

# Montessori Moments

"Free the child's potential, and you will transform him into the world"

-Maria Montessori



August 2015

## Letter from the Director: Stephanie Speicher

I am thrilled to begin another school year filled with meaningful learning and growth. I have no doubt that all of the students and teachers are ready to come together, share stories, and welcome new students to their communities.

As we move into the school year ahead, and our MMA community continues to develop, it is imperative that we remember that WE are a community of learners. Each of us has found MMA on our own personal and family journey to seek an educational experience that is different from the norm and has the potential to allow our children to reach the highest potential possible. Please keep in mind the following points as we move through this process:

1. **The entire staff at MMA has the best interest of the children at the forefront of our minds and hearts.** Having a *child's best interests at heart* is much easier said than explained. What does that mean? Everyone probably will not be doing the same lesson or activity, because students are different and they have different needs. This can be scary for parents because they worry their child will feel different or be "left behind" or "not challenged enough". It is our job to know just how far, when, and how much to push a child academically, finding their strengths and building resiliency. It is a privilege to work with students, and especially your child, and we honor that obligation.
2. **We "get to know" each and every student.** So, what do we do to create an environment that genuinely helps students find their strengths and areas of growth? We get to know each individual child well. The children in our school don't just have one teacher. We are a community of teachers that work with all students. Sometimes school will be hard and that is ok. But, we strive to never leave a child unsupported even when it gets rough. These moments are opportunities for "planned struggle" – where we intentionally give students time to work on a problem without rushing in and "saving" them.
3. **We all work towards a successful school year for all students.** Remember that learning continues and often is extended into the home (out of school) environment and this happens naturally. Help your children by not telling them the answer when they "have to know". Instead, ask leading questions that push children to think for themselves. Help students plan and carry out a schedule for doing their homework/long-term projects every night.

Together as teachers, students, and families we are responsible for the success of Maria Montessori Academy. You can be part of this success is getting involved with MAPA – our Parent Organization. Back to School Night will provide you an opportunity to get to know the MAPA Board and pinpoint an area of interest to volunteer your time. The importance of our parent commitment to the MMA is realized through the volunteerism we expect from our families. This commitment is vital to our success. When this partnership between the school and the families we serve is strong, student achievement is also strengthened. Please remember your 40 volunteer hours can be served through working with MAPA or within the school in general activities, tutoring, etc.

Throughout the year I look forward to meeting the new members of our school community and connecting with returning community members. I encourage families to get to know each other so that we can build new friendships and support each other as the need arises. You will have a great opportunity to meet new people and see old friends at the Pool Party on August 4<sup>th</sup> and Back to School Night on August 13<sup>th</sup>. This year we are offering Montessori 101,



### August 13

- Montessori 101: 6:30-7:00 PM
- Back to School Night: 7:00-8:00 PM

### August 14

New Student Orientation (1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and any new students to the school)

- 1<sup>st</sup> levels and new 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> levels and any new Early Childhood A.M: 1-1:45
- 4<sup>th</sup> levels and new 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> levels and any new Early Childhood P.M: 2-2:45
- 7<sup>th</sup> and any new Jr. High Students: 1:00-2:45

### August 17

- First Day of School
- Cross Country Sign-ups for grades 6-9 at 3:15

### August 17-21

Early Out

### August 19

Cross Country Player/Parent Meeting- 5:00 in the Library

### September 7

No school

### September 19

Run for the Redwoods 5K

## Letter from the Director Continued:

a short presentation prior to Back to School Night for new families to the Montessori method or for anyone looking to refresh on key Montessori educational components. Back to School Night also serves as an opportunity to meet in the classrooms with teachers and learn about grade level curriculum, projects, and expectations.

A few things to make our year go more smoothly are as follows:

1. Adhering to the traffic pattern for drop-off and pick-up is imperative for a timely start to our day; please refer to the maps posted on the website and in this newsletter for specific directions.
2. Subscribe to our MMA Blog. This will keep your family in the loop to all the events and activities at the school.
3. And finally, school begins at 8:30 a.m. You set your child up for success by getting him/her to school on time, ready to learn.

