

Operated by MIND

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## Message from the Academic Director

Montessori goes mainstream / Evidence mounts in favour of progressive schooling, writes Jay Mathews... The kids who scampered about construction zones in the San Lorenzo slums of Rome gave the work crews fits. Then the builders heard some woman doctor was recruiting students for a new school. They begged her to enroll the trouble-makers in the Casa dei Bambini. Maria Montessori agreed. Her Children's House offered a few dozen young students freedom. They could sort blocks, measure with beads, play with wooden letters or explore another project of their choice. They roamed through classrooms rather than building sites. The results of this experiment launched in January 1907 captivated the education world, inspiring a movement over the next century that has helped define child-centred education.

There are at least 8,000 Montessori schools worldwide. The American Montessori Society, based in New York, reported 7% membership growth in just the past year, and many of the schools are now celebrating the centennial of the Montessori beachhead. Once considered a maverick experiment that appealed only to middle-class white families, Montessori schools are getting results in low-income public schools with the kind of children on which Montessori first tested her ideas. The stubborn Italian physician and her contemporary, the US philosopher and psychologist John Dewey - who believed that learning should be active - are considered perhaps the most influential progressive thinkers in the modern history of education. But Montessori has had the more tangible impact, with versions of her child-centred practices passed from preschool teacher to preschool teacher, some not even aware of the origins of what they are doing.

Her advocacy of unstructured class time seems antithetical to today's structured classrooms, with their emphasis on standardised testing. "One test of the correctness of educational procedure is the happiness of the child," Montessori said. She also declared: "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.'" The president of the American Montessori Society, Michael J Dorer, an education professor at the College of St Catherine in St Paul, Minnesota, said creating more public schools would be the best way to break out of the upper-income niche that in some ways still limits the Montessori movement's growth. Dorer said his college and several others train Montessori teachers, but there are not enough instructors to meet demand from the expanding number of Montessori schools. Some schools with the Montessori name don't have many, or any, Montessori-trained teachers. "Anyone can open a school and call it a Montessori school. There is no trademark on the name," Dorer said. "It's a real problem." Maria Montessori, who lived from 1870 to 1952, was a pioneering doctor in Italy. She gained international notice when the severely learning-disabled students she worked with passed educational tests designed for non-disabled children. Montessori developed a system of learning in large open classrooms with low shelves, with tables of different sizes that fit one to four children and with chairs sized for children of different ages. Various materials, mostly made of wood, are set out in a typical classroom. Children choose what they want to do. A child may decide to focus on learning to tie his shoes rather than recognise letters - while his mother grits her teeth. But eventually, according to the Montessori way, he will get around to the materials that help teach reading and maths because all the activities are meant to be inviting. Children move around rather than sit still and watch the teacher. The psychologist Angeline Stoll Lillard was at first skeptical of Montessori's ideas when she started her research 20 years ago. But she found that a strong body of evidence in developmental psychology supports Montessori's major conclusions - among them, that there is a close relationship between movement and cognition, that the

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

*Jan 31— Open House*

*Feb 14—Project Love*

*Feb 19-Professional Development Day*

### PLEASE READ THE INFORMATION REGARDING PROJECT LOVE INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER!

WE WILL SEND HOME THEIR PERSONAL COMMITMENT ON BRIGHT RED PAPER ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2007. THE COST FOR EACH KIT \$2.50. PLEASE ASK YOUR CHILD TO PERFORM SIMPLE CHORES TO 'EARN' THIS MONEY TO DONATE TO PAY FOR THEIR KIT.

THANK YOU, THE TEACHING TEAM



Continued from page 1....

When observing students in our classrooms “we conclude that-though for the most part the directress leaves the children alone to get on with the job they have chosen-there are certain occasions when she steps in to put a limit on the free choice of their activities. The principle she acts on is this-to use Dr. Montessori’s own words-”the directress should never be afraid of destroying what is evil; it is what is good she must fear to destroy-good being interpreted as any activity which leads to order, harmony, self-development and therefore to discipline: evil, being anything with leads to the dissipation of the child’s creative energies and therefore to disorder.” With this in mind E. M. Standing summarized the limitations of freedom in a Montessori Classroom as guidelines for Directress’s to follow:

**Limitation One: The Collective Interest**—This refers to the well-being of the entire group and is a factor of etiquette, manners and social upbringing.

