



## Blue Bell Montessori Children's House Family Newsletter

September 2010

Dear BB-MCH Families,

Although the New Year officially arrives on January 1, to children, parents, teachers and school administrators, it certainly feels like the New Year begins in September with the return to school. The faculty and I wish you a happy new year as we welcome you to the Blue Bell Montessori Children's House 2010-2011 school year! We are happy to have all of you with us again or for the first time. This is the first of our 2010-2011 monthly online newsletters; please be sure to read each one carefully so you will be up to date on the latest information concerning your child's BB-MCH experience.

I am grateful to be part of this wonderful community, and I wish everyone a year of peace and togetherness!

Warmest Regards,  
Marsha  
Marsha Hirschhorn, Principal

### OUR EXCELLENT BB-MCH FACULTY

Our educators are dedicated to guiding your children through an exceptional Montessori experience at BB-MCH. Our skilled and talented team of teachers and assistant includes:

- Early care staff: Nancy Long and Stacia Mendte
  - Prep A: Lead Teacher Valerie Lush and Jacy Toll, Assistants Vanessa Berke and Sooksun Han
  - Prep B: Lead Pauline Rosa-Martir Schepperd, Assistants Stacia Mendte, and Margaret Geiger
  - Primary-A: Lead Teacher Judy Sheard, Assistant Chandana Saxena
  - Primary B: Lead Teacher Brenda Nolan, Assistant Jayanthi Subramaniam
  - Primary C: Lead Teacher Stephanie Howell, Assistant Nancy Long
  - Afternoon Kindergarten: Lead Teacher Judy Sheard,
- After school staff: Stacia Mendte, Vanessa Berke, Jessica Hirschhorn, and Susan Driver

### PARENT HANDBOOKS

You will be receiving a Montessori Children's House Handbook via e-mail on one of the first few days of school. Please read the entire handbook, sign and date the last page and return to me as soon as possible.

### \*\*\*IMPORTANT CHANGES: ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES\*\*\*

We are delighted to have so many new and returning children attending our school this year. Our first priority is our students' safety; with this in mind we have made some important changes to the dismissal and car-line procedures:

**8:45AM-9:00AM Morning drop-off car line (optional):**

**Morning drop-off car line will begin Monday, September 27<sup>th</sup>.** Pull up to the front door and we will be there to greet your child, help him/her out of the car, and escort him/her to the classroom. If you will be using car line, please do not get out of your car, and have your child's school belongings ready before pulling up to the door. If you still need to help your child put on his/her shoes, or wait while your child finishes breakfast, etc., please park in the parking lot and bring your child to the classroom as soon as they are ready. **Morning drop-off will end promptly at 9:00AM.**

**11:45 Dismissal**

**The 11:45-noon pick up car-line has been discontinued.** If your child is enrolled for the morning program, please park in the parking lot and come to the hallway outside your child's classroom. We will bring your child to you at dismissal.

**Please remember the morning program concludes at 11:45AM.**

**2:45-3:00PM - Pick-up car line #1: Toddlers and Miss Brenda's P.M. class ONLY**  
**AND**

**3:00-3:15PM - Pick-up car line #2: Miss Stephanie's P.M class and Kindergarten children ONLY**

**Afternoon pick-up car line will begin Wednesday, September 8<sup>th</sup>.** Please arrive within the designated time listed above. We will supply you with a color-coded I.D. card to display on your visor; please be sure it is visible when you arrive. **For the safety of the children, please discontinue cell phone use before pulling into the driveway.**

If you are picking up both a younger and older child, please arrive at 3:00PM. Form a car line to the right of the driveway; when you pull up to the front door, put your car in "PARK", and we will help your child into your car and secure his/her car/booster seat. **Please do not get out of your car.** All children must enter the car from the passenger side, and parents must remain in the car. No one is to be standing in the driveway. If your child(ren) cannot enter the car from the passenger side or if you want to buckle them in yourself, you must park in the parking lot and walk back to get them. **Each car-line will operate for a 15 minute period; if you arrive after 3:00PM (for Pick-Up #1) or after 3:15PM (for Pick-Up #2), please park in the parking lot and come into the building.**

**Early Care/Late Care:**

If your child is coming for early care, please park your car in the parking lot and bring your child to the early care room. **Children who arrive by 7:45A.M. may bring breakfast to the classroom. If you arrive after 7:45A.M please be sure your child has eaten breakfast at home.**

For late care pick up, please park your car in the parking lot. The children will be either on the playground (enter through the building), or in the late care room.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

No parking is permitted, even for just a few minutes, along the circle in front of or on either side of the building including handicapped-reserved spots. Parking is permitted only in the parking lot. Your cooperation will help us maintain a safe environment for everyone.

