

From the President

The week before Memorial Day weekend, two of our Balboa teachers, Robin Knight and Colleen King, took their students and parent chaperones on their annual campout. This year, they trooped out to Camp N-Sid-Sen on the east shore of Lake Coeur D'Alene. I was privileged to go along as a "cabin dad." It was three days of fun and fellowship and study, and despite the nearly constant drizzle and gray skies, our spirits were never dampened.

The Montessori campouts - I've been on a couple others - strike me as microcosms of all that our Montessori program is and can be. The camaraderie engendered in the students is amazing and reminds me that our children's learning so often exceeds our preconceptions.

Take one scene from the campout. Mrs. Knight took her students and some of us chaperones on a hike up to Inspiration Point, a vista overlooking the camp and the lake. On the way, we learned about the wildlife and plants of the region. The hike was replicating the journey Native American boys travelled as they become men. The last portion of the trail was very steep and proved challenging to several of the younger children, all of whom made it to the top. On the way down, Mrs. Knight stopped us to talk about what the hike to the point was about. We adults had the opportunity to see respect (children for teacher, and vice versa), sharing, caring, and an incredible amount of wisdom from the children. Their hike was educational, and physically challenging, but also revealed they'd learned so much about their own journey in life - that they can succeed and face challenges. It was truly a gift to see children being molded as people discovering things about themselves. It was Montessori in action. How gifted our children are to have such an opportunity!

The campouts culminate the academic year, and as the year ends, so does my term as president of

SCAMC. It has been a busy one (aren't they all?) It began with a planning retreat last summer, activities (carousel night!), and meetings to plan and support our teachers and children and raise funds to ensure the continuity of the program. It has been a privilege to serve as president this year!

Over the summer, Amalie Day will become president. Amalie is the mother of two Jefferson students and she brings an awful lot of passion and commitment to the task at hand. We're in good hands!

Also, continuing our pattern of presidents alternating from the two schools, I am pleased that Wendy Peter (presently president of the Balboa parent-teacher group) has been elected to serve as president-elect in the coming school year. She and Amalie will be a strong leadership team!

-Chris Coppen, SCAMC President

What's in a name?

The SCAMC board has been working to improve communication with our community and boost our image. As part of this, we would like to change "SCAMC" to a name which both sails off the tongue and more accurately reflects the current mission of our organization.

The board and parents who responded to a recent survey have spoken: CoMP (Community of Montessori Parents) is the favorite.

Every SCAMC family needs to approve our proposed name change in order for us to make it official. Please return your signed consent form right away. If your copy did not find its way out of your child's backpack, you can download a copy from our website at: <http://www.spokanepublicmontessori.org/>. Look on the "What's New" page. Thanks.

- Sandra Bancroft-Billings, Jefferson Parent

Newsletter of the Spokane Community Advocates for Montessori Curriculum THE MONTESSORI ADVOCATE

JUNE 2008

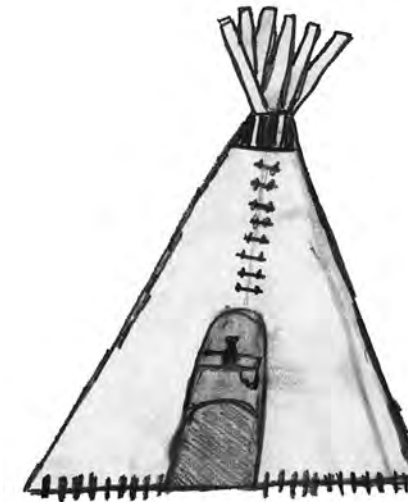


Notes from Camp

By Ben Read
Jefferson Third Grader

The Jefferson lower el Montessori campout took place during May 21-23. The campground was named Three Meadows Group camp.

On the way to the campground, we stopped at the Nez Perce Interpretive Center. There were three activities for us to do there. Paula Gibson-Smith's class started out by making a teepee. While we were making the teepee, the ranger mentioned how when the Nez Perce used to fish for salmon, you didn't have to wait to see them. You could hear them coming. After we finished building the teepee, we got to go inside it. Then we saw a movie. The most amazing part of the movie was watching the Nez Perce's land vanish after the 1855 treaty. After the movie, the ranger handed out items and you had to go around the room and see how many of your item you could find in photos on the wall. For the third activity, a ranger handed out more items and you had to go learn about them and then explain what your item was used for to the class.



James Karel, Jefferson Third Grader

When we got to the campground, we got our stuff and set up in the cabin; then went down to the lodge for an orientation. After that it was dinner. Then...free time. Many people played kickball and baseball. A so-called campfire was next, but it was more like "gather in the lodge." As soon as that was over, we went back to our cabin and settled down for bed.

