



Operated by MIND

Volume 4, Issue 8

MARCH 2008

**From the Academic Director,
Pam Ferguson**

Earlier this school year, Harvey Shaffer, President of MIND, and I had an opportunity to meet with two other organizations which operate in our complex, to share our mutual concerns and interests. We jointly agreed upon the value of sharing information about our respective services with each of our communities, so that all of us understand the broad spectrum of services offered to residents of Delta on this property. In this issue, I would like to share information about our immediate next door neighbours, The Delta Association for Child Development (DACD).

DACD is a non-profit society that has been providing services to children and their families in Delta since 1959. We believe in the potential of every child and offer a variety of services designed to meet the needs of children to ensure their optimal development. Over 1000 children and their families benefit from our services on an annual basis.

PHILOSOPHY

Two major premises form the basis upon which DACD delivers its programs and services. The first is that we will operate in a family-centered manner and the second is that we will be responsive to the needs of children and families in the community. DACD recognizes:

- the family is the major decision maker and the constant in a child’s life, while service systems and personnel fluctuate;
- families are diverse and that cultural, and racial and economic diversity requires acceptance and respect;
- families and children are unique and each has its own structure, roles, beliefs, and coping style which requires
- flexible and individualized approaches to goal identification and service planning;
- families should be in control and that the primary aim of good service planning is to enable and empower families; and,
- families should be informed and receive unbiased and complete information about their child’s care and development.

The Delta Child Development Centre provides:

- Inclusive Preschool for children requiring extra supports and typically developing children.
- Speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy are provided at preschool.

In addition, DACD provides the following services to Delta families:

Positive Behavioural Support

- In-home support to families of children with special needs with challenging behaviours.
- Family-driven program where the support provided depends on families’ priorities, strengths and needs.
- Assessment, individualized program design, hands-on demonstration and coaching, training, sharing of information and ongoing monitoring and modification.

Supported Child Development

- Consultative support to preschools, daycare centres and other child care settings that require assistance in supporting a child with special needs

DATES OF INTEREST

**April 14-18
Classroom Observations**

**April 19
Fundraising Gala**

**April 22
Earth Day**

**April 28
Professional Development Day**

“The child is the spiritual builder of mankind, and obstacles to his free development are the stones in the wall by which the soul of man has become imprisoned.”

***Maria Montessori
The Absorbent Mind, 1994***



- Specially trained consultants observe children in their setting and provide caregivers with information, guidance and hands-on support.

Therapies Program

- Includes speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy.
- Therapists work as team members with families, early childhood educators and other professionals to provide individualized intervention programs.

Respite Care Program

- Matches needs of families who have children requiring extra supports with appropriate caregivers.
- Caregivers care for child in their home or in the child's home for overnight or day visits.
- Allows families to take much needed time to rest.

This is just a sampling of the many services that DACD offers to children and families of Delta. For more information, visit their website at website: www.deltachilddevelopment.org.

From the Preschool Classroom...

In the Preschool/Kindergarten classroom we have started reading and talking about growing...plants, animals and of course, children! We have asked the children...

“What do you think of when you think of Spring?”

Ewan	“Flowers, roots, petals, stems”
Daragh	“It rains and sometimes it's sunny”
Bryce	“Picking flowers, hanging out with Mom, Dad and my brother”
Christopher	“Go out and play on the swings”
Max	“Finding leaves, I kiss my Mom in the spring so much”
Ashton	“Flowers, tennis and bunnies”
Cian	“I planted a bulb!”
Alexander	“Still rains in spring, it pours”
Natasha	“Flowers, planting, sunny, hot, go to the beach”
Jamie	“Flowers, hotness and rain”
Simon	“Butterflies and butterfly nets, moths, moss, trees and plants and rain and sun”
Benjamin	“Hot sun and trees and very hot outside, go to Queens Park and the petting zoo and take my big shoes off”
Mateo	“Grow the plants with water”
Joshua	“The leaves”
Erin	“Playing, going on my swing set”

We will be growing carrots and radishes indoors and Scarlet Runner Beans along the fence in the Preschool playground. We look forward to making delicious snacks over the next term.

By Jana Luchene and Christina Davey



The Virtues Conference

Cathy Goss and I spent the last weekend of March attending the 20th Anniversary Virtues Conference in Victoria. We were part of an international audience represented by delegates from twelve countries on five continents. We took our students' beautiful work and contributed a 'flag' to be part of a display. Our flag stated "Montessori loves Virtues!". Although the Virtues Project is not a formal part of Montessori methodology, it meets the rationale we use in determining the 'right fit' for including it in our program.

The Virtues Project includes a family and educators' guide, with materials to be used by children and families.

- It supports respectful language
- It is presented in a universal, inclusive manner
- It has a program that can inter-relate the larger community to the school to the family.
- It nurtures the spirit of children
- It is presented from a perspective of whole to parts
- It is family and child-centred

In the Primary classroom, the 'special student' chooses the virtue card and discussion is held to discern the meaning of the word, the ways we show it and how it makes us feel to live up to that virtue. Along with this group exercise, we write a paragraph map to personalize our knowledge of the virtue we have just discussed. You may have already seen your children's compilation of virtue paragraphs to know that their definitions and examples are well-informed. The children are comfortable with the language of virtues and they are able to use these words to affirm each other.

