

Change is Good

By Wendy Peter
CoMP President

Some people like change, some do not. For the purpose of this article, I have to say that CHANGE IS GOOD (and the change I am talking about is quarters, nickels, dimes and pennies)!

As you know, each year CoMP sends one or two appeal letters to each Montessori family in the Spokane Public Schools Montessori program. We ask for your contributions, not because it would be nice to have a few extra bucks in our bank account, we ask because your contributions are what make this program viable. While the appeal letters are our main fundraising effort, we are always open to new and creative ways to raise money for CoMP.

The CoMP North families at Balboa took a creative approach to fundraising. They raised funds specifically for CoMP by organizing a "Change for Change" fundraiser. Each child was given a Chinese Food container to decorate and take home. The goal: See how much change can be collected in two weeks...pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters (of course, dollar bills and checks were not turned away). It was that simple. For ten days the children had fun scouting for change and it was a relatively painless process for the adults.

Their change really did make a change! Once all of the money was turned in and counted, they were pleased to see that 75% of the CoMP North families contributed to the fundraiser and raised close to \$750 for CoMP. It was a great team effort that produced great results.

A sincere thank you goes out to all of the CoMP North families who participated in the innovative Change for Change fundraiser. I would also like to thank each and every family in our program that has made a contribution to CoMP this year. Each family has their own way of giving. For some, an

annual donation works best. For others, a monthly donation using on-line bill pay works. For others, it's finding change in between the couch cushions, the laundry room, or in the glove compartment of the family car. It all works and it all makes a positive "change" for our Montessori program!

Refresher Inspires New Work

By Gayle Waner
Jefferson Teacher

Geometry was the topic for this year's Montessori refresher course in Jacksonville, FL. Baiba Kumins Grazzini showed us how to transform triangles into new shapes, creating beautiful designs in the process. I was excited about what I learned and anxious to return home to start using it.

I began with the the triangle box. I introduced what I learned and the children slid black lines together and practiced vocabulary. Then they added boxes and rearranged triangles, creating new shapes and asking for more names. They discovered pentagons, nonagons, hexagons, and concave octagons. I showed them how to mark vertices and connect them with a straight edge. They cut out figures with construction paper and a book began to take shape.

That work continued throughout the day and inspired work for days to come. Only one idea from the refresher course was used and there is already evidence of change. This same thing happens each time I go, making the trip an important event. For that reason I thank you. Your CoMP support made this possible.

Save the date: Wednesday, April 14th, 6: 30 p.m.

A Montessori consultant will address an all-parents CoMP meeting at Willard Elementary, 500 W. Longfellow. Coffee and desserts will be served and there will be an activity for the children.

"I Was Born" Tales from Timelines

Students in Paula Gibson-Smith's and Gayle Waner's Jefferson Elementary classrooms recently finished and displayed their Timelines, the stories of their lives. Here are some excerpts.

2003: I am sitting on a pumpkin and I'm happy. I am with my brother Benjamin and my cousin Alex. I was looking for wild pumpkins. We found these three wild pumpkins. I am three years old.
-Matthew Chaddock

2008: This is me riding the twister panic at the Interstate Fair. I didn't feel too good after going on it 7 or 8 times. Then we went to weird Al Yankovic. The end.
-Jacob Proost

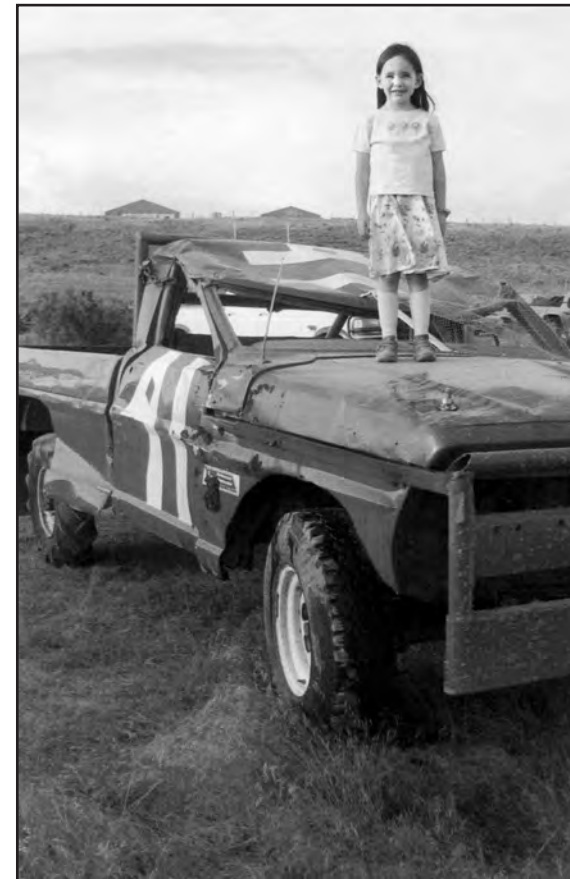
2004: This is me with a pot on my head to keep the aliens away.
-Emily Weber-Walsh

