

SEPTEMBER 2011

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## Communication

During the school year you will receive regular communications about the topics your students are learning, but we will not be providing daily updates. Because there is so much variety and so many lessons, it is not possible or optimal to tell you everything that happens at school. In an authentic Montessori classroom, a student's lessons are based on their interests and abilities. Montessori teachers observe their students, track their individual progress, and provide individual or small group lessons when the student is ready. Teachers monitor progress, and gauge the optimal time to teach your child's lesson.

I encourage you to talk to your children. Let them know you are interested, actively listen to them, and give them the option to tell you what they are doing. Try not to insist on all the details of what they did each day on your schedule, which might be directly after school, but wait until they are relaxed and feel like talking. With this approach you will receive more information. Rather than saying, "What did you learn at school today?" in the

car after dismissal, simply state something such as, "Hi, Sally, I am glad to see you." Then let your student relax until they are ready to talk. Open ended discussion that begins with your input can also help. You might begin a casual conversation about some positive elements of your day. For example, you can communicate to your student and family about your day with a statement like this, "I had such a positive interaction today at work with Mary."



Your student's classroom teacher carefully watches students' behavior. Teachers are trained to observe individual students' patterns of behavior, as well as the patterns of behavior within a group of students. When indicated, the teach-

ers intervene to help guide their students, and communicate with you regarding both the positive and negative patterns of behavior, especially those that are important to address together. Teachers will provide a "heads up" on specific incidents they think would be beneficial for you to process with your student.

You might receive a communication from your child's teacher like this one, "I want to let you know that Sally is working hard today to figure out how to respond when someone keeps hiding her lunchbox. Should she retaliate? Should she tell me and let me sort it out for her? Should she bring her friends into the solution? Should she just ignore the behavior? Should she use humor? She's looking for ideas and she may need for you to spend more time with her than usual just listening as she brainstorms and considers the possibilities.

I'm confident that she and I will discover a good way for a person like her to handle such a situation, but she

### NEWS NOTE!

Next month's issue will feature reporting by our ever popular student reporters!





## Communication (continued)

may need to feel some moral support in the meantime. This is a big, important work for Sally, and I'm really excited by the way she's taking it on." Your child's teacher also welcomes communication from you about things you are hearing from your children, as with this information they can then further individualize lessons. You will need to communicate more to your teacher when your students are young and attending pre-school and kindergarten. As students grow, we encourage you to help them communicate directly to their teacher.

*"In a well-functioning Montessori elementary, there are many ups and downs during the day, many opportunities for conflict and conflict resolution, many spontaneously arising situations and experiences that allow children to stretch themselves and to*

*venture outside their comfort zones. As the adults, our job is to give children the tools they need to handle these things themselves and to refrain from rushing in to give 'help' to those who are decidedly not helpless.*

### **Preparing the social/emotional environment**

*We prepare the physical environment with scientifically validated materials that support the development of all the various facets of the human intellect. But what are the materials for the social/emotional 'curriculum'? They are the children themselves and their interactions in the prepared environment. How do we prepare the social/emotional environment? We prepare the social/emotional environment by modeling the values of respect, kindness, flexibility, optimism, good humor, etc., that we know the children need to develop; by providing the means for*

*them to practice the skills that underlie emotional intelligence (including the considerable time this practice takes away from 'academic' subjects); by gentle coaching; by active listening; by showing the children that we believe them to be capable of growing and learning in the social/emotional arena and by honoring such growth as an important part of their work at school.*

*In short, we offer the children the skills, the freedom and the time they need to develop socially and emotionally. Psychologists, brain scientists and other researchers who have looked into Montessori education tell us that nobody supports the development of 'executive functions' and high-level thinking skills as well as we do." John Snyder, Montessori educator*





## Gossip Free Zone

Please join me in creating a “gossip free” zone at Hermosa. I encourage you to share information with those who can help you problem solve in a positive manner if necessary. An ancient text teaches that gossip injures three people: the speaker, the listener, and the subject, that is the person who gossips, the one who listens to gossip, and the person who is gossiped about. All are morally damaged by the experience. No

one benefits. Circulating rumors, sharing personal information about others -accurate or not-does not help us create community. A famous dictum says that great minds speak about ideas; smaller minds speak about events; and the smallest minds speak about others. Let’s try to use our speech to help create, learn, further enhance the lives of those around us, especially our children.

