



The Acorn: Monthly Newsletter for MSO

April 2020

Thank You for Your Continued Support



What a challenging time for all of us. Thank you again to our community at Montessori School of Ojai. I am constantly amazed at the dedication our teachers and parents are exhibiting during this time of uncertainty and confusion.

School work is important and I don't want to minimize what our students are doing in the least. However, I saw this on a social media page and it resonated with me so I wanted to share it with each of you:

Dear parents,

Don't stress about schoolwork. In September I will get your children back on track. I am a teacher and that is my superpower. What I can't fix is social-emotional trauma that prevents the brain from learning. So right now, I just need you to share your calm, share your strength, and share your laughter with your children. No kids are ahead. No kids are behind. Your children are exactly where they need to be.

*With love,
Every teacher on planet Earth*

On that note, please take photos of your children working, creating, and enjoying their time at home and send them to me so we can share with our MSO community on Facebook and Instagram.

Lastly, please reach out to me at any point with your questions. I can be reached via email janet@montessorischoolofojai.org, or phone 805-649-2525.

Love,
Janet

School Updates

Online Reenrollment – Due May 1

Thank you to everyone who has already completed the new online reenrollment process for the 2020-21 school year! We have many families on the waitlist for next year, therefore, please be sure to secure your space by May 1 before we open up enrollment to all new families.

We are excited to launch the use of our new School Information System operated by FACTS Management for the reenrollment process this year. FACTS will enable us to better communicate with families and streamline the application and enrollment process. One important thing to note: we have noticed that the system is “assigning” children to a different room than some families may be anticipating. We apologize for this inconvenience, and we are trying to find a solution to this problem. In the meantime, however, please ignore the automated classroom assignment and know that we will be placing children in the appropriate classrooms once the reenrollment process is complete.

If you have misplaced the email from Lesley with the link to the reenrollment process, please just send her a quick note (lesley@montessorischoolofojai.org) and she will resend it to you.

Summer Camp

MSO will not be offering any Summer Camps this year. We hope to be able to resume our child care program by this summer, but we will base our decision on the health and safety of the children and our staff.

Amazon Smile

Amazon Smile is a quick, easy way to raise funds for MSO. For every qualifying purchase, the Amazon Foundation donates 0.5% to the school. One family started using it last year, and they’ve already contributed over \$500 to MSO! All you need to do is visit smile.amazon.com and select Montessori School of Ojai. Thank you.

Important Dates

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| April 30 | 2020-21 scholarship applications due (returning families) |
| May 1 | 2020-21 reenrollment due |
| May 15 | 2020-21 reenrollment fee invoiced; due June 15 |
| May 30 | 2020-21 scholarship recipients notified |
| June 10 | Last day of school |

Montessori Feature: What Would Maria Montessori Do?

Ruby Cossairt, Head Teacher Upper Elementary



I've been thinking about what it means to be a Montessori educator in a world that requires social distancing. Given a situation where we cannot physically interact with our students, where they cannot physically interact with each other, the materials or the environment, where does that leave educators with a philosophy so rooted in those very concepts?

At first, pondering these questions made me feel lost. I couldn't sleep because I was worrying about the sensitive periods that would come and go while our doors remained closed. But then a guiding question came to me, a question that would help me answer all related dilemmas: What would Maria Montessori do?

You see, what Maria Montessori taught me about children is the very thing I need to be remembering right now. The materials are really a very small part of a very comprehensive method. I realized that I was so caught up in what I had lost by not being able to be in the classroom with my students that I had forgotten the things that make what we do so special. That's why, going forward, I've decided to focus on the following elements of Montessori philosophy, the elements that hold true no matter where we make our classroom:

1. Creating a prepared environment (Preparing our virtual environment is just as important as preparing our physical one!)
2. Peace through education (How can I care for the social and emotional well-being of my students--especially during such an uncertain time?)
3. Cosmic Education (How can I encourage all of us to retain a sense of connection when many of us are feeling so isolated?)
4. Montessori taught that children construct themselves. For me, this is an extremely reassuring thought! In that moment when I worry about lost learning, I remember: children are always learning! As though we could even try stopping them!

I hope these thoughts reassure some of the anxiety you might be feeling during an anxious time. Please know that all of us teachers at MSO are thinking of you and your children often and we hope to see everyone soon!

Garden Update: Our Beautiful Campus

Liz Cossairt, Assistant Director and Head Teacher Lower Elementary



Staying so close to home for the past several weeks has provided multiple opportunities to explore and enjoy my home environment here at MSO. It's easy to appreciate what our beautiful spring rains have done to bring the campus alive with color. Stan and Jesse have been working hard to stay ahead by mowing and weed-whacking the brilliant green lawns, fields and orchard. They are also grooming and maintaining beds and play yards. It's wonderful to experience the parklike qualities of the campus we all know and love. We are all looking forward to the time we can return and enjoy it together.

MSO founder and former director, Vickie Matthews, my husband, Tod, and I are spending time keeping the MSO Garden looking beautiful. The compost is cooking and the plants are changing with the season. Vickie consistently and diligently (I'm so grateful!) helps keep our paths free

and clear of weeds. As we add to the compost, Tod turns and layers it, nurturing the many earthworms and other organisms that do the work to make it ready for use when we plant. Soon we will install three new raised beds. In addition, Tod planted a row of raspberries in the garden adjacent to the field. There is so much to share and enjoy with the children when school resumes.

It's a beautiful spring. I hope you are all able to enjoy your yards and gardens, especially during the 50th anniversary of Earth Day this Wednesday, April 22.

[Click this link for a slide show](#) compiled of photos taken around campus during the last month.

Giving Back

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



In the midst of all the changes that hit us so hard in March, a major milestone did not get celebrated. Fortunately, it's never too late to share the great news that the 2020 Sportathon was the most successful to date! With your incredible help, MSO raised over \$11,000 to repair the yurt. Thank you!

The process of ordering the replacement parts has been temporarily put on hold while the campus is closed, but MSO looks forward to transforming the beloved yurt just as soon as possible.



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