality." In the Intermediate class—quality work is defined by consensus. *The students discuss and derive beliefs with the participation from all members of the room. Quality works looks like: focused thoughtful work; willing to redo work if necessary; beautiful presentation of work... Content includes: Factfinding using three sources; complete sentences; COPS... Effort includes: completing assigned work by due date; motivated and thoughtful; creative and original.*

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REMINDERS

February 14
Project Love

February 25, 2005
Pro-D Day 4





"The child should love everything he learns, for his mental and emotional growths are linked." (Maria Montessori,)

What's been happening? A love of learning in our classroom is ubiquitous! The children are enjoying the delights which accompany our yearly theme of 'growing'. This term, the class has been introduced to tools for measuring: tape measure, measuring tape, cups and spoons, rulers, scales and who in our world uses them. We have discovered that many of you parents have projects on-the-go at home! We have been able to use these tools in many ways to discover why numbers are important and the value of using measurement. We've started our own growth chart to see how the class will be growing over the next few months. We have also enjoyed baking and creating many delicious culinary feats! Our recent Chinese New Year Celebration was a terrific success, with crafts, treats and fantastic presentations by Nancy and Joyce Chong. Many thanks for a wonderful, luck-filled day!

What's coming up? Our study of mammals will bring us closer to understanding these animals and we will be continuing our focus on rabbits as well as introducing horses. A trip to the Tsawwassen Animal Hospital will be a fun and hands-on experience to learn about animal care – date TBA. **Project Love:** February 14th. The attached agreement slip is for you and your children to decide what they can do at home to help earn \$2.50 to purchase a school supplies kit to send to a child in Africa. We will be discussing what kinds of support the children can contribute to help out, such as making beds, feeding pets, tidying toys, help with meals, yard work, and so on. Please refer to the enclosed information describing the BBMH tradition and CODE. We do this as a community on Valentine's Day to promote peace and what we can do to make Earth a better place. We have experienced exclusion and hurt feelings with distribution of Valentines at the school and ask to please send your Valentines outside school hours. Thank you for your understanding. **Symphony Field trip:** March 3rd 10 am. More information as we approach the date for car-pooling arrangements and how the agenda for the day will transpire.

What's new? 'Artist of the Week' in our Art area is where each child will have the opportunity to have their work on display. *We would like to formerly welcome our three new students to our class: Saige, Forster and Anna, along with their families. Their addition to our class brings us to capacity and the transition has been a great success!

Message from the Academic Director - continued

So the climate does speaks for itself – optimum conditions that have created this climate are threefold – they include:

1. Cognitive change – which has occurred through Professional Development – through reading books, taking workshops, Parent ed overviews and conversations.
2. Personal Change – which has occurred as the teaching team has shifted from Stimulus response to internal response- done by learning choice theory and applying the practice with each other and students.
3. System Change – this has occurred by the teaching team learning to engage in supportive, respectful dialogue in order to collapse conflict, create social contracts and engage in the process of reaching consensus in order to create our goals for our year and for our program.

The table below gives a snapshot of before and after characteristics of a Quality School.

Before Quality School	After Quality School
1. Focus on problem	1. Focus on solution/need
2. Voting/Committees	2. Consensus decision-making
3. Principal-led meetings	3. Team-led meetings
4. Rule-centered	4. Belief-centered
5. Positive reinforcement	5. Self-evaluation
6. Averse to conflict	6. Embrace conflict as learning
7. Congenial or conventional	7. Collegial
8. Reactive, blaming others	8. Proactive (I, we)
9. Discussion	9. Dialogue
10. Grade, mark-centered	10. Personal portfolios, student-led conference
11. You're wrong	11. My picture/Your picture
12. Obviously you	12. Help me to understand
13. Your fault	13. "My part of the problem"
14. Teachers say, "If you don't do this..."	14. Teachers say, "Do it for yourself"
15. Parents blaming school	15. Parents thanking the school

Those of you who have been part of our school will be able to 'see' the footprint that Heather Main has left. Our work is to continue to align our practices with the Quality School model while upholding our 'blueprinted' values of a Montessori Educational Facility. We do this by continually self-evaluating in order to provide a program that allows our children to learn successfully, build self-esteem and to have a role in the decision-making of their education. The staffing hierarchy of traditional schools is not applicable to BBMH. We are all a member of community that creates this Quality School. Each individual, whether member of the board, parent of a child or teacher, is part of a whole that is far greater than the sum of the parts.



Quality begins on the inside...and then works its way out.

Primary Class Update

The Primary Class has enjoyed new beginnings and the completion of various endeavours. The children have enjoyed exercise and skill development at gymnastic class. The gymnastic teachers at South Delta Recreation Centre have remarked on our students' excellent listening skills and their willingness to co-operate. Thank you to all who helped drive the students to the Centre. Our last session was this past Monday, February 7th.

Our physical education classes will be done outdoors in the area surrounding our school.