### Gossip-Free Zone



## Character Development

One of the ways Hermosa graduates distinguish themselves is by demonstrating a great strength of character. Starting with our youngest preschool students and continuing through middle school, Hermosa actively teaches and models positive character traits and virtues. Each month all staff focuses on a virtue. You will see the virtue of the month on the marquee. For August we chose appreciation.

Appreciation is seeing the good in life. It is recognizing the gifts that come our way and showing gratitude for them.

*To practice appreciation:*

- ◆ I look for the good in life and in people
- ◆ I freely express gratitude and admiration
- ◆ I enjoy all that life has to offer
- ◆ I feel grateful for the bounty of my life.

There are usually three elements of a virtues statement:

- 1) an opening phrase
- 2) a virtue
- 3) how the virtue is being shown or needs to be shown. For example to acknowledge or thank: “You were really patient to wait so long.”

In September we will focus on cooperation.

Cooperation is working together for the good of all. When we cooperate, we join with others to do things that cannot be done alone. We are willing to follow the rules which keep everyone safe and happy. Together we can accomplish great things.

*You are practicing cooperation when you:*

- ◆ Work well with others
- ◆ Offer your help and ideas freely
- ◆ Disagree peacefully and respectfully follow the rules
- ◆ Ask for help when you need it
- ◆ Help keep a safe, happy environment.





## Parenting

As we grow as parents, it is interesting to consider what style of parenting we use, and what the research tells us regarding the outcomes of our style. The book, Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother by Amy Chua describes raising children the "Chinese way" — with strict rules and expectations — and created much discussion in the media. What is your parenting style? Psychologist Diana Baumrind conducted extensive research of American families and has described various parenting styles. She describes the styles as **authoritarian**, **permissive**, **neglecting**, and **authoritative**. The styles can be briefly summarized as follows:

**Authoritarian** parents are high in control and low in warmth. They rarely provide reasons for what they ask their children to do, and say that children must do what they say because they say so. According to Angeline Lillard, author of Montessori: The Science behind the Genius, "children of authoritarian parents tend to be low in motivation. As they get older, the girls of such parents tend to lack independence, and the boys are often hostile. As adolescents, children of authoritarian parents tend to have low social and academic competence."

**Permissive** parents are high on warmth and low on control. They let their children "be in charge," and generally go along with what-

ever their children want to do. These parents allow their children to stay up late or set their own bedtimes, and eat whatever they like. Permissive parents do not provide

***My father didn't tell me how to live, he lived, and let me watch him do it.***  
- Clarence Budinton Kelland

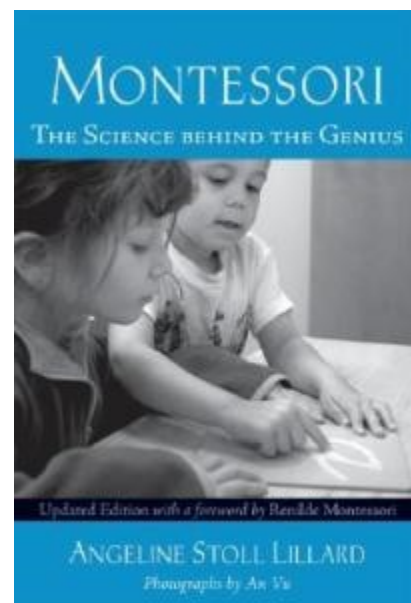
much structure for their children, and are openly loving. In terms of outcomes, children of permissive parents tend to have little self-control. They are often considered immature, and they show little self-reliance and exploration. As they get older, they tend to be low in achievement orientation, and the girls especially tend to be nonassertive. Older children of permissive parents are prone to drug use and delinquency.

**Neglecting** parents are low on both warmth and control. Neglecting parents simply do not pay any attention to their children. Children of neglecting parents tend to be low on social responsibility and social assertiveness. They are more likely to show antisocial tendencies than are other children, and more likely to suffer from psychological problems such as depression.

