

MISSOULA VALLEY MONTESSORI

WHERE CHILDREN COME FIRST



UPCOMING EVENTS

March 16th- 20th

Spring Break
NO SCHOOL

Tuesday, March 10th
Animal Wonders begins



A MESSAGE FROM ALYSSA ABOUT THE BLUE ROOM

Many of you are likely aware that I moved classrooms this school year. What you may not know is that I started my journey at MVM six years ago as an intern in the blue room with Kim so I was already familiar with the space. After completing my Montessori training I began working as a lead teacher in the taupe room. I called the taupe room home for four years and I grew to love it. Moving to the blue room was initially bitter-sweet. I was excited for the opportunity to work with more children and I looked forward to having additional space to work with



(especially in the practical life area). I was, however, saddened to know that I would be walking away from a window and a set up that I had spent four years refining. I am happy to report that I now feel very much at home in the blue room. I love the space and the children that fill it every day. We were able to create a beautiful space that is inviting and inspiring to the children who occupy it. Meaghan, Wasan, and I feel very fortunate to have such a wonderful group of individuals that we are able to observe and learn alongside every day.

Normalization

It has been such a joy to observe the growth and development of the children in the Blue Room this year. They have developed a supportive community and they have been practicing valuable social skills including communication, collaboration, courtesy, problem solving, and the ability to express, regulate, and communicate their many emotions. At this point in the year the children in the Blue Room are familiar with the routines and procedures that are present in the classroom and they are now able to more fully focus on personal development. We have reached a point that Maria Montessori referred to as "normalization."



The following excerpt from the North American Montessori Teacher's Association provides a comprehensive explanation of normalization.

*Maria Montessori used the term "normalization" to describe a unique process she observed in child development. Dr. Montessori observed that when children are allowed freedom in an environment suited to their needs, they blossom. After a period of intense concentration, working with materials that fully engage their interest, children appear to be refreshed and contented. Through continued concentrated work of their own choice, children grow in inner discipline and peace. She called this process "normalization" and cited it as "the most important single result of our whole work." (Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, 1949)*

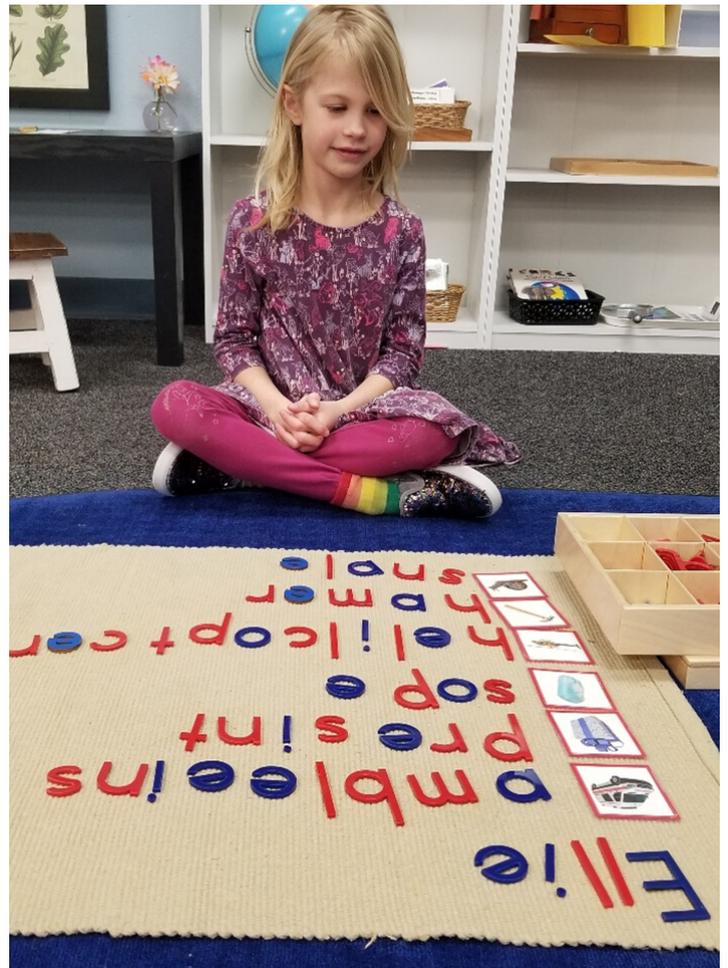
She went on to write, "Only 'normalized' children, aided by their environment, show in their subsequent development those wonderful powers that we describe: spontaneous discipline, continuous and happy work, social sentiments of

help and sympathy for others. . . . An interesting piece of work, freely chosen, which has the virtue of inducing concentration rather than fatigue, adds to the child's energies and mental capacities, and leads him to self-mastery." (Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, 1949)

The attainment of a normalized classroom has allowed the children to expend greater focus on their work and to more deeply explore our content areas.

Differentiation

One of my favorite aspects of the Montessori method is that it allows and encourages each child to progress at his or her own pace. When you enter a Montessori classroom, each child is engaging with materials that are appropriate for their personal level of development. At any given time in our classroom you might observe one child working with a material that develops an understanding of the numbers from 1-10 while another child is adding four digit numerals using the golden bead material. Yet another child might be working with the long chains, a material that introduces the concept of cubing numbers in a concrete manner.



Practical Life

On our practical life shelves we now have a plethora of large, involved practical life activities that the children have been enjoying engaging with. They seem to be drawn to floor scrubbing, wood polishing, making and drinking tea, flower arranging, cooking, and hair combing. When engaging with these materials the children are demonstrating deep focus and concentration, the ability to complete complex tasks independently, development of fine and gross motor skills, and a sense of order.