The next morning, our first activity was a hike. Toward the middle of the hike we did "each two teach two." That's where two people teach two people a lesson. Then toward the end of the hike, we saw the carcass of a sharp shinned hawk. Then, we had a bird lesson, directed by Joyce Alonso and lunch. After lunch, Paula gave us a lesson on bees. When we were finished, it was free time again. Many people went fishing down by the water. Dinner that night was

pasta. We had another half hour of free time after dinner. My cabin did a bird scavenger hunt. That night we had another "gathering in the lodge" and skits. We had breakfast and loaded the busses. Then we started driving. On the way back we stopped at two places: the Dworshak Dam, which we got to tour, and the fish hatchery. Then we came home.

Erin Schmidt to teach at Balboa next year

We are excited to welcome Erin Schmidt to Balboa for the 2008-09 school year. She will be teaching one of our lower elementary Montessori classes as Robin Knight's leave replacement. Erin attended her first session of AMI training last summer. During the 2007-08 school year she has been teaching an all day kindergarten class at Regal Elementary. She will be attending her second summer of AMI training this summer.



Erin is excited to have the opportunity to teach in a Montessori class next year. She will be bringing many talents to the classroom with her along with boundless energy. Ms. Schmidt will be greeting students new to the Montessori program at Balboa on August 28, 2008 at 4:30 p.m. and is excited to meet all of her students and their families at a Balboa Montessori welcome back picnic. Details for the picnic will be forthcoming. Please join me in welcoming Erin to the Montessori community.

- Pat Lynass, Principal
Balboa Elementary

Why I love Montessori

I'm Garrett and I am a second grader at Balboa Elementary. Here are my top five reasons why I love Montessori and think it is cool:

Reason 5 – Volume cubes

Volume cubes are little cubes that I use to measure different things in the classroom. They make math fun!

Reason 4 – Work Period

Work period is when I have time to work on my

presentation. I get to research, study and write my presentation. Sometimes I work alone and I get to work in a group other times.

Reason 3 – Field Trips

I like field trips because we get to go to exciting places like Manito Park, City Hall, Fort Mukogawa and nature hikes. We get to study things like nature and meet people like the Mayor of Spokane and our pen pals at Fort Mukogawa.

Reason 2 – Presentations

I love doing presentations because I get to show off all of my hard work. For my next presentation I will write a skit and eight people will act in it.

Reason 1 – Campout

Our class gets to go to really cool places like WSU and Chewelah Peak for a campout. We get to spend the night too! This year we did a pageant about American History. I dressed up, sang songs, read part of a poem and played my recorder. Also, the chicken we had for dinner was so good. I wasn't a big fan of chicken, until now!

I love Montessori. It is so cool.

- Garrett Peter, Balboa Second Grader

Teacher update

Rob Daray, who has taught in Spokane schools for a few years and was in Milwaukee in the year-long Montessori training program, has submitted his resignation to District 81, intent on pursuing a teaching position elsewhere. While we wish him well, we are sad that he has departed. Such are the vagaries of teacher recruitment. We remain committed, recruiting teachers who have the passion and energy that we know so well in our present staff of Montessori teachers. A recent posting for a Montessori position in District 81 garnered over 40 inquiries. We are clearly in demand and through diligence we anticipate finding teachers as needed in the future.

- Chris Coppen

Rhonda Clark and Kim Thomas are new board members

As the 2007 - 2008 school year ends, we are thankful to the many parents who have served on the SCAMC Board this past year and welcome the new parents who will serve on the board next year. Balboa Elementary is pleased to introduce two new active members of the SCAMC board:

•**Rhonda Clark:** Rhonda has three children, Gabriell, Rowan and Lucy. Rhonda teaches at Shaw Middle School as the Alternative Teacher. She works with disenfranchised youth and loves her job. She is a runner and loves to ballroom dance especially Salsa (Samba). She is excited about the possibility of having a Montessori teacher trainer in

Spokane and would love to have more alternatives available for kids. She is happy to be a part of the SCAMC board and we are very happy to have her.

•**Kim Thomas:** Kim has two children, Drew and Raegan. Kim will serve as the Chair of Balboa's Montessori PTG during the 2008-2009 school year. Kim and her family keep busy with a variety of sports activities and they are also very involved with their church.

We welcome both Kim and Rhonda to the SCAMC board.

-Wendy Peter, SCAMC North Chairperson

Opportunity for you to be a hero

As we are all aware, SCAMC raises funds to provide materials, support and educational opportunities for our teachers, and sponsorships to future Montessori teachers. In short, we keep the ball rolling. If you have not yet given to support SCAMC this year, now is your chance. Thank you!

Please tear here and include this form with your donation.

SPOKANE COMMUNITY ADVOCATES FOR MONTESSORI CURRICULUM

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Please make checks payable to SCAMC and mail to: SCAMC • P.O. Box 1181 • Spokane, WA 99210. Your gift is tax deductible as provided by law.