



The Prairie News

Rock Prairie Montessori School

APRIL 2011



Martha Carver-Head of School

There are so many exciting events at Rock Prairie Montessori! I truly appreciate all of the volunteering that abounds in our community. You all make so much possible! Thank you.

On April 1st, we held a meeting for parents interested in the future growth of the Elementary Program. About 16 interested parents and grandparents attended; filling the room with enthusiasm and motivation. The impetus for this meeting was the board directed annual parent survey which spoke to the desire to see the school consider growing beyond the present third grade. The board also commissioned Milissa Rick (former parent and board member) of Innovation Research LLC, to investigate and conduct interviews with present RPMS families and alumni to gauge perceptions, barriers and assets of our Elementary program and the future.

To empower our parent community working with the Board of Trustees and Head of School we are going forward looking at existing Montessori programs in other Montessori schools in the region.

One key consensus of the meeting was **the imperative** to get our present parent community to experience and understand all of the extraordinary educational experiences that are offered here at RPMS. There is a sure connection with parents who learn more about Montessori education here at RPMS. They understand how they are getting their **money's worth** and are committed to the program. They understand the outcomes of leadership, divergent thinking and a work ethic for their child.

So, you have an opportunity on **Thursday April 28th at 6:30 pm** to experience Montessori education in all levels with the spring version of **Journey of Discovery**. In November, we had over 50 adults enjoy the classes and really get a feel of what their child does every day. Now it is your chance to come again, bring a friend or grandparent, perhaps a neighbor who is interested in this type of education, a co-worker, etc. Now is your chance to experience this and truly see why these materials and the method produce life long learners. Come!

Jenna Gresens-Board Chair

As I write this, RPMS staff, family members, and volunteers are busily preparing for our 8th Annual Italian Dinner. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you to all who contributed time and donations to this event. The community participation and contribution has been overwhelming!

The RPMS Governance Committee is in the process of reviewing applications submitted for our 2011-2012 Board of Trustees. New board members will be presented for election at our All School Annual Meeting on Friday, May 27th. Make plans now to attend!

On Friday, April 1st, Ms. Martha led a community discussion about possible expansion of our Elementary Program to include grades 4-6. Over 16 families were represented and indicated interest in exploring possible options for the future. Ms. Martha is working with interested families to organize visits to area Montessori schools. After these visits, we will again meet as a group and discuss future planning. The interest and motivation of this group is exciting!

Respectfully Submitted, Jenna Gresens-Board Chair



8th Annual
ITALIAN DINNER
COME AND EXPERIENCE VENICE

Our fund raising event will offer a delicious Italian dinner with a superb drink selection, live entertainment and exciting raffles throughout the night. The evening also hosts a wide variety of silent and live auction items perfect for any budget.

Unmask The Potential

SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 2011 ~ 6:00 PM
ROCK PRAIRIE MONTESSORI SCHOOL
5246 ROTAMER ROAD, JANESVILLE ~ 608.868.4844

Upcoming Events

April 9

8th Annual Italian Dinner Fundraiser 6pm

April 12 & 13

School Picture Days
8:30-10:30am

April 15

Breakfast Club
7:45-8:30am

April 18-22

NO-SCHOOL
Spring Break-
No childcare

April 25

SCHOOL RESUMES

April 28

Journey of Discovery
6:30-9pm

April 29

Breakfast Club
7:45-8:30am

ENROLLMENT UPDATE:

Re-enrollment response has been exceptional. Thank you to everyone that has submitted their forms.

NOTE: A waiting list has started for the 3-day Children's House Program

**Only three year olds are accepted into the 3-day Children's House Program.*



Breakfast Club!

Friday, April 15th and 29th
7:45-8:30 am

Breakfast items will be sold between 7:45-8:20am. Please plan to come early enough for your child to enter their classroom by 8:30am. This is a great opportunity to share a special moment with your

What to watch for in May:

- May 13th– Last Breakfast Club of the school year
- May 18th– Last Culver's Scoopie Spirit Night of the school year
- May 27th– Last day "All School Celebration" (this includes our Annual Meeting and Picnic)
- May 31st– Summer School Begins

“Journey of Discovery”

Thursday, April 28th

6:30-9:00pm



Because of the success of our first “Journey of Discovery” in November we are happy to announce that we will be hosting this event again. If you did not attend in the fall, we highly encourage you to make plans to attend this one. Come and experience what is like to be a Montessori student!

Parents are invited to come to the school on ***Thursday, April 28th from 6:30-9:00pm*** to experience for themselves the materials in the Young Child, Children’s House and Elementary classrooms. Attendees will be able to explore all of the classrooms and then end with a round table discussion about their experiences in the classrooms with alumni parents and former RPMS students. Beverages and finger snacks will be served. Childcare will not be provided for this event. Please plan according and mark you calendar to be able to attend this very important evening.

