



# montessori matters...

Northwest Suburban Montessori School

May 2010



## Note from Principal: Jan Howland

I DID NOTHING TODAY

A common question parents often ask children "What did you do today?"

The following poem is a classic one. The author is unknown.

When children come home at the end of the day,  
the question they're asked as they run out to play  
is "Tell me what did you do today?"  
And the answer they give makes you sigh with dismay.

"Nothing, I did nothing today!"

Perhaps "Nothing" means that I read a book,  
or with a teacher I got to cook.

Maybe I painted a picture of blue.  
Or heard a story about a mouse that flew.

Maybe I wrote in my journal myself,  
Or found a great book on the library shelf

Maybe today I helped a friend,  
Or wrote the letters beginning to end.

Maybe today was the very first time  
That my scissors followed a very straight line.

Maybe I sang a song right to the end  
Or worked with a special new friend.

When you are three, four, or five, your heart has wings,  
and "Nothing" can mean so many things.

Please, as parents, try to understand that so much is being absorbed in those little minds every single day (whether you know it or not) Keep allowing your child to grow those "wings" and develop into an active and excited learner.



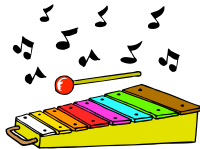
***Have a great summer full of wonderful "Nothings!"***





**Music Notes: Justyna Krafft-Weirich**

Time goes by fast! I can't believe the end of the school year is almost here. We have had a great, fun-filled year. We've learned so much about music. What is music? My little friends will answer: music is a sound, rhythm, melody, pitch, volume and feeling. Music speaks not with words but with expression. It is a universal language that has united all of us at Montessori. We all understand music because we all have feelings.



This year we learned about *forte* and *piano* and many other musical terms. We learned to read and write treble and bass clefs as well as time signatures. We studied how the conductor leads the orchestra through a performance and took turns with the baton. We let music inspire us to dance ballet, jazz and tap. Everyone now knows that the musical alphabet only has seven letters and we used our alphabet to compose pieces we performed on the xylophone. Most importantly, we learned that music is for everyone. It's for anyone who wants to hear the sound, dance to the rhythm, clap to the beat or sing along.

Teaching the children has been an absolute joy this year. Thank you for the opportunity. **Look for the flyer about Music Theory classes if you'd like to keep the beat going this summer.**

**Spanish Notes: Sra. Palao**

What a great school year we have had! The children have shown great interest and gain a lot of confidence learning a new language. They have mastered their numbers (1-20), abc's, colors, basic greetings and so much more. Also I'm glad to see how much the children participate during line time. For the month of May we will be reviewing some of the things we've learned throughout the year as well as fruit like: manzana (apple), uvas (grapes), platano (banana), pera (pear) and a few more. Make sure you ask your child what they've learned or what their favorite thing is during Spanish.



to Sra. Palao,  
for her patient  
and kind work  
with the  
children. We will  
miss you!

After so many years I'm sad to say that this is my last year as a Spanish teacher at Montessori. I'm expecting a baby and will be staying home with her. I will miss the children very much, but we will come and visit. It was great working with the children, and I am happy to have been part of your child's education at Montessori. Have a safe and fun summer.

**Upcoming Events**

NSMS Board Meeting Room One	Wednesday, June 16 7:30 P.M.
Memorial Day Parade Wear your NSMS T-Shirt and bring lots of candy to throw to the crowd!	Monday, May 31 – Meet at 9 A.M. Look for details on the flier in the Friday folder.



Does anyone  
have an old fax  
machine that  
can be donated  
to the main  
office? The  
office is looking  
for a new fax  
machine.



## **Montessori Basics: Sara Whittleton**

In this column of our newsletter we would like to offer information regarding the different areas of learning in the classroom. For most of the year, our Principal, Jan Howland, has provided a wonderful supplement to the Montessori magazine, Tomorrow's Child, that parents get for free as part of their enrollment fees! This month, we have a great email correspondence between one of the contributors to that magazine and one of our own Montessori parents.

In her article, "The Positive Psychology of Childhood," published in the January 2010 issue of Tomorrow's Child, Maren Schmidt discusses the **six core virtues** that appear across cultures and aid people in developing healthy minds and happy lives. Below is the email exchange between Brett Whittleton and Maren Schmidt:

Hi Ms. Schmidt -

My 4.5 year old son is currently enrolled in the Northwest Suburban Montessori School in Arlington Heights, IL (northwest suburb of Chicago). He is blossoming with the Montessori Method and we couldn't be happier with the program, or the staff. One of the perks of being in the curriculum is that we receive a copy of Tomorrow's Child. As such, my wife shared a copy of the January 2010 issue and I enjoyed your article on "The Positive Psychology of Childhood."

