



No one can be free unless he is independent: therefore, the first, active manifestations of the child's individual liberty must be so guided that through this activity he may arrive at independence.

~ Dr. Maria Montessori

Montessori Matters

Nov/Dec 2008
Issue 2

The Spirit of Giving

Notes from Nikki

With the fall and winter holidays fast approaching, our attentions shift to the tasks of the season: special feasts, gift giving, parties with friends and family, and religious and spiritual ceremonies. These celebrations are gifts that we share with our children. They are breaks in our daily lives that give focus to life's meaning and purpose, allow us to reconnect with family and loved ones and nourish our spirit. However, with much on our calendars between now and January, it is wise to take a moment to think about religious and cultural rituals and how to enrich our children's experiences without overwhelming them - or ourselves.

One way we can make holidays accessible to children (and reconnect ourselves with their true meaning) is to tell them stories about the holiday in our own words. The oral tradition is a strong one and each family's story will differ depending on the values or traditions most important to them. Whether sharing the story of the first Thanksgiving or beloved childhood memories, children begin to see the holiday through the eyes of your family and focus on those aspects that hold the most meaning to you.

Another way to make holidays meaningful to children is to allow them to participate in the holiday as an active member from start to finish. For example, hosting Thanksgiving dinner takes a great deal of planning. Your child may help plan the holiday dinner, shop for ingredients and help prepare a special part of the meal, such

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Upcoming Events:

- Nov 9:** Open House at Glen Castle
1:00 – 3:00 pm
- Nov 13:** Open House at Poncey Highlands
6:00 – 7:30 pm
- Nov 20:** Morning Coffee at Poncey Highlands*
8:45 – 10:00 am
- Nov 25:** Grandparent & Special Friend Day *
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
11:30 am dismissal for all children
- Nov 26-28:** Thanksgiving Holiday – NO SCHOOL
- Dec 4:** MONTESSORI: BIRTH TO THREE
Parent Evening with Lilian Bryan at Glen Castle
6:30 – 8:00 pm
- Dec 11:** 10,000 Villages Shopping Night*
6:00 – 8:00 pm
- Dec 19:** Winter Break Begins at Noon
12:00 pm dismissal for all children
- Jan 5:** School Resumes
- * See article in this issue for further details

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as the applesauce or pumpkin pie. During the dinner, they may help serve as a host to visiting friends and families, taking coats to the closet, offering refreshments and engaging in conversation. At the end of the celebration, children can help to clear the table, pack up leftovers and send guests away with a fond farewell. Participation of celebrations in all of its parts, beginning, middle and end, help children connect to the event and meet their very real desire to participate in both the ordinary and extraordinary of our family lives.

Finally, as with so much in life, remember that less is more. A few well-chosen experiences help us avoid the overstimulation that sometimes accompanies this time of year. Fewer “things” help to put the attention on those that matter the most.

All of us at Montessori In Town wish your family a happy, safe and peaceful holiday season.



HOLIDAY SHOPPING

Montessori In Town and Ten Thousand Villages invite you to join us for our annual **MIT Shopping Night on Thursday, December 11** from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. This is a wonderful chance to whittle down your holiday shopping list while supporting artisans and craftspeople from around the world. Additionally, Montessori In Town receives 10% of the sales accumulated this evening.

We hope you will join us for a fun and profitable evening. Together we can make a difference in the lives of people near and far.

Ten Thousand Villages
1056 St. Charles Ave, NE
Atlanta, GA 30306
404-892-5307

Morning Coffee: The Elementary Years

MIT parents are invited to attend the Morning Coffee on Thursday, November 20 at the Poncey Highlands campus. Please note this date is rescheduled from the original date and location of December 3 at Glen Castle.

The focus of the meeting will be the transition from Primary to Elementary. While specially designed for Second and Third year families, all MIT families are invited to join us for coffee and conversation. We will discuss the special characteristics of the elementary-aged child and "life after Primary". Parents considering both Montessori and non-Montessori programs are encouraged to attend.

