

Here's to a new year

By Wendy Peter
CoMP President

Welcome to the 61 new families who have become a part of the Spokane Public School (SPS) Montessori program and a warm welcome BACK to the 163 returning families. Summer seemed to breeze by this year but I have to say, I am always happy to have that certain level of normalcy and consistency return as a result of school being back in session.

Although summer was shorter this year, that doesn't mean a lot didn't happen. In fact, there are many exciting things to share:

•A new Montessori classroom has opened at Jefferson. This classroom will be for upper elementary students (grades 4th – 6th) and is starting out as a 2nd through 4th grade classroom. It will transition up a grade each of the next two years. This is the 6th Montessori classroom at Jefferson which makes a total of 10 Montessori classrooms in the SPS Montessori program. This is something to be very excited about as it demonstrates the community's desire for Montessori education as well as the district's support for our program.

•Teachers in training update. Our three teachers in training, Erin Schmidt, Lynzie Abbey and Carrie Ryan Walls, have been making tremendous progress on their Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) training. It's a rigorous 3-summer training program that must be completed to obtain an AMI Elementary certification. In fact, a hearty "Congratulations" goes to Erin Schmidt who recently completed her AMI teaching certification this summer. Lynzie Abbey and Carrie Ryan Walls have completed their second summer with only one more to go.

•We would like to welcome Ms. Schmidt to Jefferson as she will be teaching in the new upper elementary classroom. Additionally, we would like to welcome Ms. Abbey to Balboa Montessori! Since Mrs. Hauge retired last year, Ms. Abbey will be the new Montessori teacher for that lower elementary classroom. Not only are we thrilled to have new Montessori teachers at Jefferson and Balboa, we are thrilled to extend a warm 'welcome back' to Mrs. Knight who is returning to her Balboa lower elementary classroom after her leave.

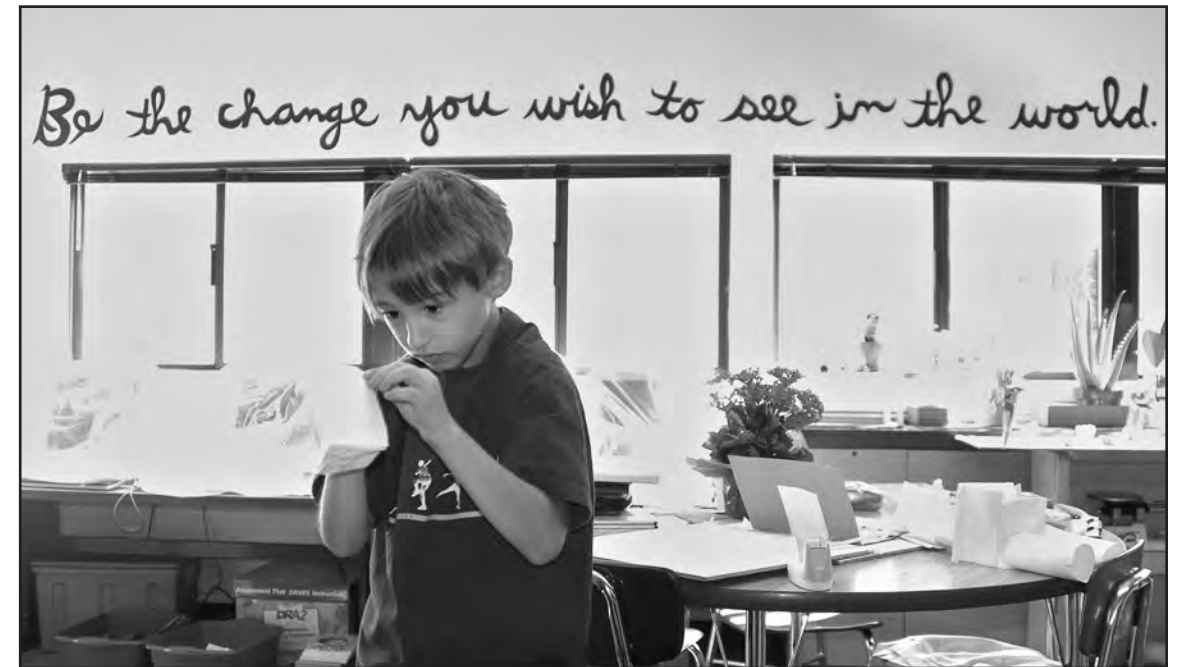
•Lastly, effective July 1, 2009, the board members of CoMP started serving their new terms. I am now serving in the capacity of President and will continue to play a role in growing and enriching our Montessori program as past presidents have done. You'll hear more from me in the near future but I would love to hear from you too. Any questions, comments, concerns? Call or e-mail me: Wendy Peter (509)999-1992 or thepeterfamily@yahoo.com
Here's to another year of amazing Montessori experiences!

