



Montessori School of Ojai

Educating the Individual · Building Community · Caring for the World

The Acorn: Monthly Newsletter for MSO

September 2019

Welcome Back!



MSO Director, Janet Lindquist-Lang

On behalf of all the staff, I am happy to welcome students and families for what, I believe, will be an exceptional year.

We have an outstanding, committed group of teachers. We were able to spend a considerable amount of time together throughout the summer preparing for the 2019/20 school year and every one of our teachers has what it takes to provide your child with the guidance they need to become lifelong learners. As Maria Montessori said, "To assist a child we must provide him with an environment which will enable him to develop freely." Our teachers have their environments (classrooms) ready. Let's watch these children develop together!

One of my favorite things is talking about the Montessori philosophy and showing families the magic of what happens in our classrooms each day. Please reach out to me at any point throughout the year with your questions, or to set up a time to visit a classroom together! I can be reached via email janet@montessorischoolofojai.org, or phone 805-649-2525.



Room 6 students welcomed MSO founder Vickie Matthews as she returned to help with sewing their Harvest Moon quilt.



MSO Middle Schoolers clean up at Refugio State Beach

Around Campus

Staffing Updates

Congratulations to Coral Ramage as she starts her first year as head teacher of the Infant Room. This change comes with Micaela taking the position of head teacher of Room 3. In the Middle School, David Taylor is co-teaching alongside Libby Hawkins. David will divide his time between teaching in the Middle School and continuing to teach drama to the entire MSO community.

We would also like to welcome our newest staff members: Regina Colby – Office Support; Jennifer Walsh – Cook; Shannon Kay - Social Empowerment Specialist; Maribel Diehl, Aiden Hartley, Ronni Townley, & Nicolette Walker - Teaching Assistants.

Awesome Lunches

Please stop by the kitchen and say hello to our new chef, Jennifer Walsh. Word around the school is that her food is “awesome” (some kids have even said her pizza is better than Ojai Pizza Co!). If you have not already signed up for hot lunches, it’s not too late. You can still elect for your child(ren) to have hot lunch and we will just add the cost to your monthly bill. Easy peasy! (yes, pun intended)

After-School Activities

This Fall, we’re offering three fabulous after school activities and it’s not too late to sign up, space permitting:

Lego Camp on Tuesdays (Rooms 1, 2, 6), Sept 10 - Oct 29

Ceramics with Colleen McDougal on Wednesdays, Sept 11 - Oct 23 (FULL)

The Peaceful Corner with Lisa Batchelder-Hetrick & Lara Horsting on Thursdays (Rooms 1, 2, 6, 8, 9), Sept 9 - Oct 17

Register in the office or call 805-649-2525

Spring Sing Video Now Online

If you haven’t already seen it, the [Spring Sing video is now posted on our website](#), and it’s fabulous! Each year we’re blown away by the talent that is showcased in the Spring Sing, and it’s so wonderful to be able to share it with the world (and grandparents) in video format.

Events

September 3-6	Middle School camping trip, Refugio State Beach
September 11	Parent's Happy Hour, MSO campus, 6:30 p.m.
September 20	Family Picnic, MSO campus, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. Bring the entire family!
September 23rd - 27th	Picture Day(s)! See your teacher for more information.
October 4	Harvest Moon Fundraiser, Topa Mountain Winery, 5:30 - 9:30 p.m. Drop the kids off at MSO daycare and join us for our biggest fundraising event of the year!!