The meeting is scheduled for 8:45 a.m. to 10:00 am. Please enter the school through the North Highland Avenue entrance (Anne's morning arrival door) and come up stairs. We will meet in one of the church meeting rooms adjacent to our school.

Please RSVP to Nikki at: nikki-mit@mindspring.com or 404-784-1038. Hope to see you there!

Holiday Gift Guide

The following is taken from the AMI/USA article "The Montessori Spirit of Giving", January 2001, Vol. X No. 1

Open-ended activities nurture the child's interest and imagination. Electronic, video and computer activities and toys that "only do one thing" can limit developmental possibilities and don't always reflect the values your family may hold. The following offer a few suggestions of items that may appeal to the children in your life.

For the kitchen: Child-sized kitchen tools allow the child to contribute to the creation of meals. Children's cookbooks, aprons, functional (non-plastic) tea or picnic sets are also good choices.

For the office: Children need their own "work space" to carry out their projects and artwork. A child-size desk and chair, small shelf for books, supplies such as paper, paint, pencils and office tools (clips, ruler, tape dispenser) can allow for such work.

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GRANDPARENTS' AND SPECIAL FRIEND'S DAY

For the second year, Montessori In Town will host Grandparents' and Special Friend's Day. On Tuesday, November 25, all children are invited bring a grandparent or other close adult in their lives to visit school.

The honored guests will be received with a morning coffee and light fare starting at 10:00 a.m. at both campuses: Poncey-Highland and Glen Castle. There will be a meet and greet and brief welcome before guests are ushered into their grandchild's classroom to observe and visit with them.

As this is the last day before Thanksgiving holidays, dismissal will be at 11:30 a.m. Guests are invited to accompany the children to the playground and dismissal will be from there. It is our hope that with special relatives coming to visit for the holiday, this will add to family traditions and celebrations.

Invitations have gone out for this very important day and we hope to see many of your parents and special friends at this event. Please RSVP to us by phone (404-784-1038) or by school e-mail: office-mit@mindspring.com

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For the outdoor environment:

There are many child-sized garden tools as well as kits for making birdhouses, steppingstones, etc. Bird or plant identification books are also wonderful resources.

For art appreciation: Musical instruments (particularly those from around the world), art books, craft supplies, music CDs and family memberships to local museums are all good choices for the budding artist or musician.

Outings: Consider a handmade coupon book or certificate for a special outing, like the zoo, a family picnic or fishing trip.

Books: Create a daily routine of reading with your child. Whether fiction or non-fiction, poetry or prose, children of all ages enjoy being read to.

Gifts need not be expensive, elaborate or recently advertised on TV. What we give our children we give them to make them happy and grow. We also give them the message of what we feel is important in our lives.



**Happy
Holidays**

AFTERNOON CLASS OFFERS SUPPORT ON ELECTION DAY

With record-breaking voters turning out on Election Day, our Poncey-Highlands campus was swamped, as Druid Hills Baptist Church is a large polling place in Fulton County.

Maureen's Afternoon Class decided early in the day that they wanted to help the long line of waiting voters; with the aide of parent Brooke Edmond, who provided bottled water and snack bags, the children were able to hand out goodies from the school wheelbarrow to the tired but orderly crowd.

The children were met with many thanks and a sense of wonderment. The grateful voters were told that the children wanted to thank them for voting as they are looking forward to this wonderful privilege and responsibility when they themselves turn 18 years of age!

Montessori Address at the Georgia Association on Young Children Conference

Maureen Walter, MIT's Executive Director, was invited to speak at the recent Georgia Association on Young Children (GAYC) Annual Conference in October. On behalf of the Montessori Institute of Atlanta, Maureen presented a session entitled "Language and Literacy: Development of Language and the Progression from Reading to Writing". Attendees included a diverse group of childcare, day-care and early childhood educators from around the state.

It is distinctive to have a Montessori perspective at the conference, as it draws nearly one thousand participants. Montessori education has been underrepresented at early childhood conferences in past years; this workshop was well received with much interest from participants all around Georgia.