**Limitation Two: Knowledge must Precede Choice**—this refers to the idea that no child is permitted to use material until they have been introduced to it by the Directress.

**Limitation Three: Correct Use of Materials**-this refers to the idea that if a child is not using the materials correctly, they will be asked to refrain from using or will re-present the lesson to the child.

Montessori wrote “on this question of liberty, we must not be frightened if we find ourselves coming up against certain contradictions at every step. You must not imagine that liberty is something without rule or law.” Montessori expected that the Directress would use a common sense approach in her management of student behaviour.

At BBMH we have decided that the framework of *choice theory* and *restorative justice* gives a solid foundation of what this ‘common sense’ approach should be. Creating clear expectations that include social contracts for the classroom, consequences and ‘bottom lines’ engages directresses and students in respectful and responsible dialogue and supports an increased awareness of appropriate behaviour. Although the school population is not comprised of the ‘troublemakers’ in Montessori’s first Casa de Bambi, the principles that she revered, that of purposeful work and connected, respectful teachers continue to be the basis of what we offer to our students. As Directresses we ‘hear’ and ‘see’ the outcomes of this in our students. Their qualities of accountability, pure intention and respectful dialogue are noticeably apparent in Class Meetings, interpersonal relationships and, not surprisingly, when they are faced with coming to resolution in conflict resolution situations.

## From the MIND Board

### Fundraising

**Pistol Burnes Coffee, Tea, Hot Chocolate and Cocoa** -- The next order will be due December 7 with delivery on December 14. This is perfect timing to plan to give Pistol Burnes items as gifts this holiday season.

**Thrifty Gift Cards**—This is an easy way to support the school while buying your groceries. BBMH gets 5% of the total purchased. Your cheque is not cashed until the day your card is issued, so your money is not “tied up” in between submitting your order and delivery of your card. And you can submit post dated cheques so you don’t miss the due date each month! Look for your order form in your family file.

**Bottle Returns**—Both Ladner and Tsawwassen have BBMH accounts to which you can direct your refunds.

**Spring Gala**—please contact Diana Nesbitt if you have suggestions for this year’s major fundraising event.

**Fun Fair**—Look for information in the Friday email updates!

**Preschool Extended Day Kindergarten News**

This month in the Preschool/EDK classroom we have set up an enclosure to allow the rabbits to be inside. The children have enjoyed watching the rabbits eat and groom themselves and are learning about caring for our pets. This is a great opportunity for us to learn about an animal's need for proper environment, exercise and a healthy diet. Pam, our Music teacher, has been preparing us for our excursion to the Vancouver Symphony. Several of the students from the Intermediate Band program visited us to share their instruments and show us how they work. The children really enjoyed the visit. Our Symphony field trip will take place on Thursday, February 15 and includes the morning and afternoon preschoolers and the EDK students. Please arrive at 8:45 am (with car seats) for the carpool to the Symphony. A sign-up sheet for the carpool is posted outside the Preschool entrance. We ask that those parents who have already had the opportunity to volunteer for this field trip allow those who have not to volunteer first. Pick-up from the school is 12:00. Please direct any questions to Jana, Elicia or Christina.

**CALENDAR 2006 2007 WINTER TERM 2**

DECEMBER	18	CONCERT REHEARSAL
	19	CONCERT REHEARSAL
	20	CONCERT REHEARSAL—SCHOOL CLOSED PM
	20	CONCERT EVENING
	21	SKATING PARTY 9:30—10:30 TSAWWASSEN
JANUARY	22	SCHOOL CLOSED FOR WINTER BREAK
	8	BOARD MEETING
	9	SCHOOL BEGINS TERM 2
FEBRUARY	16	PARENT EDUCATION SERIES 2
	17	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY
	14	PROJECT LOVE
MARCH	19	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY
	16	SCHOOL DISMISSED SPRING BREAK 3:00 PM
	26	SCHOOL REOPENS 8:45 AM

**Physical Education Schedule**

**INTERMEDIATE GYMNASTICS**

**Mondays 1:45—2:45 Feb 12/19/26**

**PRIMARY HAP DO SOOL**

**Monday 12:45—1:45 Feb 12**

**YOGA**

**February 19/26**

**Intermediate News**—The Intermediates have had a focused start to the new year. They are beginning new lessons in Math, Culture and Language. Year Four and Five are doing work on fractions for math. In History we are starting the term with The Timeline of Humans with each year investigating various aspects of the timeline from Early Humans, Early Civilizations, The Middle Ages, and the Age of Exploration. In Science Year Four and Five are learning about the “The Great River” which is a metaphor for the body and Year Six and Seven are researching various aspects of global warming after watching “An Inconvenient Truth”. Students are deeply engaged in writing stories, reading novels, building lego structures for math, and drawing native designs based on Emily Carr’s work. The classroom is humming!