**Authoritative** parents are high on control and high on warmth. They tend to be very strict about what the rules are, but also willing to discuss the reason with the child, and when sensible even alter the rules

in response to the children's expressed views. Yet within the limits they set, authoritative parents allow children considerable freedom. They are warmly affectionate and communicate openly. Children of authoritative parents are clearly the best off, high in achievement, motivation and in self-control. They tend to be more popular, competent, and self-assured than other children.

Clearly, the research on parenting styles and outcomes demonstrates that children do best when adults are high in warmth and control. Children thrive when they have respectful communication with set firm behavioral guidelines within which they are allowed freedom. As children get older, they do better when their parents give them more control. Happily, once again, the research supports Hermosa's educational philosophy, teacher training, and Montessori approach.





## Upper Elementary Updates

### LEADERSHIP

At the beginning of each school year, students of the upper elementary program elect new classroom leaders. There were many candidates that put their name on the ballot. Every level had candidates

running for office.

This year the students elected into office will serve their office for a semester. The first group of officers will serve through the end of December 2011. Elections will be held once again in January 2012 to allow more

students to take direct leadership roles in the classroom.

The votes were so close for 5th level Sergeant at Arms that there was a second vote required to break a tie between two candidates.

### CLASSROOM ELECTIONS

*by Anna Kruse*

When we have class elections we let people vote for whom they want to be in charge. Unlike most schools, Hermosa allows the class to be basically run by students. There are lots

of different jobs and lots of responsibility for the people who are elected into office. For example, the Treasurer counts all the money from what we earn from selling pizza and fundraisers. The Secretary is in charge of taking notes and report-

ing details on the classroom activities. There are also the Sergeant at Arms, Vice President, and President. It is fun to be in office, but it is a big responsibility!

### UPPER ELEMENTARY PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION SPEECH

Here at Hermosa, the heart of our school is our community. As a leader my goal would be to strengthen the community in every way that I can. That means that I would like to get everyone involved in being a part of the community because I believe that even a small act of kindness goes a long way. Every time you help someone you are making the world a better place. One act of kindness can lead to another and another and pretty soon everyone is helping, all because just one person showed kindness. I also believe that trust is a very important aspect of leadership. Trust means that you will always be able to count on that person to be reliable and to show integrity. My goal this year is to earn your trust. That is why I, Jewel McDonough, would be honored to be your president, represent Upper El and be able to get everyone involved.

#### UPPER ELEMENTARY CLASS OFFICERS

**President:** Jewel McDonough

**Vice President:** Ellie Fester

**Secretary:** Anna Kruse

**Treasurer:** Summer McDonough

**6th Level Sergeant at Arms:** Rachael Montgomery

**5th Level Sergeant at Arms:** Rachel Cain

**4th Level Sergeant at Arms:** Emma Fickett

## Recommended Books

To learn more about your school choice, there are four books I have recommended often:

[Montessori Madness! A Parent to Parent Argument for Montessori Education](#) by Trevor Eissler

[Montessori: The Science behind the Genius](#) (best practices supported by research)

[Math Works](#) (Montessori's ingenious approach to math)

[Understanding Montessori: A Guide for Parents](#) by Maren Schmidt M. Ed.





## **AHERA Notification**

### **HERMOSA MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL**

*Annual AHERA Notification - August 10, 2011*

RE: Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) Compliance Notification for  
Hermosa Montessori Charter School & Hermosa Montessori School, Inc.

Dear Parents, Guardians, Teachers, and Staff:

In accordance with regulations of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), we are required to notify parents, guardians, teachers, and other employees each year of the availability of the Asbestos Management Plan.

To our knowledge, no asbestos-containing materials were used or specified in the construction of any of Hermosa's buildings. Ron Fridlind, Hermosa's architect, has verified this fact. Every three years, this plan will be reviewed and updated. The Asbestos Management Plan will be maintained continually and notification of the plan will be issued every year. It is the intention of Hermosa Montessori Schools to comply with all federal and state regulations regarding asbestos and to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure students and employees a healthy and safe environment in which to learn and work.

You are welcome to review a copy of the Asbestos Management Plan in the front office during regular business hours.

Sincerely,

Sheila Stolov

*Superintendent*