2002 (two years old): This is me when I first standed up. I felt so happy I felt like I was gonna explode. I stood up on my tippy toes while I grabbed my mommy's and daddy's bed to help me stand up.
-Alex Phalon

I love to read, write & play & do tap & that's my list of my favorite things to do.
-Emily Bendickson

2005: In this picture I'm looking at my friend Matt Miller do a tiny jump. In my mind I thought, "I'm going to be a show off." So I did a big jump. I missed the landing and got a fat lip.
-Mitchell Sanders

2003: I am drinking a batch of chocolate syrup with the frigerator open!!!
-Julia Picanco



June 2009: My dad is from Lind, Washington and every summer we go back to the Lind Combine Derby and this year I got to help my dad with getting the combines that are stuck in the mud out from the arena. It was so much fun!
-Kendra Lund

Walking in Their Children's Shoes

Silent Journey lets parents explore Montessori environment

By **Paula Gibson-Smith**
Jefferson Teacher

On a Friday evening and Saturday morning in February, Montessori parents and teachers embarked on a unique journey - a silent journey - through the continuum of Montessori prepared environments. The group began at Woodland Montessori and were introduced to the premise of the silent journey - become a child again and experience these classrooms as your child experiences them - first without talking or touching, just looking. This approach put the participants in a special, almost spiritual frame of mind.

After the silent tour of the elementary classrooms at Jefferson, the adults reflected on their experience. One comment highlighted the "doing nature" of the classrooms - the materials just call out to be discovered and explored! The next morning, the parents and teachers returned to work at each level with materials, following printed directions or getting a lesson.

One teacher noted a classic work cycle: easy introductory activities followed by work of increased difficulty and concentration - just like the



Maryellen Cooley and teacher Erin Schmidt talk about analyzing the style of a poem using Montessori grammar symbols.

children do. Streams of concept development were evident from the primary through to the upper elementary in such areas as fractions and language analysis. The adults could see how the work in Montessori classrooms builds, develops and deepens as the child grows older.

The response at the end was positive and enthusiastic. "Our husbands are going to do this next year!" two women reported. The teachers look forward to offering more parents the opportunity to experience a silent journey in the years to come.

Keeping the Bar High: You Can Help

By **Kathryn Picanco**
CoMP President-Elect

Earlier this year I attended the Association Montessori International (AMI) Public School Forum in Denver to learn more about Montessori public school programs and how to support them. I visited programs in the Denver area and caught a glimpse of what our program could be like if we are able to expand down to the preschool years and up through high school. I participated in lively discussions about what a quality education looks like, how Montessori aligns with that vision, and what it entails. It also became clear that the Montessori teachers in public school systems are torn between two educational worlds for certification: the state they teach in and also the national AMI requirements. I left the meeting inspired knowing that Montessori is an excellent education for our children, yet also cognizant that our teachers must go to great lengths to teach in the public system.

We are fortunate to have some of the most well-educated and trained professionals teaching our children. Certified by the state and AMI, many also have masters degrees in education and additional special endorsements. When you put all of these credentials together, they are equivalent to the coursework and internships required for a doctorate in education. As of now, a prospective teacher for our public school Montessori program must complete all of the state coursework for a Washington teaching credential and spend an additional year training for her Montessori credential. In addition, as with most professional certifications, ongoing education is a necessity. Our teachers must keep their Washington credential current by meeting state requirements for recertification and attend the types of classes required to meet state standards.

They must also attend Montessori refresher

courses annually to keep their AMI certification current. Unfortunately, the two requirements do not overlap. Thus, financial support to assist teachers in acquiring the necessary state and Montessori certifications as well as fund a portion of their ongoing certification is essential to sustain and grow the current program.

Here is where the Community of Montessori Parents (CoMP) can help. While our classrooms do receive monetary support from Spokane Public Schools, we also depend on parent contributions. Your contributions help CoMP successfully accomplish its goals of increasing the number of Montessori classrooms, providing sponsorships for teachers in training and funding teacher professional development.

The CoMP Board of Directors is asking each family to please donate to our program. A contribution of any dollar amount will make a difference. There are several convenient payment options available:

- Set up a one-time or recurring donation on-line. Go to: www.spokanepublicmontessori.org. Click on "Contact Us/Donate Now," then click on the GuideStar icon. It is very fast and the website will easily guide you through the process. You will receive an e-mail confirmation from GuideStar regarding your tax-deductible contribution immediately.
- Set up a one-time or recurring donation using your bank's on-line bill pay. If you need a phone number for CoMP, use 509-354-3200.
- Send a check, made out to CoMP, to P.O. Box 1181, Spokane, WA 99210

Thank you for your contribution and support. It's your commitment to your children and the program that sustains a high quality Montessori education in Spokane Public Schools.