Back to School Orientation for new students to MMA, 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and incoming 7<sup>th</sup> graders on Friday, August 14<sup>th</sup>. It is our goal to provide our students with an opportunity to get to know their classmates and their teachers in their new community before school starts. Please refer to the information in this newsletter with specific times and instructions for Orientation.

We are excited to begin the 2015-2016 school year! At Maria Montessori Academy, the staff, faculty, and administration are honored that you entrust us with your child's education. The hours that your children are with us each day are so important. Here's to a great school year!

## MMA Homework Policy

"A fundamental truth permeates Montessori's work: children are desperate to learn. In a Montessori class, children are motivated to discover why and how things work. Therefore, homework, in a Montessori sense, is work that the child does at home, as an extension of his or her educational exploration" (Hektor, L 2010). We know that parents are a child's first teacher; this comes with a great deal of responsibility and it is a relationship that doesn't end when a child enters school. Real learning is not limited to the schoolroom and children need to see their family's excitement for learning and real-world applications, in order to fully reach their potentials. Even though we do not require traditional homework at MMA, we do encourage activities, which constructively direct a child's pursuits during home hours, while nurturing their interests and building family bonds. Monthly and long-term "home projects" are best completed with an adult as a guide and resource for the child, helping the child to meet the expectations set forth. We also ask that children read and write daily. Reading is established as a Time set aside for reading whatever children find interesting (either individually or aloud), and writing is either in a journal or involves freely chosen creative or expository writing exercises. We may also ask that children practice spelling words or math concepts at home. In fact, many activities may constitute homework, including household chores. Responsibilities at home help the child develop language skills and cultural awareness. Making math a real part of the home environment (pairing socks and counting by twos; dividing a pizza into equal pieces; shopping and making change) and giving the child a voice in family Decisions are important to the child's perception of math concepts and economic geography. The goal for the Montessori family's homework is to be practical, purposeful and continuous; spending quality time inspiring children's natural curiosity and love for learning. This requires considerable parent participation, understanding of the Montessori philosophy and regular communication with the school.

## New Student Orientation

When you drop off your children for the orientation, the classroom assistant will be holding up a sign on the front curb that indicates their teachers' names. Please direct your child to this sign. We asked that you do not get out of your car to walk your child into the school. This will assist in encouraging your child's independence, which is a hallmark of the Montessori philosophy. Please be prompt with your drop-off and pick-up so we can assure that your child has a successful orientation. Also, we encourage you to drop off your child's school supplies before school starts. You may do so student orientation, or any other time during the week before school starts. Please make sure to label your bag/container with your child's name & teacher so that they are delivered to the correct classroom.

**Get ready to start training  
for our 4th annual 5K Run  
for the Redwoods!**

Mark your calendars for September 19<sup>th</sup> at 8 AM. This is a fundraiser our 6<sup>th</sup> graders do to kick off fundraising for their 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Field Trip to the Redwood Forest in April. Come support our students and meet the other families of MMA! More detailed information will be sent out through August and September. We can't wait to see you there!



## Dress Code Policy:

\*All clothing needs to be free from logos, lettering, graphics, sparkles, sheen, patterns, decorative accents, etc.

\*\* Dress Code is enforced Monday-Friday. Dress Down days will be announced at discretion of Director.

### Tops

- Color: Any solid color.
- Styles: Uniform polos, button-down shirts (must remain buttoned even with undershirt).
- Layering: Sweaters, pullovers, vests, and sweatshirts may be worn over shirts with collars and must comply with solid color restrictions and no logos. Students may wear layer long sleeve/short sleeve shirts under collared shirts.
- School Pride T-Shirt: May be worn any day of the week. This is the only shirt that is allowed without collar. For school safety teacher may require all students to wear school shirt on field trips.