As educators, we refer to the virtues in our dialogue with students. It creates a way of mentally planning your next step. When you see behaviour displayed in your child that is inappropriate you can quickly determine what behaviour or characteristic you would like your child to develop. Using this virtue as a goal will deepen the discussion and raise it above the classic nagging or adult-directed solutions. The conversation we engage the children in provides empowerment through language and a method for teaching social and emotional intelligence. "The Five Strategies" of *The Virtues Project* help us to live more reverent, purposeful lives, to raise children of integrity and compassion, to develop a culture of character in our schools, and inspire excellence and service in the workplace. These strategies build foundations for safe and caring communities. The strategies are to:

1. **Speak the Language of the Virtues:** Language shapes character. The way in which we speak, and the words we use, have great power to discourage or to inspire. The language of virtues helps us to replace shaming and blaming with personal responsibility and respect. It is a frame of reference for bringing out the best in children and ourselves. It helps us to become the kind of people we want to be.
2. **Recognize Teachable Moments:** Recognizing the gifts and life lessons in our daily challenges helps us to cultivate character in ourselves and others. When we have the humility and confidence to learn from our mistakes, every stumbling block becomes a stepping stone.
3. **Set Clear Boundaries:** Virtues-based boundaries focus on respect, restorative justice and reparation to create a climate of peace and safety. Personal boundaries help us to build healthy relationships and protect our time, our energy and our health.
4. **Honor the Spirit:** This strategy begins with respect for the dignity of each person and encourages us to make time for reflection and reverence, and to encourage participation in and celebration of those things that are reflected by our sense of values.
5. **Offer Spiritual Companionship™:** By being deeply present and listening with compassion and detachment, we help others 'to empty their cup'. This counselling approach empowers others to define teachable moments and to reflect on their virtues. It supports moral choice, intimacy in relationships, and peaceful conflict resolution.

In our classrooms, the language of the virtues is a natural component of how we interact with students and each other. *The Virtues Program* meshes beautifully with our use of *Choice Theory* as it allows us to use positive language and goal seeking when creating our classroom environment. It also allows us to rise above the knee-jerk reactions that occur when we find ourselves tired, frustrated or when our points of view are not well perceived. Finally, as a teaching team, we annually use the virtues to define strengths and attributes of each other in order to build a picture of the team and to use this to set goals in areas that we would like to develop both personally and professionally.

Cathy and I were deeply enriched by this professional development experience and wish to thank the society for supporting us so fully in order that we were able to partake in the event. If anyone would like to learn more about *The Virtues Project* please contact us. The society owns the books that can be used in your homes with your children.



Operated by MIND

Boundary Bay Montessori House
3800 72nd Street, Ladner, B.C.V4K 2B2

Phone: 604-946-9814
Email: teachers@bbmh.com
www.bbmh.com

CALENDAR 2007-2008 TERM 3

April	14-18	Observations
	19	Fundraising Gala
	22	Earth Day
	28	Professional Development Day
May	11	Mother's Day
	19	Victoria Day
	20-23	Intermediate Camp
	30	Student Led Conferences
June	5	Sports Day
	6	Professional Development Day
	15	Father's Day
	17-19	Rehearsal
	19	Graduation and Year-end Concert
	20	School Picnic

Choice Theory in the Intermediate Classroom...

Choice Theory/Reality Therapy has, over the years, become an integral part of the Intermediate classroom. At the beginning of the year students explore four of the five basic needs: Fun, Love/Belonging, Freedom, and Power in small group discussions and by drawing and developing a personal crest for their working group. It offers the students an opportunity to meet and work with new students

in September, as well as explore their own personal needs, and share their Quality World with their classmates. This sets the tone and establishes the environment. Very soon in the year we discuss and list My Job/Your Job and use that list to write our "Class Beliefs". The *Behaviour Car* is another vehicle (pun intended) for working with the needs and is used in a variety of ways, such as through role plays and journal writing. Whenever students are in conflict, or acting in way that is not appropriate, we ask the questions: "What are you doing?" "What do you want?" "Is what you are doing getting you what you want, in other words, is it working?" "And finally, what could you do differently (to get what you want)?"

This term we are focusing on the concept of Quality Work. This means understanding the criteria for the work assigned and engaging in a self-evaluation process to ensure the work is completed to the expected standard. Quality Work is not only measured by an external benchmark, but also by an internal one. It is the teacher's responsibility to nurture and encourage the student's innate sense of how well a task has been done, whether it could be improved upon, and to develop a habit of assessing his or her own satisfaction with the quality of the work. Glasser and Montessori would agree that in teaching students quality, we should only ask students to do work that is useful, constructive and meaningful. This will support each student to value the task he or she is engaged in. Once students develop an understanding of quality and begin to nurture their own innate sense of it, they will be intrinsically motivated to perform to the best of their ability. Learning and producing Quality Work will become part of their Quality World.

Choice Theory supports the Intermediate students in taking responsibility for their behaviour and the work they produce. It helps them to understand what motivates their behaviour and how to get what they want in a healthy manner. Most importantly, it is a life skill that will serve them well as they move on to high school and lifelong challenges that will be presented once they leave BBMH.

By Eileen Wilson