

President's Update

By Amalie Day
CoMP President

• Thank you CoMP North for hosting an enjoyable evening for Balboa and Jefferson Montessori families at the Loeff Carrousel on December 4th. There was a great turnout of students, parents, teachers, and the evening's special guests, our Montessori teachers-in-training: Lynzie Abbey, Carrie Ryan Walls, and Erin Schmidt.

• Thank you to all the families that have responded to the appeal letter. Since late October, CoMP has received donations totaling \$7,463. That's over a quarter of the way to our goal of \$26,000. So far 18% of CoMP families have donated. Our goal is 100% participation.

Are you thinking, "I can only give \$20, so why bother?" Well, one of the options available when donating online is setting up a monthly recurring donation. Monthly donations of \$20, \$15, or even \$10 truly add up, and will go a long way in helping us reach our goal. There's also an option that lets you make a donation on behalf of or in memory of another person. What a great idea during the holiday season.

To donate online: go to our website, www.spokanepublicmontessori.org, click on the "Contact Us/Donate Now" tab, and then click on the GuideStar® icon. To donate by mail: send a check to CoMP • PO Box 1181 • Spokane, WA 99210. If you need a phone number for CoMP to set up a one-time or recurring donation using your online bill pay, use (509) 354-3200. There's still time to make your donation for the 2008 tax year.

If we all do our part, we can assure that our Montessori program will continue to flourish.

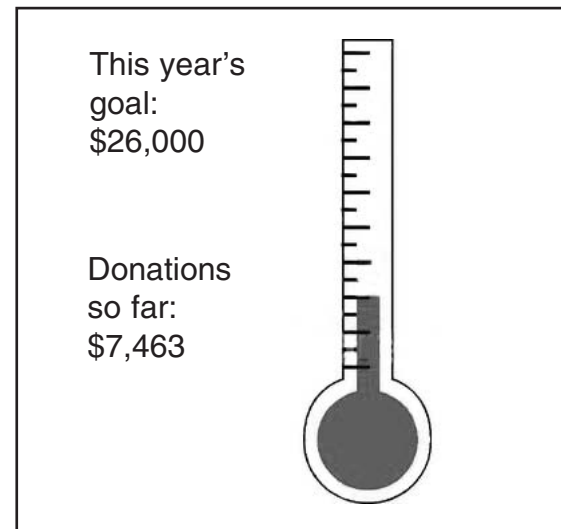
• Maybe you have something sitting in your attic that will fill a need in a Montessori classroom. Check the "Teachers' wish lists" on our website.

Go to www.spokanepublicmontessori.org and click on the "What's New" tab.

• Is your family new to Montessori education? There are two things you can do to increase your Montessori knowledge: 1) attend parent information nights, and 2) read. Go to our website, www.spokanepublicmontessori.org, click on the "Calendar" tab for Parent Information Night dates, click on the "Parent Resources" tab for reading suggestions.

• Thank you to Rebekah Giangreco of New Moon Family Acupuncture, 3418 S. Grand Blvd. Rebekah, a Jefferson Montessori parent, will donate 25% of the group clinic's earnings on January 7th to CoMP.

• Get involved! Our program depends on parent involvement to succeed. There are many opportunities, in and out of the classroom. Contact Wendy Peter (327-3392, thepeterfamily@yahoo.com) at Balboa, Callie Bendickson (443-1228, calleen@hotmail.com) at Jefferson, or me (443-0580, amalie@icehouse.net) to find out what will work for you.



Jefferson and Balboa Kids Help Out

Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF

By Ariel Chai and Kiersten Moss
Jefferson Students

Five years ago, Mrs. Bradley's class started donating to Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF. The next year, Mrs. Bradley's class invited the rest of Jefferson to join them. UNICEF stands for United Nations Children's Fund. This program started in 1950 in Philadelphia, when a local youth group raised \$17 in orange-painted boxes. Trick-or-Treat for

UNICEF funds have provided children all around the world with life-saving medicine, better nutrition, clean water and sanitation, quality basic education and emergency relief.

We were asked to organize Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF at Jefferson this year, and we had fun. Mrs. Bradley's class went out in pairs to tell other classes about UNICEF. We visited most of the classes, and we had more student participation than any other year. However, we had fewer donations than last year; we collected \$648.59. After Halloween, our class collected the boxes. We enjoyed counting the money, looking for rare or foreign coins, and adding up the totals. The fourth graders also used the money counting to practice decimal work.

In conclusion, we are very proud to participate in Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF, and we hope this will continue for many years to come. Our goal for next year is to have all the classes participate. Thank you for supporting Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF here at Jefferson Elementary.

Balboa Walk-a-thon

By Christa Boone
Balboa Student

The Walk-a-thon was held at Balboa Elementary on Thursday, October 16th. The Balboa Montessori Walk-a-thon was a big success. We have collected \$1,063 in pledges so far. Over 90 people participated in the Walk-a-thon. The Walk-a-thon has been held for 17 years. In those

17 years, we have supported Lea Nyachwo and Nabukwasi Justine with some of the money. We helped Lea and Nabukwasi by sending them \$250.00 each year for their education and family in Uganda, Africa.

A Montessori student committee chooses how to spend the extra money. In the past, we have spent the money on activities like blanket making parties for the Spokane Women's Shelter, the Humane Society, sending supplies to schools in Kyrgyzstan, and field trips.