Attendees will walk away from the “Journey of Discovery” with a better understanding of Montessori Methods and Philosophy, as well as, partake in what the students at RPMS experience each day they enter their classroom.

Please sign-up in the vestibule starting Monday, April 11th, if you plan to attend.

Help us bring SCRIP to Rock Prairie!

We are looking for parents willing to help serve on a committee to bring Scrip Fundraising to RPMS this fall. Please contact Linda Maybee if you are interested in helping with this project. There is also a sign-up sheet in the vestibule. It will take a team of parents to make this happen.

Over 1500 non-profit organizations take advantage of Scrip for fundraising. Instead of cash or credit, families can use prepaid scrip gift cards to make regular household purchases and RPMS receives a percentage of all scrip gift card purchases.

Please consider being a part of this great opportunity to raise funds for our school!



Volunteer & Donation Opportunities

- Parent & child hosts (7:15-9:00am) for our Breakfast Clubs .
- We are in need of two morning greeters to help assist students from their vehicles into the school from 8:15-8:35.
- Join the SCRIP committee and help launch next year's SCRIP program at RPMS. Contact Linda Maybee for more details.
- Clean-up at the end of the Italian Dinner Event on evening of Saturday, April 9th. If you are attending and want to help, please stay afterwards.
- Spring clean-up of the landscape and gardens around the school building.
- Paper cutting for the classrooms.
- Sign-up to bring desserts for the last day of school All School Celebration/ Picnic. Sign-up sheet can be found in the vestibule. You can count this toward your hours in advance.
- Sign-up to help serve at our next Scoopie Night on May 18th in the vestibule.

This Month's Featured Classroom: Ms. Mary's Children's House and Extended Day



"To assist a child we must provide him with an environment which will enable him to develop freely"—Maria Montessori. This is a key tenant in

Montessori education and it is what Ms. Mary strives to provide the children in her classroom daily. Each day begins with the children gathering together as one community. This is a time when children can share their thoughts with the group, classroom lessons are given, and current events are discussed. Ms. Ellen adds another dimension to this community time with lessons and conversations in Spanish. Once group time is completed the children begin working on materials and exploring the classroom. At the end of the work day we once again gather together for stories, movement, and music. Ms. Mary loves to sing and shares her enthusiasm for music with the children through animated songs, finger plays, games, and movement activities. Many smiles and laughs are shared during this time.

In the afternoon the Kindergarten age children gather together in Extended Day with Ms. Mary. Extended Day is an extension of the activities and materials the children are exploring in their morning classrooms. Ms. Mary provides materials for the children to explore, experiment, learn and grow with. Group activities, Spanish, and Creative Movement class are all part of the Extended Day experience.

Ms. Mary has been teaching at Rock Prairie for 10 years. She began her time here as Ms. Nancy's assistant. Her second year she became the lead teacher for the Enrichment Program. She has been a Montessori lead teacher for the past 6 years. Prior to joining our staff she taught pre-K in Virginia. She holds certification in Early Childhood Development and a Montessori 3-6 Certificate. Ms. Mary has also been the director of our summer program for the last three years. Ms. Mary states, "What I find most rewarding about teaching is when a child blossoms into the person they were meant to be. Whether that is a quiet child who has found their voice, or an active child who has learned to channel that energy into positive creative actions. This is what keeps me excited and wanting to teach again year after year."

Ms. Mary and her husband Ken have lived in Idaho, Maine, and Virginia as he fulfilled his duties in the United States Navy. They returned to Wisconsin (both having grown up in the northern part of the state) after Ken's retirement. They have three grown children.

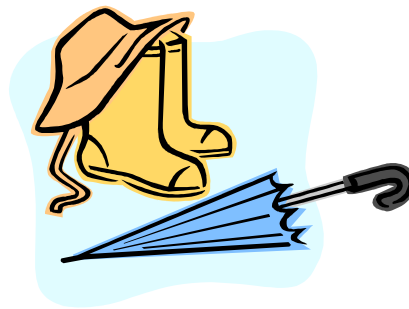
Teacher Messages

Young Child - Ms. Amy and Ms. Tracey's Classes:

We hope to see all of you at the Italian Dinner this Saturday. Make sure to look for our classroom projects in the Silent Auction and place your bid. We created beautiful note cards using your children's artwork. Plus, this past week each child decorated a mask which will make the event more festive. If you wish, you will have a chance to purchase your child's mask.

We have been celebrating Spring with lots of stories, songs and discussion pertaining to this wonderful time of new life and growth. We listen to the rain pitter patter on the roof and enjoy the sun shining outside our window. Vibrant green plants and beautiful flowers will soon decorate our outdoor environment.

