

## **Community Meeting 10/8/2008 Minutes**

The new Montessori School logo was sent around and approved.

### Spanish Program:

Annamarie gave the introduction to the Spanish program at TMS. There are 2 teachers on board: Maria from Children's House Classroom 3 and Luisa from Toddler Classroom 3. Annamarie explained that the neurological opening for the brain to absorb a second language is from 0 to 10 years.

Maria is from Puerto Rico and Luisa is from Columbia. Maria's and Luisa's classes are considered Dual-language. In addition, Luisa also teaches Spanish to the other toddler classes in the mornings one time a week, Children's House classes for 20 minutes once a week (in the afternoon) and the Upper and Lower Elementary classes for 45 minutes, two times a week.

Maria presented how Spanish as a dual-language is working in her classroom through the use of a Spanish curriculum guide written by a Montessori teacher. She speaks only in Spanish and translations are only used if absolutely necessary. She stated that the children are responding well in her class and are learning not just the language but the culture by studying the holidays and celebrations of the Hispanic culture. She demonstrated through a Montessori work how she teaches Spanish words through the 3-period lesson. She said that most of her children are listening and absorbing, but not yet in the 3rd period of speaking/producing. She is using the calendar, songs, poems, books and lessons to incorporate the Spanish.

Luisa also presented how she is teaching Spanish in the Lower and Upper Elementary classes. She uses games like Twister in the lower and upper elementary classes to teach Spanish, never translating, but using gestures when she needs to. She stated that the children are catching on very quickly. Their pronunciations and recognition of words are very good, she stated. The upper elementary class is spelling Spanish very well also. Because Spanish is phonetic, it works well with the Montessori way of teaching.

Maria states that there is much interest among the teachers to learn Spanish. She will try to start up a Spanish club for the TMS teachers interested.

### Montessori Middle School Committee:

Ashley Donahue, member of the committee read an article about a child who had gone from toddler through elementary Montessori program, but went to a non-Montessori middle and high school. The child stated how sad and stifled he felt after during his non-Montessori schooling.

Ashley also stated that the committee is now a corporation with the name of "Crossroads Montessori Middle School" and is working on 501(c)(3) status. A sign up sheet was sent around for all those who want to be involved.

### NLI- Natural Learning Initiative

Three representatives from NLI came to TMS to have a workshop with the children at TMS. They have taken back all the information from the students, toddlers to Upper Elementary, and will weigh these ideas along with ideas from the TMS staff, who had a retreat with the NLI Sept 19th. NLI will make a blueprint based on a hierarchy of these wishes.

At 6p, on Nov. 10 (a Monday), at the next Community meeting, Robin Moore will formally present this blueprint/ schematic plan. After which, a landscape architect will be hired. The plan will be pieced out over the years in a fiscally responsible way.

There are copies of Last Child in the Woods available in our library for parents and teachers to check out. In addition, the school will look into getting a few more copies. This book deals with the lasting effects of "nature-deficit disorder".

NLI and Last Child in the Woods ties in well with Montessori themes.

Ecoliteracy.org and Beholdnature.org are good websites to go to regarding nature and our kids.

The federal legislation of "No Child Left Inside" is out of committee and will go forward through the Legislatures. It will put in our schools curriculum for all children to be exposed and interact with the outdoors.

#### News from the Board:

Al Andrews, TMS Board Chair, spoke to the Community regarding the economy and current financial crisis. He stated that the economy has impacted TMS in a big way. Money that TMS wanted to use for other things has had to be moved. Our interest rate on the loan for our building has jumped up, maxing out at 12%. He stated that the Board will do all that the TMS Blueprint says but that some of the issues regarding classroom acoustics and electronic school security may have to be addressed later.

Al Andrews also stated that the Middle School Committee has the Board's full support minus any administrative and financial help. And that the Middle School Committee could use the school's space as needed. He stated that we must keep our eyes on our Community. We may disagree but we should stay as committed and mindful as we can, not to develop a cleave. We need to be able to avoid a division in our Community. Al stated that there may be a time when the Community should be more about TMS and not about the middle school. Al also stated that the Middle School Committee should not feel the obligation to always report to the Community.

The letter regarding the TMS Board's position on the Middle School that Al sent out at the last Community meeting along with the response by the Middle School Committee was published in the TMS Community minutes that can be found online. The Middle School Committee stated that the agreement at the last Community meeting was that this letter along with the Committee's response was to be sent out separately to each family.

It was also discussed that when the Middle School Committee reports to the Community, the Committee should introduce itself as a separate school with Community support.

#### Agenda Items for next meeting:

Next Community meeting Monday 11/10/2008, 6p:

NLI- Natural Learning Initiative