

MAY 2014

THE MONTESSORI MONITOR



The newsletter of Park Road Montessori School

2 longtime teachers say goodbye to PRM

The first public Montessori program in Charlotte was established more than 20 years ago. Two of the individuals who pioneered that effort at Amay James Montessori School, Kelly Harding and Sherry Herbert, are leaving us this year to travel new roads of life.

Their leaving will be a big loss to us; however, we are grateful that their legacy and their work will live on in the daily life of the school. The imprint they have made is indelible, not only on the lives of all of the children they have nurtured but also on future children who will benefit from what each of these Montessorians has contributed to our school community through the years.

It will be an adjustment not seeing these ladies in the hallways, but they will forever remain in our hearts and minds. The Park Road Montessori community sends you off with much love and gratitude and the hope that you both find peace and happiness in your new homes.



Anna Moraglia,
Principal

CALENDAR

MAY

- Tues., May 13 PTO meeting/MOM meeting, 8-9 a.m., Media Center
- Wed., May 14 Spirit Night, Jason's Deli, 1600 E. Woodlawn Road, 5-10 p.m.
- Mon., May 26 Memorial Day - NO SCHOOL
- May 23-June 6 EOG testing

JUNE

- Tue., June 10 Last day of school

AUGUST

- Mon., Aug. 25 First day of 2014-15 school year



Thank you for making Teacher Appreciation Week a success

Thank you to everyone who helped make our Teacher Appreciation Week a success! We had a lovely lunch from Salsarita's for all PRM staff on Monday and Wednesday. On Tuesday students sent in cards for teachers, and on Thursday all staff members received glass water bottles etched with Park Road Montessori and our tree logo. We finished the week with popsicles for the staff from King of Pops. We hope everyone who works at our school felt loved and appreciated!



Montessori Mornings raises \$19,000

Montessori Mornings had a successful year.

Approximately 570 children participated in more than 18 different classes that were offered over the three sessions. Our students enjoyed foreign language, chess, art, sports, as well as yoga and ukulele lessons.

The 2013-14 Montessori Mornings program raised approximately \$19,000 for the PTO. A special thanks to our co-chairs, Erika Dabney and Jennifer De La Jara, as well as to our instructors, parents, volunteers, Ms. Bethanie, Mr. Davis, and Becky and Laura in the office for helping us make it a great year!

Congratulations, teachers of the year!

Congratulations to Ms. Tricia, our Art Teacher, for being selected as Teacher of the Year at PRM. And congratulations to Ms. Charlotte, our Experiential Science Curriculum Assistant, for being selected Teacher Assistant of the Year. These teachers were nominated by their peers and voted on at the school level. Thank you both for everything you do for our children and everything you contribute to our school community!

Panthers camp a fun experience

I thought the Panther Training Camp was super fun. Our class got to work on catching, throwing, kicking, and tackling. There were two Myers Park students who helped us at the catching station. We ran into these cool square boxes and then we were tossed the ball. Then we had to pass it off. The fun part was being tossed the ball again and scoring a touchdown. It was super challenging. My favorite part was tackling. I pretended the big tackle pad was Cam Newton. I punched him in the stomach, but not really.

I loved learning how to play football and wish girls could play. If I was able to play, I would be a tackler for sure. I really liked the trainer Jillian and thought she was awesome. I hope Coach Strait brings this back again next year and Sir Purr will come play with us.

— Avery Salmon, Mrs. Denene's class



PRMCares walked and volunteered in the October 2013 fight against mitochondrial disease in Freedom Park.

PRMCares has a great first year

Together we can do great things!

This was our first year committing to a monthly service project, and what a successful year it was. We want to thank all the families that have come out for the events. Park Road Montessori families are amazing! Our goal with PRMCares was not only to get organized around serving our local needs, but also to provide an opportunity for our families to get to know each other better. We hope your family has enjoyed participating in one or many of our events.