You referenced the work and research of Dr. Martin Seligman and I plan to take a look at his books, as well as completing his VIA Strength Survey. The six types of core virtues: wisdom/knowledge; courage; humanity; justice; temperance; and, transcendence referenced in your article provide a helpful series of guideposts to share with my two boys (4.5 y and 2.5 y), as well as enhancing my perspective of the world, and my place in it.

I'm wondering if you would mind sharing an electronic copy of your recent article? I'd love to share it with other parents and friends, who are looking for tools/techniques for raising their children with a healthy balance of wisdom (heart) and intellect (head/mind).

Also, are there any training tools or techniques available to help share these character strengths with children? My original plan was to work from your article, but if additional tools are available, I suspect they would help teach the concepts.

Warm Regards,  
Brett Whittleton

Brett,

Thank you so much for writing. I'm glad to know that you found the positive psychology article to be helpful. I have found Martin Seligman's ideas very valuable. There aren't direct lessons, per se, to give to children in his books.

Teaching your Children Values by Linda and Richard Eyre is a book I have found valuable for the 'how-to's' of helping learn those character strengths. There are lessons for young children, older children and adolescents so it remains a long time resource for you as a parent.

What Do You Really Want For Your Children by Wayne Dyer is another book I have used extensively to help parents (and myself) think through what is really important for us to teach.

Another book I like is Ten Conversations by Rabbi Shmuley Boteach. He helps you see those truly important things we need to be emphasizing as parents.

I'll attach a word document of the article. I may need to make a pretty pdf if I get too many requests!

This article is excerpted from my book, Building Cathedral Not Walls, [buildingcathedrals.net](http://buildingcathedrals.net).

Also, you might enjoy my book Understanding Montessori: A Guide for Parents. Available at [MarenSchmidt.com](http://MarenSchmidt.com).

Thank you, Brett, for writing. And thank you for being a father to two boys. Such important vital work. Thank you.

All the best,  
Maren Schmidt  
[MarenSchmidt.com](http://MarenSchmidt.com)



### **Notes from the Toddler Room: Kelly Behn**

Summer is just around the corner, and the toddler room is buzzing with activity. April brought caterpillars, butterflies and praying mantises. We watched the caterpillars turn into butterflies and the praying mantises hatch from the egg. Once they were hatched we released them outdoors. The children love to watch the caterpillars spin their cocoons and wait patiently to see them emerge as butterflies. We continue to have music twice a month and the children enjoy every activity with Ms. Justyna. In May we will be planting. We will plant a sunflower seed, care for it and watch it grow. The children love this activity because it involves water. Pick up will be at the park, weather permitting. We will be going outside when it is 50 degrees or higher, so please dress the children appropriately. It has truly been an honor and a privilege to watch your children grow this year. It coincides nicely with the life cycle of the butterfly. I would like to take this time to thank you for entrusting the care of your child to us. Maria Montessori once said, "That 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.'" So, I would like to say we have had a successful, productive and fun year. I tell people I have the best job because I get to go to the park when it is nice, sing and dance every day, and I work with a group of people whose abilities I respect, and, in turn they respect me and the classroom environment. So thank you again for having provided our class with such wonderful children. I hope you all have a safe and fun summer and in the words of Maria Montessori, remember to, "follow your child." Also, thanks to all the parent volunteers who brought fruit, play dough, and a smile.



### **Notes from the 3-6 Classroom: Marie Ferber**

#### **Happy Graduation Class of 2010!!!**

May is such a fun time of year. The children get to go outside more because the weather is finally warming up! We can observe all the wonderful changes the season brings, for example, the trees are budding, the grass is growing and getting greener and all the flowers are blooming. All this natural phenomena will be incorporated into the classroom. We will also enjoy the wonderful musical works of Leonard Bernstein, best known for The West Side Story.



As the school year is winding down we are gearing up for many end of the school-year activities. Our Kindergarteners will be graduating on May 24. Congratulations to our 2010 grads: **Jimmy Giuliano, Simon Hemenway, Ethan Kossak, Casper Opala, Prashanth Ramachandra, Amol Shah, Jon Jon Siemianowski, Danielle Skiko, Jia Skrudland, Andi Yeverino and Aaron Zawislak!** All of our 3-6 students will be participating in an end of the year game day. Half day will play on May 25 and full day will play on May 26. We will also be having an end of the year picnic. Watch your e-mail and/or Friday Folder for more details. May 31 is the Arlington Heights Memorial Day Parade. Come and walk the parade to show you NSMS spirit!!

Finally, near the beginning of summer break I will be starting a new phase in my life. My husband and I are expecting our first child on May 13. Along with transitioning into my new role as a mom, I will also be moving from the full day classroom to a half day class. This will not only allow me to spend more time with my baby but also enable me to stay in contact with the school and families that I love so much. I am going to miss all of you in full day so please be sure to say hi to me in Room 6!!!