## COMMUNICATION

### ***Parent Mailboxes:***

Your parent mailbox is the key to effective communication; please check it each day for notices and children's work. Parent mailboxes are located on the second floor next to Marsha's office. If your child is in the first floor classroom (Miss Brenda's class), please be sure to come upstairs on a regular basis to check your parent mailbox.

### ***Messages for teachers:***

Be sure that all messages from you for teachers are in written form and include the date and your signature. There is a note pad outside of each classroom so that you can write your message. Be particularly careful to note changes in the drop-off or pick-up routine of your child.

## ATTENDANCE SHEETS

Attendance sheets are provided for each classroom, and allow us to keep an accurate record of each child's attendance or absence on a day to day basis. Each child must be signed in and out every day.

**Please do not use these sheets for messages or to change pickup times! Please do not allow your child to complete the sign-in sheet.**

## SECURITY CODES

Each family has a security code for entering the building. To operate the system, enter your 4-digit number on the keypad. The door release should buzz for 5 seconds, allowing you to enter. If it doesn't work, press the # button twice and enter your code again. If it still doesn't work, ring the buzzer and let Marsha know of the problem. Please do not allow anyone you do not recognize to enter the building when you use your code.

## PARKING

There is never to be any parking on the circular driveway to drop off or pick up your child. This area is a fire lane and must be kept clear of unattended cars. Please proceed to the parking lot and walk your child to or from the building.

## EXTRA CLOTHING

Every child needs to bring a complete change of clothing to be kept at school. Be sure to update clothing as the seasons (and your child's sizes) change, and LABEL everything.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Although children love to bring things to school, personal items often get misplaced, lost or broken. We ask your help in having children leave toys, jewelry, and special items (including clothing) at home.

## SUBSTITUTES

There are occasions during the school year when one of our staff cannot be in school. We have been fortunate in having parents who have been willing to serve as substitutes to help us out on such days; if you would like to help in this way, see Marsha in the office.

## ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

Miss Margot will be here leading music classes for Prep and Primary children every other Wednesday morning starting on September 15th. Miss Beth will be here for our sports program for the Primary classes on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday mornings of each month beginning September 27th. Miss Margot will also be teaching weekly French classes to Miss Stephanie's P.M. class and Miss Judy's P.M Kindergarten class every Tuesday afternoon beginning September 21. Miss Brenda's P.M class will enjoy Creative Movement class with Miss Pauline every Tuesday afternoon beginning September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Hurray!

## LIBRARY

All BB-MCH children will visit our children's lending library each Tuesday morning. The library is coordinated and staffed by a group of wonderful parent volunteers. The library will soon be open for business! Please let Marsha know if you are available to volunteer this year. Library volunteer work includes helping children choose and check out books, and re-shelving returned books. We have been fortunate to see our library grows as parents donate books in honor of their child's birthday, and we look forward to seeing the beautiful new books which will be donated this year.

## ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE LIST

We are in the process of compiling a listing by class of all of our BB-MCH families. It will be sent via email to each family in the school to assist you in inviting your child's friends to play or inviting your child's friend's parents to dinner! The directory will be sent to you by the end of September.

## PARENTS' BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT

On Tuesday evening, September 21, all parents are invited to meet with their child's teachers at 6:30 PM. The teachers will present an overview of the year to come, and answer general questions. Because of time constraints, teachers will not be able to discuss individual concerns; you are welcome to make an appointment to speak with your child's teacher at another time. **Adults only at Back to School Night, please.**

## PIZZA WEDNESDAYS

Back by popular demand is our Wednesday pizza lunch program for full-day primary children! The first pizza lunch for the year will be September 22nd. The delicious pizza comes from Michael's in the Broad Axe shopping center. All pizza orders are pre-paid for the full semester...sorry, no refunds for absence. The first semester includes 14 Wednesdays, and the price for the semester is \$28.00 for one slice per week, and \$56.00 for two slices per week (cash only please). You need only provide a drink (and dessert if you'd like). Pizza registration forms will be in your parent mailbox.

## GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

Please review the health guidelines and procedures outlined in your 2010-2011 Parent Handbook. Remember, do not send your child to school if he or she is too ill to comfortably take part in the regular school activities (including outdoor play), or if he or she will infect other children. Thank you for helping us to keep our school community healthy.

## ALLERGY ALERT

The snack calendar posted outside your child's class will note any food allergies in that classroom. Please read the ingredient labels on the snack that you are providing for the class. If you are bringing in a home-made snack, please supply us with a list of the ingredients. **BB-MCH is a peanut free school – no peanuts or peanut products are permitted in snacks or lunches.** Thank you for your understanding.