### Dresses:

- Must have collars.

### Outerwear:

- Outerwear is defined as anything worn over the standardized dress, such as, but not limited to: hoodies, jackets, and coats. Students shall not be allowed to wear any type of hood/hoodie inside the school building. Nothing offensive on outerwear is allowed, such as images, sayings, artwork, music groups, etc.

### Bottoms

- Color: Any solid color.
- Material: Cotton, twill, corduroy.
- Style: Plain, pleated, cargo; no sagging or baggy pants.
- Skirts/jumpers/shorts: Pleated or straight; hemlines should fall below fingertips when arms are extended down sides of body.
- Leggings must be worn with skirts/dresses.
- Tights/hose/leggings: Solid colors only; leggings may only be worn under skirts/dresses/skorts.

### Shoes

- All students need to have a soft sole shoe/slipper that must be worn at all times while in the building. The slipper needs to be
- free from logos, lettering, graphics, sparkles, sheen, decorative accents, and characters. \*Note: a small pattern is acceptable.
- Accessories/Hair
- Hairstyles and hair accessories are expected to be non-distracting and out of their eyes.
- Jewelry and other accessories are limited to wristwatches and non-distracting earrings.
- Hats or hoods will be worn outdoors only, and in the manner for which it was designed for.
- Not Allowed
- Visible tattoos.
- Body piercing except ears.
- Large or clanging jewelry.
- Bandanas, feathers, or scarves.
- Bare midriffs when raising arms or when sitting.
- Clothing that is frayed, has holes, tears, stains or is made of denim.
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### Junior High Allowances

Junior high will follow the same dress code stated above, with the following allowances:

- Students may wear denim pants. \* Students are not required to have slippers.