We have been singing the following rain songs:



It Rained A Mist

*It rained a mist, it rained a mist.
It rained all over the town, town, town.
It rained all over the town.*

(Repeat choosing different objects for it to rain on, i.e. the slide, a dog, etc.)

This is Thunder

*This is thunder, this is thunder, (pat hands on floor)
Hear it roar, hear it roar, (pat hands on floor)
Pitter, patter raindrops, pitter, patter raindrops (pat hands on knees)
I'm all wet, I'm all wet. (shake both hands)*

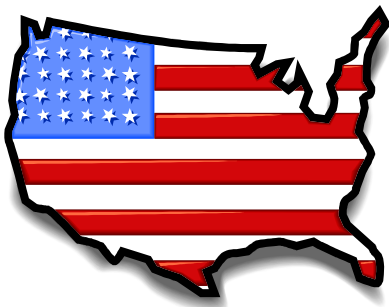
Children's House - Ms. Mary:

Our classroom is sure to buzz with activity this month as we look for signs of Spring and hopefully some warmer weather. I wanted to thank everyone for attending conferences. It is so important to work as a team in assisting your child through their educational journey. I enjoyed the opportunity to sit down with you and share observations and stories about the amazing things your child is doing at school! I hope you found it informative and rewarding as well.

During the month of April we will take a closer look at how plants grow, the parts of a plant, and why plants are important to us. Ms. Ellen and the children planted lettuce seeds this week. We will be tending our seeds and watching them grow. We hope to harvest enough lettuce to have as a snack. We will explore a unit on "Life on the Farm." This will give children a chance to learn the proper names of the male, female, and young farm animals. They will also learn about various horses and we will be taking a closer look at eggs and the life cycle of a chicken. In Geography we will be learning about the continent of Asia.

The Italian Dinner, picture day, Spring Break, and the Journey of Discovery will also be held this month. We will be busy! Another important day to remember is Earth Day which is April 22. As a group we will be sharing ideas all month long on ways to take care of our planet Earth. Below is the song we are singing to commemorate Earth Day.

This Land is Your Land



This land is your land
This land is my land
Let's work together
To make it better
From the tall green forests, to the clear blue waters
This land depends on you and me!

Children's House - Ms. Nancy:

Thank you to all parents for their enthusiastic and helpful comments at conferences. It is always nice to meet and compare notes on each child's progress.

Our science focus this month is on our Solar System. We are learning about each planet, how each orbit the sun and also about astronauts and spaceships.

Australia is the continent that we are leaning about this month. This children are exploring a variety of materials on the geography shelf and singing songs about koalas, kangaroos, and kookaburras.

Let's hope that April showers will soon give way to some (early) May flowers and lots of sunshine for our Spring Break!

Children's House - Ms. Martha:

April is a great month for learning about Spring, plants and everything growing anew. We see the children very engaged in learning new and more challenging lessons, enjoying friends and having fun with the nice weather.

Our themes for April are the study of the continent of Australia and a new exciting unit about chickens. Our continent studies are always very popular with the children. The children are so fascinated that Australia is so far away that their seasons are the opposite of ours in North America.

For our unit on poultry, we will be learning about embryology by hatching chicks in an incubator. We will start the incubator next week to try to time the three- week incubating time for the first week of May. I look forward to the children's faces when the chicks hatch!

Enjoy Spring!

Extended Day - Ms. Mary:

It is always amazing to me to see the amount of growth that happens within a child in just a few weeks or months. A concept or task which seemed insurmountable a short time ago is now mastered. As I watch the Extended Day children tackle their work each day I am inspired by their progress and their continued enthusiasm for learning.

Our afternoons are very busy. Over the next few weeks we will have units on the forest, the weather, money values, graphing, and measurement as well as keeping on task with our regular activities. In these last two months of school we will continue to offer a wide variety of materials that will excite and challenge each student as the year draws to a close.

Please take some time and review the Summer **Sunsation** camp guide that has recently come out. Any Extended Day student who will be attending first grade (at any school) in the fall will be eligible to attend the Elementary Camp Sessions. We are excited about these new school age one-week camps. The variety of topics and activities planned will satisfy a multitude of interests as well as being flat out fun! Keep in mind as a rising Extended Day student your child is still eligible for the add on all day camp program as well. Therefore, if your child needs all day care they can still get it here. Remember sign up before May 1, 2011 and receive a FREE camp T-shirt too!

Montessori Enrichment - Ms. Sara and Ms. Kim

Monthly Theme: Woodland Animals

This month we will take an exciting look at woodland animals. The children will be exposed to information on their habitats, food, lifestyle, and life-cycle. Your child will also create many crafty art projects as well as sing songs and listen to stories related to animals. Below is a song that you can sing with your child!