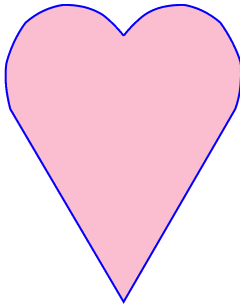
**Primary News**

Our class is full of life and learning! We returned to school and made illustrated booklets on the topic of *I Feel Happy...* and the children answered the questions *who/what/when/where/* and *why*. This was a whimsical way for the children to summarize the highlights of the holiday season. Their booklets reveal the child's love of simplicity and the certainty of family life. In Culture, the Year 2's are learning about Geology by studying rocks and minerals. All the children are feverishly occupied with lessons in Geography! The Year 1 children have worked well in pairs making a topographical map of North America using plasticine. They are now making individual maps using pencil crayons. Exuberant with this task, the children are being reminded of the criteria for a quality map which is to colour beautifully, to print neatly and to use an atlas. The Year 2 children have completed their political maps of Canada and are now working on their second layer showing topography. The Year 3 children have embarked upon their maps of British Columbia which show topography and natural resources. Enthusiasm abounds amongst the children as they willingly share their knowledge and love of this work. Our first virtue that we looked at was a word that puzzled the children. It is a word they all know (and believe they've mastered as a character trait) but was odd to look at on the virtue card. The child who took it from the Virtues Bag looked at it and passed it to the next child to read. The card was passed to four children and the fourth declared, "*Patience!*" It is such a familiar word yet strange in its spelling. Some, feeling quite mature, said that they are patient but their younger brothers or sisters aren't. They told of the ways they show patience when they have to wait. Quite admirable and amusing too. The second virtue that we are studying is *Respect*. This is the one upon which all the other virtues are built. We are in need of practising this character trait as some of the children are rather high-spirited at this time. We encourage you to nurture your children in these virtues. We see evidence of strength of character developing in the children, especially those who have had lessons and practise in these virtues.



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## Boundary Bay Montessori House Blueprint—Excerpt I

### I.1. The Fundamental Nature of our School

- I.1.1. The Montessori approach to learning is the educational framework of our education program at BBMH.
- I.1.2. BBMH is a multicultural school committed to diversity.
- I.1.3. BBMH is designed to prepare students both for life and for future educational endeavors.
- I.1.4. Our school teaches children to be at home in the world of nature.
- I.1.5. BBMH is a family-friendly school.
- I.1.6. We are committed to developing character by embracing virtues and high personal standards.
- I.1.7. BBMH is a close-knit community of students, educators, parents, extended family, and friends of the school.

A Special Thanks to the Volunteers who cleaned and helped prepare the school for the recent SCI Meeting, OPEN HOUSE and tours. Your response to our requests is very much appreciated.

### Characteristics of Montessori Education at BBMH

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ Each child's inherent desire to learn and perfect his/her skills is nurtured by the stimulating and dynamic Montessori environment.</li> <li>♥ Each child works at his or her own pace and receives a high degree of individual attention.</li> <li>♥ Respect for each other, the self and the environment are taught within a peace curriculum that is multicultural and non-denominational.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ The child is honoured in this caring, community-minded educational environment where parents are invited to participate.</li> <li>♥ Student teacher ratios at BBMH are 10:1 in Pre-school and 18:1 in Elementary.</li> <li>♥ Using a 'spiral curriculum' teachers incorporate the latest educational research and use criteria-based assessment tools to promote academic excellence.</li> <li>♥ A well structured, prepared environment, with learning materials that are self-correcting.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ Students are prepared for high school by learning the academic skills of time management, task organization, research and exam preparation.</li> <li>♥ With these opportunities, the child is empowered to fulfill his/her own potential thereby fostering:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ Independence</li> <li>♥ Self-discipline</li> <li>♥ Self-esteem</li> <li>♥ Self-motivation</li> </ul> </li> <li>♥ The child develops a lifetime love of learning</li> </ul> |
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