

The Montessori Messenger

Volume 3, Issue 1

December 2004



**Charter Schools + Montessori Philosophy
= Quality Education!**

The Montessori Messenger is a publication of CMP administration to provide information on philosophy, policies, and procedures, school wide events, and charter school issues, which may be of interest to all CMP parents and staff.

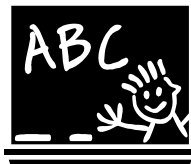
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Insert: Letter from CMP Ed. Consultant

CMP Religious Holiday Policy:

Our policy is based on the shared commitment of respect for individual religious beliefs expressed in the constitution guaranteeing religious liberty and a separation of Church and State. We neither promote

Nor inhibit religious belief or non-belief. Our classrooms are rich in cultural lessons and materials, and we seek to understand the role of religion in history and cultures. Teaching about religious holidays occurs when the opportunities naturally arise. Recognition of, and information about the holidays focuses on how and when they are celebrated, their origins, histories and generally agreed upon meanings. Our goal is to foster understanding and mutual respect for differences in belief. In the words of Maria Montessori, "Establishing lasting peace is the work of education".

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT/ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello and Season's Greetings!



Looking back on my first six months at CMP, I am very impressed with our students, staff, and families. I especially appreciate seeing our students being honored as responsible, motivated, and independent learners. Our teachers are dedicated professionals who love working with their students in the Montessori environment.

As I observe the students working closely with their teachers, I am filled with a sense of hope for the future of our school, and on a much larger scale, optimism for the welfare of our planet. Thank you for entrusting your children to CMP, and for sharing your gifts, time, and talents with us. You are valued members of our CMP team!

CMP's program is highly regarded throughout the state. As many charter parents know, Charter School Programs are independently run public schools that operate through the sponsorship of a Local Education Agency (LEA), such as a local school district. As part of the high level of accountability that Charter schools provide, a school's charter must be renewed every five years. The CMP Charter will be up for renewal in August 2006, which has been a topic of conversation amongst staff and administration, as well as parents. CMP has enjoyed a very positive and supportive relationship with our current sponsor, the Wheatland Elementary School District. Due to recent legislation, which requires all Charter School sites to be located within the district and/or county of sponsorship, CMP will be actively pursuing an alternate sponsor for our next Charter Renewal. I will be working closely with the CMP Board and Administrative Team to explore all viable options for Charter Renewal so that we may ultimately chose the best alternative for our students and families.

It is my mission and passion to ensure that we will continue to build upon our success and continually focus upon CMP's

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Board Of Directors

Sarah Aikenhead	Business Rep
Erin Auernig	Montessori Rep
Jayna Gaskell	Charter School
Dorothy Hilts	CMP Teacher
Tamara Johnson	District Rep
Jenny Savakus	CMP Parent Rep
Val Toppenberg	Community Rep

Executive Director

Gary Bowman, M.Ed.

December 3, 2004

Dear Staff and Families of CMP:

In 1999, Montessori public elementary school programs were introduced to the greater Sacramento and El Dorado Counties. The original co-founders, Keith Alpaugh, Deanna Gardner, Marion MacGillivray and myself, developed this vision over the next year and a half. By early 2001 we began to assemble the rest of the CMP team and received approval for CMP's original charter. Four years later, here we are!

As a co-founder and education consultant to the program, I have worn many hats. My main focus, however, has been to oversee CMP's Curriculum and Instruction, Staff Development and Training, and Facilities. It has been an incredible experience to watch this project grow from the visions of four co-founders to a model program of five campuses and over 1100 K-8 students.

Many of my initial tasks with CMP have achieved closure including the alignment of the Montessori curriculum with state standards. In addition, the MSAC/WASC accreditation documentation has been submitted and we are awaiting the results in late January 2005. With these accomplishments behind me, I've had the opportunity to explore new paths. I have recently received an opportunity to serve as an Education Consultant to the Child Development Division of the California Department of Education (CDE). After careful consideration, I have decided to accept this full-time appointment where I hope to introduce many of CMP's inherent qualities into the state education system. I look forward to beginning this new assignment with CDE on January 3, 2005. Although this transition is bittersweet for me, I am very excited at the opportunities and the potential to bring Montessori influence into a larger sphere! With regard to CMP, I have faith that our recently appointed Executive Director, Gary Bowman, is moving our team in the right direction as he works diligently toward identifying the best option for CMP's Charter renewal.