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Despite the dreary economic conditions last year CoMP families stepped up and donated over \$19,000 in support of our Montessori program. This money helps defray the cost of attending continuing education courses for our ten Montessori teachers, sponsors new teachers in their AMI Elementary training, and supports Balboa-Jefferson joint community events. Thank you, and keep up the good work in 2009-2010.

-Amalie Day
CoMP Past-President

Questions or comments about the newsletter: sandrabilings@me.com



Jamie King, a third grader in Ms. Schmidt's classroom, carefully makes paper cubes.

“What will we create?” New Montessori classroom at Jefferson

By Erin Schmidt
Jefferson Teacher

It's hard to describe the new classroom. The eve of August 26, I looked around A102 and smiled at the memory of all of us there, just hours before, as part of the Jefferson Montessori Open House. It felt like a grand opening, children and adults mingling with grapes and possibly a cookie in hand, chatting about summers, pets, composition books, a cubby label. Families not directly involved in the new A102 stopped in to welcome, hug, and share.

Isn't this great? What will this be like? How is it

possible that we will get to have the best day of our lives every single day? I thought these thoughts as I looked on the shiny new Montessori materials; the bead cabinet that I put together myself with the help of an allen wrench, the cubing material in its smart parallelogram box, glittering grammar boxes in neat lines. My new AMI diploma gazed at me from the wall near the door. The plants. All students had "plant" listed on their supply lists, and my heart took in a 6-foot tropical tree, an orchid,

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New Montessori classroom for Spokane Public Schools

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everything in between. Oh, botany. It will be so rich. I cannot believe our good fortune.

As many of you know, I've recently returned from Minnesota as a certified AMI teacher. Three years.

Work. Intense. I cannot describe this. On the day of my final exam, three friends walked out of the building that held us, holding hands and looking at the sky.

Triumphant. Accomplished. Joyful. A very small percentage of people in this world can know what I'm talking about, but it was as if I had given birth to the whole universe.

I will try to hold that moment close as this year and every day begins, here in Spokane in the Montessori community. It is my story of how things can be, and how absolute possibility lies just within. I can't help it. Montessori causes me to speak in

hyperbole.

On the first day of school, a friend called me to quote Roald Dahl: "And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places." We are all gathered, parts of other

classrooms, even other schools. We start like this: grades 2, 3, and 4. My name shall be Ms. Schmidt or Ms. Tuesday, depending on who you are. It's hard not to weep. We demand everything and nothing, and we get to work.

What will we create? It's hard to imagine, but my hopes are high and ready. In the glittering eyes around me in this class, I can see it. Our spirits are great and happy.

We've all met each other. We're going to take it as it comes, creating as we go. I cannot promise anything great like world peace, but I can say that we'll certainly do our best.

"... the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places."

-Roald Dahl

CoMP website is your community bulletin board

By Sandra Bancroft-Billings

Jefferson Parent

When one's ambitions exceed one's abilities, one can become "webmaster." Did that sound like a fortune cookie? Sorry.

Just like many volunteer opportunities we've all had, this one has occasionally made me ask myself, "What was I thinking?" You know that feeling, don't you? It's the feeling you get when you think you may have just irrevocably broken something you don't know how to fix. It's the product of a "learn as you go" philosophy. It's the chilling realization that not every computer mistake can be fixed by an "undo" button.

While it can be a little nerve wracking, mostly

it's been a lot of fun. And, truthfully, web designer Daryl Burch is the real webmaster for CoMP's website. He got it up and running. A more accurate title for me would be "web editor."

As such, I am at your service. If you have a child enrolled in the Spokane Public Schools Montessori program (or if you don't), and you think the website would benefit from some improvement, please drop me a line at: sandrabillings@me.com.

The website is a great resource for educating yourself about Montessori, keeping up with our Balboa and Jefferson Montessori calendars and, of course, channeling your surplus financial resources to a great organization. Check it out: <http://www.spokanepublicmontessori.org/>



Sharon Bowman and Claudia Start explore life above the tree line in Jackson, Wyoming.

Glacier gazing refresher for three teachers

By Gayle Waner

Jefferson Teacher

Sharon Bowman, Claudia Start and I attended the AMI Elementary Alumni Association's Summer Conference at the Teton Science Center in Jackson, Wyoming from July 20th through the 26th.

What a learning experience. We learned new ways to engage the children through geography charts. We played with rocks and discovered ways to explore books in a search for identification and then had the opportunity to apply what we learned

in the mountains among our globe's newest mountain range. There we found fossils, stood next to glaciers and walked on top of a moraine. All this decorated by some of the world's most beautiful wildflowers, spectacular wildlife and pristine lakes.

Inspired by these experiences, we collaborated with teachers from around the country, learned a few dance steps and sang. When the week was done we found ourselves eager to share all we learned with the children. Thank you for supporting this opportunity.