Here is what a couple of Park Road families had to say about PRMCares:

We LOVE PRMCares!!!! I, like so many of us, want to help but don't have (make) the time to search for events that are family friendly, truly make an impact, and are do-able. Bite size ways to get involved. My family has participated in many of the events you guys have graciously organized....Energy for Life walk, Walk to School day, Ronald McDonald House, helping a PRM family in their time of need...and we look forward to more in the coming years! – Longshore Family

I truly admire what you have done with PRMCares. So, thank you!!!! – Goodrich Family

Check out PRMCares.com to stay up to date with volunteer options through the end of school, into the summer and on into next year!



In September, several families participated in the Park Road Montessori neighborhood thank you and cleanup.

Q&A with Tricia Kozek

What is your role at Park Road Montessori?

Visual Arts teacher.

Why did you choose a Montessori school over a more traditional school?

I was working at a traditional elementary school when my principal and assistant principal were asked to start up Billingsville Montessori. When I asked them what Montessori was, I was told I was already teaching that way and I should go with them. I took the lower elementary training two years later with the intention of going into a classroom, but the more I found ways to incorporate the philosophy into art, the more I knew that is where I needed to stay.

How long have you been with PRM and how long have you been with CMS?

I've been with PRM since it started in the fall of 2002. I've been with CMS since 1992, in ASEP and then Art.

What you do like most about your work at Park Road Montessori?

I love working with the kids because they are genuinely interested in learning. We have creative kids who really think outside the box and they inspire me every day.

What's the most rewarding part of what you do every day?

I really love that I have the students from PreK to 6th grade. I get to see how they grow, change and mature and I have a part in that each year they are at this school.

Do you have an example of a child having a funny "ah-hah" moment?



I love when the PreKs come in and start mixing primary colors for the first time. When they mix together blue and yellow, for example, it's really fun to watch when they think that they are the first ones to discover that is where green comes from.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

Right now, I'm hooked on TV music competitions like "American Idol" and "The Voice."

Paideia Picnics: A fun Park Road tradition

Park Road Montessori Elementary students have been enjoying Paideia Picnics for several years. Paideia Picnics are an adaptation of the Paideia Seminar method of discussion. In a Paideia Seminar, students and teachers participate in a collaborative, intellectual dialogue facilitated with open-ended questions about a text. At Park Road we call these seminars picnics and use the format of an optional schoolwide book club.

Each month from October through April, interested students join friends for a picnic lunch and a Paideia-style book discussion on the front lawn. This year students enjoyed the following books:

October	Fudge- A-Mania by Judy Blume
November	Ramona the Pest by Beverly Cleary
January	Pedro's Journal by Pam Conrad
February	The Borrowers by Mary Norton
March	The Ballad of Lucy Whipple by Karen Cushman
April	Mr. Popper's Penguins by Richard & Florence Atwater

Hosted by Miss Jennifer, the Talent Development teacher, and Miss Deborah, the Media Specialist, along with instructional assistants Miss Priya, Miss Jennifer and Miss Pauline, this book club is open to all students at Park Road.

At the beginning of the school year the bulletin board outside Room 3 will list the assigned books and picnic dates for each month. Students may browse the titles, decide which books to read and sign up for the appropriate picnics. Book titles will be available for purchase at the book fair in the fall, or students may choose to borrow from the library.

In order to attend each picnic, students need to have completed the assigned book independently or with an adult. Then students simply pack a picnic lunch and come ready to talk about the book with Park Road Montessori friends.

The 2014-15 school year book titles will be revealed in September. Join in as this fun tradition continues.



Q&A with Scott Strait

What is your role at Park Road Montessori?

I am the PE/Health teacher at PRM.

Why did you choose a Montessori school over a more traditional school?

I was actually placed at this school when I applied to CMS. I did not choose Montessori, but am very grateful to have been placed here. I have learned much about Montessori and what it has to offer children. I've grown to like it so much that I enrolled my children here!

How long have you been with PRM and how long have you been with CMS?