As I accept this new appointment, please know that my heart will always be with CMP. And of course, I remain a parent of my two wonderful children at the CMP Elk Grove Campus. I am very grateful for these past five and half years and to each and every one of you for believing in this dream. The time has now come for me to move on to continue my advocacy of quality education for all ... on a statewide level.

Thank you again for your continued support of this project and for allowing me the opportunity to work and grow with such an incredible team!

Sincerely,

Norman Lorenz, M.Ed.,
Educational Consultant

mission to provide a tuition-free, quality Montessori education for any student who seeks out a program such as ours. Be confident that as our unified team examines every potential Chartering option to allow for the best informed choice of possibilities, we also remain committed to the current responsibility of providing our students with a Montessori education of highest quality; ensuring the success of our educational model for the generations who will follow.

Thank you for your continued support. It is an honor and a privilege to serve the CMP learning community. I welcome any questions or comments you may have.

Gary S. Bowman, M.S. Ed.
Executive Director/Superintendent



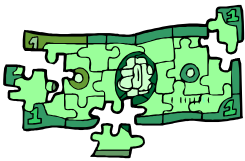
Each month, as CMP's Board of Directors visits our different campuses, they take time during their meeting to acknowledge outstanding parents and staff members. At this time, we would like to publicly acknowledge the following individuals for their exemplary commitment and dedication to the CMP Team:

August 9th, 2004 Carmichael Campus
Lisa Coates & Crystal Alexander

September 13th, 2004 Shingle Springs Campus
Lynnee Boyes & Eileen Perkins

October 12th, 2004 Capitol Campus
Kelly Regan & Nannette Chester

November 8th, 2004 Elk Grove Campus
Maryann Kowalik,
Kathleen Merz,
& Cara Latham



We want to extend a big thank you to our fundraising committees and families who have done an outstanding job of raising funds. On behalf of the governing board and all the children, thank you for your commitment and sustained effort.

As we approach the holidays, we want to take this opportunity to remind you of some ongoing fundraising options that you can participate in. Script is an easy way to support your school. Cards that you can swipe at the supermarkets and other stores have been developed. Use of these cards results in CMP being given a percentage of the sale and at no cost to you.

Another way you can help CMP is assistance in identifying and/or introducing us to businesses or private foundations that have an interest in education. Please feel free to contact Gary Bowman with any suggestions or referrals. – gbowman@cacmp.org. Your company may be a potential funder. Some companies have foundations which support non-profit organizations. Some companies have matching gift programs which allow you to make a donation to the school that is matched by your company. If so, please let us know when you make a donation to CMP and enclose your employer's matching gift form with your donation. We thank all of our families for their variety of donations and we look forward to working with everyone in the year 2005.

Please remember to check with your campuses for information on annual fundraisers and other way that you can become involved and support your child's school.

CMP Staff - Principals



Kim Aldridge
Principal,
Carmichael Campus

Kim Aldridge was the administrator of CMP's fifth site, the American River Campus in Orangevale, for two years. In her third year with CMP, she has taken over the principal duties at the Carmichael Campus. Kim is grateful for the opportunity to bring a quality Montessori education to the public sector. Kim holds a 3 to 6 Montessori Certificate and has a bachelor's degree in business management.

Kim's exposure to Montessori came first as a parent. She became an active parent at the school, teaching music in the classrooms and starting the school's first parent/teacher organization. Assisting in the classrooms as a parent volunteer made Kim realize that she wished to pursue this as a career rather than return to her previous occupation. Teaching in the Montessori classroom gave her a sense of peace and fulfillment. After teaching at the Kindergarten level for 10 years, she never tired of giving those very special lessons to her students. The glow and excitement seen in the children's faces as they discovered a new concept was well worth all the hard work and extra hours required of a Montessori teacher.