Report from Kansas City

By Wendy Peter

CoMP President-elect

I recently had the privilege of attending a Public School Montessori Forum in Kansas City, Missouri. I spent 2 1/2 days listening to presentations, participating in breakout sessions, touring four public Montessori schools, and talking with Montessori teachers and administrators about their programs.

Here are some highlights I'd like to share:

All Kansas City public Montessori schools have primary classrooms for children ages 3 -5 in addition to the lower elementary (grades 1-3) and upper elementary (grades 4-6).

The four schools have a total of 30 primary classes and 20 lower and upper elementary classes. They have 1,500 Montessori students (out of 18,000 in the Kansas City school district). Four hundred children are on the waiting list for the public school Montessori program.

The largest school has 437 students and the smallest school has 210 students. Three of the four schools are strictly Montessori. One school, Faxon, was built in 1991 as the first school in the U.S. designed specifically for Montessori education. It is a beautiful school with many wonderfully designed, spacious classrooms.

All children within the district are welcome to attend the public Montessori school on a first come first served basis. However, children must have primary classroom experience to be eligible to enter lower or upper elementary Montessori classrooms.

The schools have very strong parent teacher groups. Parents raise money to help fund ongoing professional development for teachers, replacement of classroom materials, field trip expenses, etc.

Each school has all three levels under one roof. This not only strengthens their community but also

provides a stable, consistent environment for children as they progress from primary to elementary.

Kansas City has a Montessori Program Developer/Coordinator representing the program at the district level. She has a deep understanding of the needs of Montessori students and teachers, and acts as an advocate for the Montessori program.

They are not without their problems, however. There is an on-going struggle to align Montessori teaching with state and district requirements. They find ways to let "external forces" enter the school without corrupting Montessori teachings.

Also, because the teacher certification program is to be completed in either one school year or over three summers, it's challenging to find teachers who are certified and ready to teach when the school is ready to hire.

Funding is always a challenge. They constantly look for access to good funding within the district as well as look to their parent groups for help.

It's interesting that the challenges Kansas City faces are the same challenges that we face here in Spokane. I've only been involved in Spokane's public Montessori program for three years and in that time I have been impressed with how we have turned many of our challenges into successes.

It's apparent to me that these successes have been possible for three reasons. First, our teachers are committed to Montessori's methods of teaching, so our children love to learn. As a result, state and district requirements are met and often exceeded.

Secondly, our parents work tirelessly to implement new, creative ways to fund our program; and finally, our administrators' support for this program has allowed us to increase the number of classrooms, recruit and hire new teachers and explore new funding options.

I believe that the combined dedication of our teachers, parents and administrators is the answer to overcoming challenges and continuing the growth and success of our Spokane Public Schools Montessori program.



Curtis Bibb tries for the brass ring.

Carrousel Night

By Sydney Cathcart and Sophia Karel

Jefferson Students

On December 4th, CoMP rented out the Loeff Carrousel for the annual Balboa and Jefferson Montessori social evening. It actually had a really good turn out! We think there were over 200 people. The line for the carrousel overflowed with flocks of kids and parents everywhere.

The lines were too long so we decided to hang out with our friends and eat candy canes and cookies. Christmas music was playing the whole time, which made it seem like the holidays were just around the corner. Even some of our old friends from previous years at Montessori, who are now in middle school, came to visit us as well.

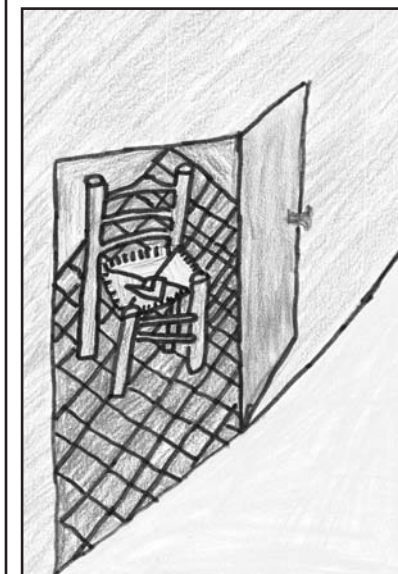
The line finally got shorter so we took a ride, and then another ride, and then another ride. One of our friends has prosthetic legs and it was really thrilling to see her ride the carrousel for the very first time without any trouble. We were all very excited and proud of her. We have to say, we got a little dizzy while the ride was getting close to the end. Finally, the night came to an end. You know what they say, "Time flies when you're having fun." It was a great night and great experience. Can't wait until next year's event.

Winter

By Chandler Jordan

Balboa Student

It was a cold winter day outside.
 I was playing in the snow.
 Snowflakes falling gently on my cold red nose.
 The soft breeze rushing through me, and my purple coat turning white.
 I trudge through the snow falling to my knees while embracing the winter weather.
 The snow fell into a white blanket covering our earth.
 Jack Frost gently playing games only children could play,
 And me tagging along.
 I get called into see the fire lit and smell Mom's sweet homemade hot cocoa.
 I gently took the penguin mug, grabbed a blanket and sat by the fire sipping my cocoa, warming Jack Frost away.



Chair inspired by Vincent van Gogh by Ian White, Balboa Student