I have been with PRM for 10 years,

and with CMS for about 10.5 years. I taught at JM Robinson Middle School before coming to teach full time here at PRM.

What you do like most about your work at Park Road Montessori?

What I like most about working at PRM its the positive vibe about the school. The children are happy and excited about learning. My co-workers are great to be around as well.

What's the most rewarding part of what you do every day?

The most rewarding part of my day is the love and energy my students give me every day. They are hardworking and eager to learn. It's great to see the joy on their face when



they achieve something in PE they didn't think they could.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

Outside of work I enjoy simply being with family, working outdoors around the house, and going to pretty much any sporting event.



International Spring Picnic was delicious event

The International Spring Picnic was AWESOME! Can we have it again next year? I loved running and playing with my friends until late, and eating treats from the different countries, especially the sweet stuff. The passports were fun and I think that the different stamps that we got to put on our passports were cool. I collected toothpick flags, beads from the Irish table, and I did not try the green stuff at the German table. The cookies at the New Zealand table were the best! – *Synjin Storm Speet, age 5, Ms. Jeanne's class*

Q&A with Melinda Henry

What is your role at Park Road Montessori?

Upper El teacher.

Why did you choose a Montessori school over a more traditional school?

Traditional school never worked for me as a student. When I was in my first year of college I had to visit a Montessori school for my Intro to Psychology class, and I was sold.

How long have you been with PRM and how long have you been with CMS?

I have been here for 12 years. I came from out of state.

What you do like most about your work at Park Road Montessori?

The people, everyone has the children's best interest at heart.

What's the most rewarding part of what you do every day?

I love that ah-hah moment.

Do you have an example of a child having a funny "ah-hah" moment?

One day I was pointing at something and a child touched my flabby underarm and told me I was melting.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?



Sewing, white water rafting, traveling.

Visit the new pond created by Ms. Charlotte and students



With financial help from the PTO, Ms. Charlotte has created a new school pond. She has worked very hard to get it set up and landscaped, with a new fence around it for protection. Please enjoy these photos, which show the pond before, in progress and after. If you're on campus, please stop by to check it out – it's on the back side of the school outside Ms. Ann's classroom.

Thank you, Ms. Charlotte, for all of your hard work, and thank you to the PTO and school community for funding this venture!





Q&A with Teresa Lee-Hedlund

What is your role at Park Road Montessori?

My role at PRM is Teacher Assistant.

Why did you choose a Montessori school over a more traditional school?

Back in 2003, I started working at a Montessori school (as an assistant) in Toronto. I loved what I saw happening in the classroom – the self-motivation, the incredible material and lessons, the independence of the students – and was immediately drawn toward the method.

Shortly thereafter, I packed my stuff and moved to the D.C. area, where I received my Montessori Elementary certification from Washington Montessori Institute.

Since then, I worked as lead teacher for a few years at a local Charlotte Montessori school but stopped working when I got married and had my children.

Due to my love of the Montessori method and my belief in the importance of having it available to every child, I wanted to enter back

into the workforce at PRM.

How long have you been with PRM and how long have you been with CMS?

This is my first job with CMS and I started working at PRM at the end of January 2014.

What you do like most about your work at Park Road Montessori?

It's hard to choose just one thing. The staff has been extremely supportive and welcoming – everybody in general at the school has been very helpful. Also, seeing the children and how they are growing as individuals just puts a smile on my face.

What's the most rewarding part of what you do every day?

I'd have to say that the most rewarding part of what I do is in seeing how the children are learning and growing each day. Knowing that I have an impact on their lives and on their development as individuals really means a lot to me.



What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

In my free time I enjoy listening to music, going to concerts, spending time with friends, traveling, hiking and trying new things. Being born and raised in Toronto, I try to go up to visit as often as possible. But most of all I enjoy spending time with my little family – my husband, my 3 year-old daughter, Caitlyn, and my 1 year-old son, Zac.

Farewell to Ms. Becky as she retires

Our amazing Senior Administrative Secretary, Ms. Becky Neely, is retiring at the end of the summer.