## BIRTHDAYS

The children love to acknowledge their friends' birthdays during the traditional Montessori "Celebration of Life". The birthday child tells about their growth as the "earth" circles the "sun" each year. If your child celebrates their birthday during the school year, you may send in a special "bite size" treat such as cookies, fruit, mini-muffins, or donut holes, and a set of photographs, one for each year of your child's life! You also may donate a book to our library in honor of your child's birthday. We will be putting a special dedication bookplate in the front of the book with your child's name and date of his/her birthday.

## FUNDRAISING NEWS

Thanks to your participation in our fundraising activities and events, we are able to provide need-based scholarships and purchase equipment and materials for our school. Your contributions last year have enabled us to offer additional scholarships, and to purchase some substantial playground equipment (expected later this fall). As in the past, we kick off our fundraising efforts with the Kidstuff Coupon book sale.

Kidstuff Books will be on sale for \$25.00. You will find lots of savings for items you frequently purchase. Remember you can buy them now for birthdays and for the holidays. The sale begins on Wednesday, September 8th and ends Friday, September 17th. You will find one book in your parent mailbox so you can look through it. Please remember to return your book to Marsha if you are not purchasing it. Of course you may order as many books as you would like!

## SPOTLIGHT ON: HELPING YOUR CHILD TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

Just like adults, some children handle change more easily than others. Knowing what to expect and experiencing consistency gives children (and adults!) a sense of security, safety, and control.

For toddlers and young preschoolers, familiarity is the key. Developmentally, these young children are trying to make sense of their world, and learn who they can count on to meet their needs. This can be difficult for some children if the adults in their lives are frequently changing. You can implement some strategies that will help your child become more comfortable with transitions:

**Develop routines and use them consistently.** You probably have routines during transitions at home, such as meal time, bath time, and bed time. Decide on a routine for transitioning to school as well. This can even start the night before; perhaps you and your child read a book about school or look at pictures from school at bed time, or lay out clothes for the next morning (your child will feel more in control if they help pick out their clothes – just make sure you have removed any unacceptable clothing items, such as a sleeveless shirt in the winter or a too-small pair of pants – so you won't argue with your child over clothing choices). Whatever the routine, follow it consistently, and allow enough time to make it enjoyable.

**Take transitions in steps.** View your morning routine as a series of smaller routines. This may involve a routine for wake-up time, one for dressing time, one for breakfast time, one for going to the car, one for driving to school, one for entering the school building, and one for entering the classroom and saying goodbye! This may seem like a lot and that's exactly the point, because it will help you view the world through your young child's eyes so you will slow down and take a gentle approach to transitions.

**Provide clues or cues of change.** Sing or play a certain song or ring a special chime that means it's time to get ready for a change from one activity to the next. Give time notices, such as, "In 10 minutes breakfast will be over and it will be time to go to school". Give the notice again at 5 minutes, 3 minutes, and one minute. You may find a timer (with a pleasant sound) helpful as a concrete sign of time passing. As your child grows older, they will be able to set the timer and have an even greater sense of control!

**Create a special ritual to say “see you soon”.** Developing a QUICK, fun ritual that you and your child share just before they walk into the classroom is very comforting – and you’ll enjoy it too! Your child will look forward to using the short and special ritual they share with you. Some examples are a special handshake, a certain number of hugs and kisses, a special gesture that means “I love you”, or a short rhyme you say together. The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn is a beautiful story illustrating the power of a parting ritual between parent and child.

Some children need more help than others in making transitions. Your child’s temperament, personality, life experiences and developmental level will all contribute to their reaction to transitions. Your reaction will also communicate a great deal to your child. Try to stay calm, consistently follow your routines and rituals, and always communicate to your child that school is a safe, secure place. Do not discuss your concerns and emotions in front of your child. We are always available to talk with you about how to help your child make a more confident transition to school, and of course there are many websites and resource books available as well. It is a wonderful moment when you witness your child joyfully entering the classroom; if that moment has not yet come, you can feel confident that in time it will!



# September 2010



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

1

2

3

4

5

6

Labor Day

**School and Supplemental Care CLOSED**

7

New Parent/Child Visitation  
10:00-11:30AM

8

First Day Phase In (through 9/17).  
New P.M Pick-Up Car Line Begins.



9

First Day of Rosh Hashanah

10

First Day of Eid al-Fitr

11

12

13

14

15

Music with Miss Margot



16

17

18

Yom Kippur

19

20



21

French—P.M.  
Creative Movement P.M.  
**Parent Back to School Night 6:30PM**  
(adults only please)

22

Pizza Wednesday Begins for Full-Day Primary Children (optional)



23

Autumn begins



24

25

26

27

Morning Drop-Off Car Line Begins



Lil' Sports

28

French –P.M.  
Creative Movement—P.M.



29

Music with Miss Margot



30