Coming to CMP was the perfect opportunity for Kim to extend that educational joy to more families through the public charter school system. Administration is an ideal way to assist and mentor, not only the children, but the staff and parents as well.



My experience with Montessori began when my grandmother and great-aunt attended the San Francisco World's Fair in 1915. They were both teachers and became fascinated with the Montessori exhibit's glass classroom that was constructed at the fair. You could stand outside and actually see the children working with the Montessori materials. They not only got to meet Maria Montessori, they came home with many of her materials that they were able to purchase at the fair. Their classrooms transformed into Montessori environments. When I came along in the 40's they had set up their garage as a mini Montessori environment. My sisters and I learned how to do our math facts and read using Montessori materials, and when we entered school at age five we were fluent readers. I have loved reading ever since that first experience with my grandmother in her garage.



Deanna Gardner
Principal,
American River
Campus

Well, I guess the Montessori gene pool in my family was very strong. After I raised my four children, I finished my education in Child Development and purchased a small Montessori school that grew into a campus of 150 students. Four years ago, Norman Lorenz gave me a call and asked me to join him in starting a Montessori charter school. We contracted with Keith and Marion and here we are. Four years later, we have five campuses and a long waiting list for enrollment. I still have four children, of course, and my main pleasure is in enjoying my four beautiful grandchildren.



I have been involved in the incredible world of Montessori education for over 10 years. I was inspired to obtain my Montessori training and attended the Montessori Teachers College in Sacramento. I went on to teach Montessori students in multi-aged classrooms from Kindergarten through 3rd grade. This classroom experience has been an invaluable resource to me in my current administrative role with the California Montessori Project in Shingle Springs.

Prior to my work in Montessori education, I utilized my degree in Business Administration in my work as the administrator of a large computer services division. During my 14 years in this capacity, I prepared and managed budgets, coordinated personnel functions such as interviewing, hiring, and overseeing staff development programs, managed many large implementation projects, conducted adult education courses, and represented our company at numerous world-wide conferences, seminars, and training sessions.



Kim Zawilski
Principal, Shingle
Springs Campus

It has been fun to "marry" my prior administrative background with my Montessori education experiences. In my role as the Principal of the Shingle Springs campus, I enjoy the creative process of ensuring that we plan and budget for improvements at our campus. I also find it personally rewarding to work with an incredibly dedicated staff of teachers and paraprofessionals to create an educationally rich experience for the students and parents in our community.

CMP Staff - Principals

Shellie Wright MacColl has been the principal of the Capitol Campus for two years. She joined the CMP team as a willing participant and full supporter of the Montessori charter movement. Although not Montessori trained, Shellie carries the ideas of Montessori education in her spirit. For the past 18 years, she has been involved with alternative education in both the private and public sectors. She's a definite supporter of charter school options and hopes to continue her career contributing to such programs.

Shellie is the mother to Myles, a 16 year old high school athlete. The two spend their time visiting family members in the Napa Valley, attending sporting events and just relaxing with friends. Shellie especially likes flowers, chocolate, the sound of rain while going to sleep or when just waking up, jazz music, baseball/softball, talk

radio, avocados, birds, staying in a motel, going out to dinner and enjoying a good conversation, and summer evenings in Sacramento. Education is her passion while photography and ceramics are hobbies that she enjoys and hopes to do more of in the near future. Parenting is what has brought her the most joy!



Shellie Wright-MacColl
Principal, Capitol Campus

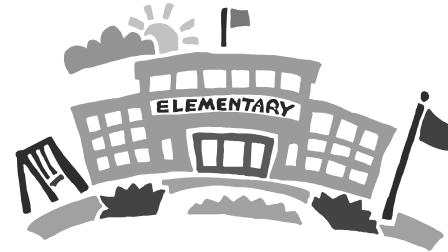


I have been involved with Montessori education for over 14 years. I have a variety of experiences working in the field of education from infants through adults in both the private and public sectors. I was involved with at risk students in the Sowing Seeds Program in the Elk Grove Unified School District and served as a Board Director of the National Center for Montessori Education. I have provided administrative oversight to the Montessori Teachers training college in Sacramento. I am currently the Principal of the Elk Grove School campus, a Kindergarten through 8th grade program. My husband John and I have lived in Elk Grove since 1989, our roots are in the Chicago/Indiana area. Both of our children spent many of their pre school and elementary school years in Montessori programs.