Montessori Feature

The Prepared Environment

Ruby Cossairt, Head Teacher Upper Elementary



One thing all Montessori classrooms strive for is a “Prepared Environment.” That is, we teachers design our classrooms so they’re suited to the children’s needs. The tables and chairs are child-sized. The work on the shelves is age-appropriate and neatly ordered. The material is realistic and made to fit in the children’s hands. This idea of a prepared environment—one that is both safe and age-appropriate—allows the children to move freely about the room. To some people, Montessori classrooms look chaotic. To Montessorians, the structured environment is what allows children to develop autonomy and self-discipline. Read more on Ruby’s blog <https://theabsorbentteacher.wordpress.com/>

Parent Corner

In an effort to continue to build community within the MSO family, we are going to devote a section of each newsletter to our parents. Helping us kickoff this new section is a wonderful book review submitted by MSO parent Ashley Parris. If you have contributions to make to this section of the newsletter, email us (mso@montessorischoolofjai.org). Enjoy!

Recommended Reading: *How to Raise an Adult* by Julie Lythcott-Haims

Do you ever wonder how we ended up with so many young adults who seem incapable of separating from their parents? Do you feel like your needs take a backseat to managing your children and their social lives? Have you already started thinking about how you will engineer your child's resume to help them get into the right college? Do you ever look at young people today and wonder if you will still be paying your child's cell phone bill (or rent) when they are 30? If you sometimes feel like this parenting thing shouldn't be as exhausting and all-consuming as it is for so many families, this book is for you. Lythcott-Haims, Stanford's Dean of Students for 10 years, devotes her book to encouraging and instructing parents to allow children to truly experience childhood, without us parents getting in the way.

How to Raise an Adult dedicates its time to teaching parents when to step back and allow children to experience life - pitfalls and all - and when to step in - teaching chores, responsibility and life skills. The author argues that American parents are so obsessed with their child's resume and education, that they lose focus of the big picture: that our primary job is not to raise Harvard graduates, but to raise resilient, hard-working, responsible adults who are able to care for themselves. With so many parenting books dedicated to dealing with this issue or that, it's remarkably refreshing to read a book dedicated to the philosophy of parenting itself. I cannot recommend this book highly enough.

Animal Crackers



Meet Thomas the potbelly pig! Thomas joined the MSO family during the Thomas fire when someone left him on campus. Even though the campus was closed, our staff remained committed to looking after the animals, feeding and caring for them. Apparently, a family in need of a safe place for Thomas noticed that we were caring for the animals, and the orphaned potbelly found a new home with us.

Thomas is looked after by MSO staff Jesse Luna and Jody Warner. He is very friendly and he really loves the occasional leftover snack from lunch. Please stop by and say hello to Thomas the next time you're at the school!

Giving Back

Elise Rayner, Mom to Kai (Room 9) and Jack (Room 8), Development/Communications volunteer

Join us this year as we commit to campus-wide engagement in giving back to MSO!



MSO students, staff, and supporters at July 4th parade

I had the opportunity last year to work on a comprehensive Development Plan for MSO, a plan that will guide their fundraising efforts for the next three to five years. One of the most astonishing things I learned in the process is that *MSO relies 100% on tuition to cover all of their expenses, including scholarships*. Most independent schools rely on an 80/20 mix of tuition and donations.

While this is extremely admirable, and the teachers and staff have been able to accomplish so much with so little over the years, I know they have so much more they would like to do! The only way they can do so - without raising tuition significantly - is with *more support from all of us*. Therefore, I invite you to take a moment and find the best way(s) you can contribute to MSO this year!

2019-20 Major Fundraising Events:

- Bid high and bid often at our annual Harvest Moon event! See “Events” for more info.
- Invite your friends and family to support MSO on Giving Tuesday, December 3rd.
- Help your child collect pledges during the Sportathon in the Spring.

Other ways to give back:

- Volunteer your time and talents in the classroom, in the office, or out on the grounds.
- Set up a recurring monthly donation of \$20 (or more!).
- Contribute directly to your child’s classroom by purchasing items on the teacher’s [wishlist](#).
- Call the main office to set up a meeting with Janet and Patrice to learn more about the needs of the school and how they might align with your giving priorities.

There are just as many ways to give as there are members of our MSO community. Find what works best for you and help us make this the best year ever for MSO. Thank you!



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