Since the beginning of the year we have increased the complexity of the food preparation and cooking activities that we offer in our classroom. The children have particularly enjoyed making waffles, quesadillas, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and fruit kabobs. They have demonstrated that they are able to properly use kitchen tools and they have an awareness of safety measures that must be taken when using hot surfaces.

Geography

Over the last few months the children have been learning about the earth and the seven continents.



They have engaged with materials that provide a broad overview of the human and physical geography of our planet. Some of their favorite materials include our colored continent globe, a cards that contain images of children from around the world, and materials that introduce animals from around the world.

We are now narrowing the focus of our cultural studies on the continent of North America. We are beginning this adventure with a broad study of the people, cultures, geography, and animals that are found in North America. As our unit of study progresses, we will narrow our focus. We will explore seven of the biomes that are found in North America: mountains, grasslands, wetlands, deserts, polar regions, temperate forests, and tropical forests. The children will work with a variety of materials that help them to develop an understanding of the climate and terrain of these biomes as well as the plants and animals that live there.

I look forward to observing the continued development of the children in the Blue Room. I can't wait to see where the rest of the school year takes us.

Alyssa Stahl
Blue Room Lead Teacher



NEW FACES AT MVM

You may have noticed a new face in the halls of MVM. We are happy to announce that Jayne Brenneisen will be spending time with Deb in the Early Learner classroom. Here is a quick message from Jayne about herself:

Hi, my name is Jayne Brenneisen, and I am thrilled beyond words to be at Missoula Valley Montessori, and especially helping with the Early Learners. I was nineteen years old when I was first introduced to Maria Montessori, and her philosophy on learning and education. For over forty years, I have attempted to utilize her philosophy with each of the the

students with whom I have been privileged to work, from toddlers to college students. I am currently in Missoula awaiting the arrival of my second grandchild, meanwhile spending every available moment with my daughter, Melody, son-in-law, Derek, and grandson, Will Larsen, a family in the Early Learner Classroom. Thank you for letting me spend my days with your beautiful children!

We are so happy to have Jayne with us at MVM. She brings so much joy, love and wisdom to our school. And she is a lot of fun!

We are excited to share the news that Meaghan is expecting a baby boy in July. She is looking forward to spending time with her new little one and she has decided to take some time to nest and prepare for his arrival. Meaghan's last day will be March 13th. We are sad to see her go and we wish her well in her new adventure.

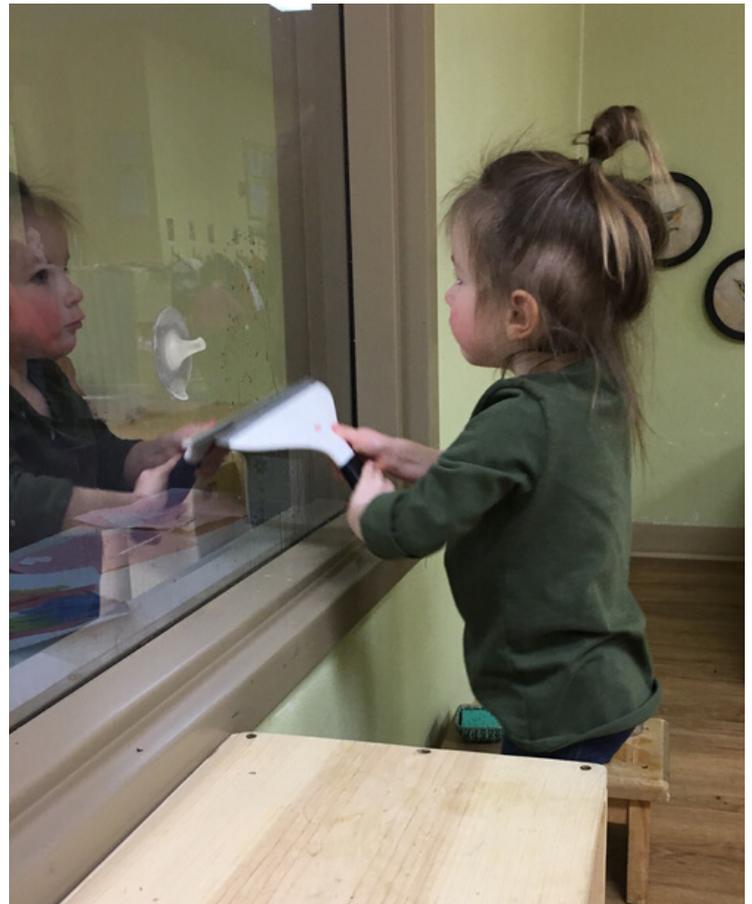
We would also like to announce that Isaac Little will be stepping into Meaghan's role in the blue room. Kim and Catherine are thrilled to have Isaac as part of the MVM family. He is one of their former elementary students from way back in the day. Isaac will be starting his time at MVM beginning Monday morning.



We are excited to announce that Animal Wonders will be visiting our school a total of ten times this spring. Animal Wonders is a local educational outreach organization that teaches children about wildlife, conservation, and a love of nature. On each of her visits, Jessie will be presenting immersive educational experiences to the primary children

with the help of her animal ambassadors. Knowing that we are studying the continent of North America, Jessie will be bringing several animals that the children will be learning about in the study of our special continent. Jessie and her animal ambassadors will be visiting our school every Tuesday from 10:20-11:20 beginning March 10th. If your children do not regularly attend school on Tuesday you are welcome to bring them to participate in Animal Wonders. You may either choose to stay with them or drop them off for 30 minutes while you get a cup of coffee.

PHOTOS FROM THE EARLY LEARNER ROOM



PHOTOS FROM THE EARLY LEARNER ROOM



PHOTOS FROM THE TAUPE ROOM



PHOTOS FROM THE TAUPE ROOM



PHOTOS FROM THE GREEN ROOM



PHOTOS FROM THE GREEN ROOM