The Elk Grove School is located in the Community Services District building. This school site was formerly a public school. We currently occupy eight classrooms, serving over 225 Kindergarten through 8th grade students. We are in the process of renovating and expanding the current bathroom facility. Our school community is in the process of landscaping an area which will include raised planter beds, seasonal flowers, and an area where students can display their classroom community art work.



Mickey Slamkowski
Principal, Elk Grove Campus



FACILITIES

CMP has been working hard to continually evaluate our facilities needs at each campus and research our various options for improvements. Each year, CMP has an opportunity to submit applications for facilities requests with each district in which our campuses physically reside. Last year, we were successful in securing various facilities options from some of our districts under Proposition 39. We recently submitted Proposition 39 requests to the San Juan Unified, Sacramento City Unified, Elk Grove Unified and Buckeye Union School Districts for the 2005-2006 school year. Negotiations with these districts are ongoing.

In addition to Proposition 39, CMP also submitted requests for facilities funding under Proposition 55 earlier this year. Based upon district eligibility, we are awaiting the outcome for two eligible applications. The eligible districts include the Elk Grove Unified School District and the Buckeye Union School District.

Currently, CMP is investigating different possibilities for purchasing the Shingle Springs Campus. The Capitol Campus survived the torrential hail and rainstorm that struck the area in September of this year — roof and carpet repairs have been completed. We continue to explore viable options for this campus. CMP is thrilled with the prospect of the bathroom expansion and renovation at the Elk Grove Campus, with construction scheduled to begin in January. A big thank you to the Community Services District for their collaborative efforts on this project! We are also pleased with the fire upgrades that have been completed at the Carmichael Campus. Thank you, Rob White, for your efforts!

The new American River Campus on Sunrise Avenue has worked out well and our families are enjoying the facilities.

We are excited about the many facilities options we have recently explored for California Montessori Project and we continue to work diligently in maintaining our high quality program.



CMP Families

CMP would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new families! This is an exciting time to be a part of the CMP family as we are in our fourth year of operation and continue to grow. Our programs have expanded and we consistently review and modify our instructional program to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our students.

Please remember that your input is greatly valued by CMP as it communicates the heart and the needs of our school community. As we continue to evaluate our parent survey information and discuss action plans that will further improve our quality programs, we welcome your ongoing comments, questions, and concerns. CMP Campus Principals are available to listen and always encourage your feedback. General e-mails can also be sent to info@cacmp.org for the purpose of asking questions or providing comments to our Central Administrative Office. Our web site www.cacmp.org is an excellent resource for obtaining campus news, Governing Board, and general program information.

Montessori 101, 102, and 103

Montessori 101 was made available to all parents at the beginning of the year. Historically, this has been an engaging and educational experience for all families. In an effort to present to a variety of learning modalities, we have incorporated several elements into this training. These include an informative PowerPoint slide show created by Norman Lorenz which accommodates our visual learners. Kinesthetic learners have the opportunity to experience a hands-on presentation with Montessori materials. Our auditory learners delight in their experience of Kim Aldridge as she impersonates Maria Montessori (both in costume and in her impeccable Italian accent). Overall, this event presents fun and interesting exercises that can be helpful to parents in identifying the modes in which their children prefer to learn. For our new families, we welcome your questions about Montessori 101 and encourage you to attend at its next presentation date.

During the school year teachers provide open house nights (Montessori 102) to inform the families about what is going on in their classrooms and to give the families an opportunity to ask any questions they may have. Later in the school year the children will have an opportunity show their parents what they do in school. (Montessori 103). Each of these informative parent evenings earns parent participation credit. Be sure to log in these hours at your school campus

Parent Participation

The end of December marks the halfway point for earning the required minimum number of parent hours to earn priority re-enrollment privileges. Many parents have completed their parent participation hours already. Thank you! Your support of the school is invaluable and at the same time gives your children the message that you value their education. Research indicates that children whose parents are involved in their schooling have significantly higher success rate. **Even when you have completed your hours please continue to track your volunteer hours as this information is helpful in demonstrating parent contributions when we submit grants.** A very big thank you to all the room parents who have made so many field trips possible and helped the teachers with the many events that they put on each year. Remember: You may use your attendance at Montessori 101, 102 and 103 towards your parent participation hours. We also encourage you to stop by your campus office for additional ideas to earn parent hours.