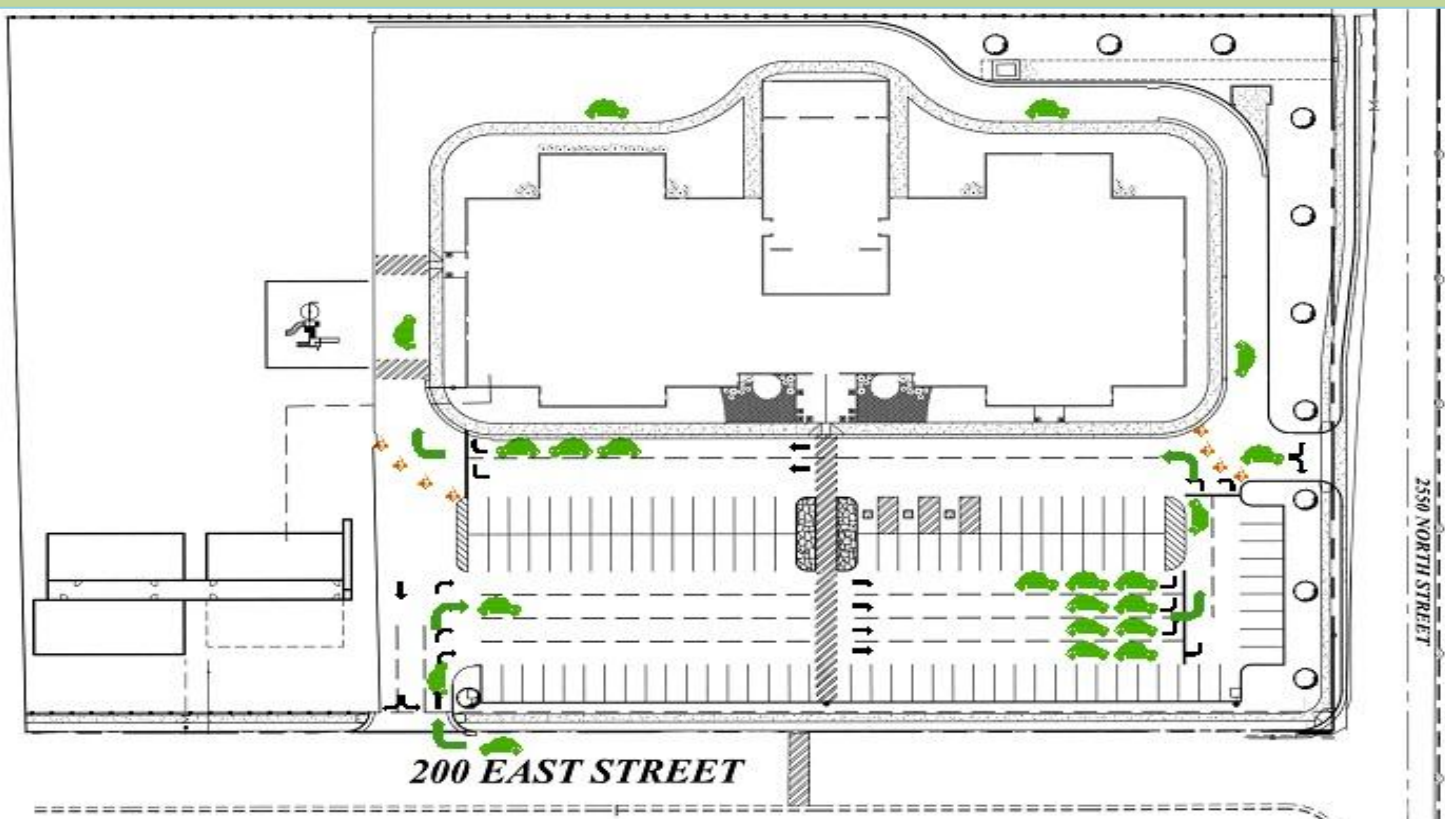
## School Land Trust

## Gear up for Cross Country!

The School LAND Trust Program, established by the legislature in 1999, distributes the “annual dividend” from the permanent State School Fund through school districts and charter schools for all public schools in the state. Elected parents, elected teachers, and the school’s principal serve on School Community Councils. Charter schools are not required to have a council but instead have trust land committees that make decisions about the School LAND Trust Program. LAND stands for Learning And Nurturing Development. Our council or committee prepares a plan that identifies the school’s greatest academic need(s). Local School Boards approve the plans, and funding is sent to each school with an approved plan before the school year begins. Our council or committee receives an annual dividend from the permanent State School Fund every July to implement our school’s approved plan during the next school year. The program is paperless and visible on the web at [www.schoollandtrust.org](http://www.schoollandtrust.org).

Any students grades 6-9 interested in joining the MMA Mountain Lion Cross Country team now is your chance! Practices start on Monday, the 17<sup>th</sup> at 3:15-5:00. Students should bring the appropriate clothing to change into before practice. A player/parent meeting has been scheduled on Wednesday the 19<sup>th</sup> @ 5:00 in the MMA library. Any students wanting to participate must attend this meeting with a parent or guardian.

## MMA Drop-Off/Pick-Up Map



### GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Please be patient and courteous toward MMA staff, students, and other drivers.
- Be on the lookout for students using the crosswalks in the parking lot.
- Stay in your vehicle at all times.
- Refrain from mobile phone usage while driving on school grounds.
- Students will exit and enter from the RIGHT side of the vehicle only and at the CURB only.
- Students must be picked up at dismissal or immediately following an after school program. If a student is left for more than twenty (20) minutes after dismissal time, the school will start a late list and parents will be asked to conference with the Director.

### PROTOCOLS

- Enter MMA parking lot from 200 east.
- Turn right into one of the staging lanes, pulling forward only as directed by staff.
- When a staff member indicates, complete the U-turn and pull forward alongside the curb as far forward as possible.
- Unload and load students from the sidewalk into the right side of the vehicle.
- Check for seat belt security.
- Turn right and drive around the backside of the MMA building.
- Turn right or left onto 2550 North.