I'm a Little Gopher

I'm a little Gopher (sung to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot")

I'm a little gopher, furry and brown

I play in the sun and sleep underground

Sometimes you will see me playing outside

But when I'm scared, in my burrow I hide



Elementary - Ms. Bonnie Sue and Ms. Kris:

Ms. Kris and Ms. Bonnie Sue were delighted by the vast adult participation in the Italian Dinner. We are very grateful to so many families who make the well-being of our school a priority in your lives.

In our Elementary Class our students are continuing the study of the continent of Asia interspersed with such activities as writing Kanji symbols with water brush painting and designing a Zen garden in sand. Each student had a hand in creating our Chinese Zodiac grinding an ink stone to make the ink they used. As this is the year of the rabbit our upper level students are making rabbits out of soft soap using newly acquired carving skills.

We are developing writing skills by learning to write complete sentences, paragraphs, and essays. Each of our friends recently shared their five favorite things with the class. That information has been recorded and makes a high interest basis for practicing these writing skills.

We look forward to and hope you all enjoy our Spring Break.

Miscellaneous

STAYING CONNECTED



Visit our website at www.rockprairiemontessori.com

Join our group on Facebook "Rock Prairie Montessori School-Official Group"

Piano and Voice Lessons



Has your child expressed an interest in music? Do they like to sing or want to play the piano? At Rock Prairie we can provide the opportunity for your child to take piano and voice lessons without interfering with after school schedules! Ms. Robyn, the Director of Operations at RPMS, is also a private music instructor. Should you wish for your child to have private music lessons, she will pick them up from their class (beginning at 2:30 pm), have a 30 minute private lesson, and return them to their classroom for dismissal. Please see Ms. Robyn in the school office or contact her by calling 608-563-2170.

"Character is the backbone of our human culture. Music is the flowering of character."

Confucius - Chinese Philosopher

.....C-A-R-P-O-O-L-I-N-G.....

- If you are interested in carpooling to save gas, money and time, please contact the school office at 868-4844. We will do our best to connect you with other RPMS families that might be interested.



**Do you ever have a need for afternoon care?
Did you know RPMS has Drop-In Care available?**



You may be familiar with our guaranteed Before/After Care and Enrichment programs. But did you know that families can also request care for occasional childcare needs or emergencies?

If you need occasional care for your child and would like them to stay for Before/After Care and/or Enrichment, simply submit a request for care in the school vestibule by filling out a blue "RPMS Drop-In Care Request" 48 hours before your scheduled childcare need and place it in the mailbox provided. We would also be happy to help during an emergency. Please call the school office at 608-868-4844 for emergency childcare needs.

RPMS strives to meet the needs of every family. We hope you find this option helpful to you and your family.

Montessori Book Store



A collection of Montessori books, parenting books and children's books are available for purchase in the school hallway. RPMS wants to provide families with resources that support their desire to provide the best education and learning opportunities for the whole family. To purchase, please fill out your information on the clipboard provided and the charge will be added to your next school invoice.



TARGET

Use your REDcard to help Rock Prairie Montessori School.

Enroll for free in the “Take Charge of Education” program and **Target** will donate up to 1% of your **REDcard** purchases to your school of choice.



Morning Drop-Off

Each morning between 8:20-8:35am we provide drop-off service to families. Simply pull up in front of the school and an adult will escort your child into the school. Please do not park in front of the school at this time so parents can pull up and drive thru easily.

Thank you!

Corporate Grants

Does the company you work for provide grants to schools? If you or someone you know offers a



grant program that you believe RPMS may qualify for, please contact Linda Maybee or Martha Carver with details.

Earn A Tuition Credit Bonus!

Tell others about RPMS!!!!
 When your referral enrolls
 and completes the school
 year, you can earn
 \$250 toward your
 tuition costs
Questions?
 Please, contact the office.



Little Things Add Up!

DON'T THROW \$\$ AWAY!

Collect, Collect, Collect !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Campbell's Labels for Education, Box Tops for Education, Milk Caps, Ink Cartridges & Cell Phones

These items help bring in extra funds and supplies to our school. Deposit your items in the designated boxes in vestibule for collection.

Thank you to this month's sponsor of the "Prairie News"



Barron's Top 1000 Financial Advisor Tyson Ray, Managing Director - Investments (center)
 Jason Kamler, Financial Consultant (left) and Lucas Kuchenberg, Financial Consultant (right)

Financial Advisor Tyson Ray from the
FORM WEALTH MANAGEMENT GROUP
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The rankings are based on data provided by over 4,000 of the nation's most productive advisors. Factors included in the rankings: assets under management, revenue produced for the firm, regulatory record, quality of practice, and philanthropic work. Institutional assets are given less weight in the scoring. Investment performance isn't an explicit component, because not all advisors have audited results and because performance figures often are influenced more by clients' risk tolerance than by an advisor's investment-picking abilities. Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC, Member SIPC.