Healthy Families

What Is it? Low Cost Insurance for Children & Teens. It provides health, dental and vision coverage to children who do not have insurance and do not qualify for free Medi-Cal.

Who Can Qualify? Healthy Families is for Children 18 years old and younger who live in California. Families can qualify if 1) The family income is within the Federal Income Guidelines, 2) The children do not qualify for no-cost Medi-Cal, 3) They have not been covered by insurance from an employer, for at least three months (some exceptions may apply), 4) the children meet citizenship/immigration rules.

Where Can Families Obtain More Information? Families can call **1-800-880-5305** or they may visit the Healthy Families web site at www.healthyfamilies.ca.gov.

Strategic Planning

When CMP opened its doors in August 2001, we made a commitment to the consistent and rigorous evaluation of our instructional program in terms of fulfilling our vision, goals and overall mission. CMP administrative staff and founders continue to participate in weekly planning meetings with the intent of constantly “sharpening the saw” — that is, fine-tuning and improving our instructional program based on the assessments and feedback that we receive.

An important goal was identified this year when looking at student achievement and how CMP can further support students identified as below proficient in reaching their full academic potential. CMP recently shaped a powerful program known as “Star Power” to provide support to students identified as needing additional help. This is a free hourly tutoring program designed to help students improve in the core subject areas of math, language arts and writing, with the focus of enriching the students’ skill levels in those areas. Our qualified, credentialed staff members are serving as the Star Power program staff so that they will be able to assist the students in the best way possible. As time goes on, we hope to expand Star Power to include enlightenment courses as well.

An ongoing component of our instructional program is the evaluation and updating of our curriculum and materials. Our administrative staff has worked diligently to identify new curriculum needs within each classroom. Subsequently, supplemental materials were ordered this year. Our curriculum team continues to meet regularly so that they may evaluate materials and provide additional support to our faculty as they utilize these materials. Our team maintains the focus of incorporating both Montessori and California State Standards while offering a quality education to our students.

CMP’s instructional program is enhanced by the valuable input we receive from our families, staff members, governing board members and other individuals that have taken their time to share their ideas for best practices. In particular, CMP has reviewed and put into practice the feedback received from parent surveys, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), and the Montessori Association of Schools (MSAC) as we continue through the accreditation process.

Thank you for your ongoing feedback and support. We value your contributions to the CMP program.

CMP Middle School Program and Montessori

Wondering what makes Montessori Middle School a little bit different? Montessori philosophy considers the unique developmental stages of adolescent students in order to support their changing needs. In addition to acquiring core academic information, Montessori Middle school students extend their grasp and stock of abstract interpretive concepts. Our students use a form of Socratic discussion to learn to interpret core data in terms of the social and environmental issues of the world, past and present. Classes are taught in cycles of 6 weeks durations. Each cycle emphasizes a specific part of the curriculum. During the last week of each cycle, the students participate in “immersion week” in which they spend time away from the school doing applicable hands-on learning in the real world.

Class structure is based on collaborative learning and research based projects. Technology based multi-media is integrated throughout this type of learning. This guides each student to develop their own abilities to become highly effective, independent young adults.

For more answers to your questions on any area of CMP’s program, please e-mail info@cacmp.org. Questions will be answered in future issues as space allows.

Wishing
you
and yours
a Happy
Holiday
Season



Principals of CMP

American River Kim Aldridge
 Capitol Campus Carmichael
 Elk Grove Shellee Wright MacColl
 Shingle Springs Deanna Gardner
 Kim Zawilski Mickey Slamkowski

CMP Board of Directors

Sarah Aikenhead Erin Auernig
 Jayna Gaskell Dorothy Hillis
 Tamara Johnson Jenny Savakus
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