It is our custom to launch the study of classical literature after the winter break. This activity is abbreviated with the term, *JGB*, which refers to *Junior Great Books*. The pleasure of hearing stories that were written by The Brothers Grimm, 200 hundred years ago, Beatrix Potter, more than 100 years ago, and folk tales from around the world is fun for all. The stories are read aloud on Thursdays and the children in Year 2 and 3 bring home their books to read again with their families. The Year 1 children have re-printed stories to take home once they've heard them read aloud in class. Many activities follow these stories to give rise to questions known as shared inquiry. The children speculate, evaluate and create responses to these classical stories. Sometimes we analyze the plot and behaviours from a moral perspective known as 'social responsibility.' The children's vital sense of right and wrong prevails and the stories could be retold with higher principles than are found in the original tales. Occasionally arguments - on an academic level with a tinge of emotion - occur on what, truly, is the size of an elf! Some of our responses to the stories involve art, drama and cooking. The children are fully engaged in the magic of story and it is a mutual pleasure to learn with them. Please make sure you take the time to read aloud with your children for *JGB* even if a long story has to be read in parts or you take the lion's share of the telling. The stories invite a dramatic style so go ahead and get theatrical!

Geography is a bustling activity with Year 1 children making their own maps of North America. Year 2 children are busy with a two-layer map of Canada showing physical and political information and Year 3 children, experienced from previous map-making, are focused on the details of British Columbia. The children have set criteria for quality and they are doing beautiful work.

We are taking time to become more precise with our Penmanship. It is one thing to put ideas down on paper while writing a 'rough copy' and quite another to envision a fine piece of work when creating a 'final copy.' We work slowly and laboriously with our Penmanship lessons. We are taking time to see the mechanics of shaping a letter and by reproducing it we learn visual judgment, self-discipline and precision.

Intermediate Class Update

The Intermediate students have exhibited a renewed enthusiasm for their work, fun and routine. The start of the term was overshadowed by the tsunami in Asia, snow and illness. Students have rallied and organized themselves around fundraising activities. We are cooking and beading each Friday afternoon for sale every other Friday. (Next sale February 18th) I am in contact with Kim Kilgore, a former teacher at this school who is now teaching at a Montessori school in Phuket, as to how we can best apply these funds.

In other areas of our curriculum, in Math all students are working on fractions at their various levels; we will be moving to decimals in the next week. Exciting new lessons have begun in History with the Timeline of Humans (Early Humans) for Year Four, The Timeline of Humans II (Early Civilizations) for Year Five, and Year Six and Seven are focusing on the Middle Ages. As part of our research we will be going to the public library on **Tuesday, February 15th for 10:00a.m. Please be dropped off at the library parking lot for 9:00a.m.** We will have an hour of P.E. before the library opens. In Science we have been studying the Torid Zone. Students have produced beautiful reports on the countries between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. Next we will be studying global weather systems.

Our P.E. program for the next few months will be Gymnastics starting: **Monday February 14 to Monday, March 14 from 1:45 to 2:45 at Delta Gymnastics in Tsawwassen. Drivers needed to transport students to the gym. Pick up at the gym is 2:45 p.m.** This will bring us to Spring Break!! The dates for Outdoor Camp will be from Tuesday, April 5th to Friday, April 8th. (Please note the date change!!) We will be having a parent meeting regarding this event closer to April, but this is the time to check to see if those gortex pants and that outdoor gear still fits!

January

- 4 Back to School
- 14 Newsletter
- 17 Martin Luther King
- 27 Open House
- 28 Pro D Day 3
- 31 OPEN HOUSE

February

- 10 Bring a Friend
- 11 Newsletter
- 14 Project Love
- 25 Pro D Day 4

March

- 7 Sign up for Observations
- 9 Kindergarten Visit
- 11 Newsletter
- 14 Student For A Day
- 15 Student For A Day
- 16 Student For A Day
- 17 Student For A Day
- 18 Reports Distributed
- 21 Spring Break



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Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives.
William A. Foster

FROM THE FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thank you to all who contributed to the BBMH Fun Fair on Saturday, January 22. We had a very enjoyable event.

On Saturday, January 29, we held a caramel popcorn sale at Tsawwassen Town Centre Mall. The primary class had read the story *Beatrice's Goat*, and we hoped to raise enough to purchase a goat for a family in a third world country, as had been done for Beatrice in the story. Thank you to Cara Jean Morrison, Sam and Eva Cummings, Leslie, Andrew and Emma Kanerva, Jeffrey and Madelene Gamage and Anna Masarsky who helped with the popcorn making. And thanks to our popcorn sellers, Madelene, Sam, Eva and Anna, Jennifer St.Gelais, Savannah Gillespie, Andrea Searle and Hanna Meausette. We raised \$260.66 which is almost enough for two goats. The goats will be purchased the aid agency Heifer International, which is the agency through which the girl in the story receives her goat.

Remember to complete volunteer hours. The red binder in which to record your family's hours is on the bookcases in our library.

Blueprint Update

1.2.9 Developmental Approach to Education: Our educational approach is centered on the stages of human development.

- ♥ Developmental stages: Our faculty is actively involved in a continuous study of human development. This study includes keeping abreast of current theories on development, regular student observation, and a constant evaluation of the curriculum to ensure that it is appropriate for the developmental stages of our students and meets ministry guidelines.
- ♥ Individualization: We strive for individualized pacing and adaptation of the classroom program to meet varied styles of learning.
- ♥ Flexibility: Our educational program is designed for flexibility in its methodology and use of resources.
- ♥ Academic expectations in an individualized approach: In designing this individualized program we follow an established Montessori curricular framework that includes the Ministry of Educations expectations for basic academic achievement at each year (grade) of the school.

Quality is everyone's
responsibility.
W. Edwards Deming

BBMH MISSION STATEMENT

Boundary Bay Montessori House will offer a quality educational program for children that remains true to the spirit of Dr. Montessori's philosophy of education to help equip them with the tools necessary to become independent adults while allowing their unique personalities to unfold.