To say Ms. Becky is an integral part of the running of the school would be a huge understatement. She is truly the spoke of the wheel. The entire PRM staff goes to her with questions, and she always helps willingly and graciously. She is responsible for all school finances, finalizing field trip plans, ordering Montessori materials, inputting schedules, handling all questions related to time off and hours worked – the list goes on and on.

The truth is Ms. Becky really can't be replaced.

She's been in CMS for 25 years and spent the first 15 years at Nations Ford Elementary – first as the 10-month Attendance Secretary then as the 12-month Senior

Administrative Secretary. She has served as Senior Administrative Secretary at PRM since 2004.

Ms. Becky grew up in Charleston and Raleigh, graduated from Mars Hill, and settled in the Charlotte area in Steele Creek when she and her husband, Ralph, married more than 40 years ago. They have two children: Trey, who lives in Atlanta; and Christian, who lives in Charlotte with her husband, Jonathan.

Ms. Becky doesn't have any immediate retirement plans other than traveling to some family weddings at the end of this summer. After that, she'll simply enjoy being footloose and fancy free.

Good luck and thank you for everything, Ms. Becky!!!



Mr. Curt's 6th graders visit Charleston

By Emma Goodrich

For three days before spring break, Mr. Curt took all of his sixth graders on a trip to Charleston, S.C. Ms. Beth and Mr. Kevin came along as chaperones. Here are some of the basics about what we did.

Transportation: Driving in a minivan with six other sixth graders is not as bad as it sounds. Everyone has their own space (sort of) and I don't think we bothered Mr. Kevin too much other than the constant singing.

Hotel: During the trip we stayed at a Country Inn & Suites 30 minutes outside of Charleston in Summerville. Staying outside of Charleston was a good idea because of prices and quality of the inns in the city. The hotel wasn't too small and had plenty of space for all of us.

Dining: The second night we had a delicious seafood feast at a small restaurant called Bowen's Island. Although it was an oyster shack, they had delicious fish and shrimp. All of us ended up trying oysters and hating them, except RC. He loved them (How?!).

Schedule: On Wednesday, we all met in front of the school at 7:30 a.m. After arriving at the hotel and eating lunch, we headed out to Charleston for the history tour.

Our tour guide, David, was really nice and knowledgeable about Charleston. He took us through the original passageway into Charleston and told us about pirates and other misfortunes of the city. Since we were all hungry, he made our mouths water even more with great descriptions about their specialty foods. I highly recommend a history tour if you ever go to Charleston.

Our first stop Thursday was the South Carolina Aquarium and Sea Turtle Hospital. Brandi, an intern there, took us through the hospital. It was very interesting and super cool to see how many turtles they saved every

year. Although it was a sea turtle hospital, they had some freshwater and land turtles, too. They even had a few sharks and crabs. We donated money to the fund and left to see the rest of the aquarium. We went through the big tank and the mini hospital. Upstairs was a piedmont and a mountain exhibit with a bald eagle and a pool of otters, Mary's favorite. Downstairs there was an exhibit on Madagascar with my favorite, lemurs. There was a little cylinder you could sit inside that went into the lemur habitat.

Next we took a scenic ferry ride to Fort Sumter. At the island, we got a quick talk on the history of the fort before we got to walk around and see it. The battery in the middle of the island had a really cool museum inside with details and history of the fort and battles. The original American flag hung over the fort was in the museum. Our tour guide the day before had told us to look for the ghost in the flag. When we found it, it was a perfect picture of one of the great leaders in the war. It was really cool!

Friday morning we drove over to the Yorktown, a very famous aircraft carrier from World War II. Today, you can walk through the entire ship and see planes from all different wars. Inside they also have the Medal of Honor museum and the Apollo 8.

On the same site, they had the U.S.S. Laffey and the Clamagore submarine. We only had time to go through one of them and we decided on the submarine. Inside they had one long hallway with different rooms branching out of it that you could look in to.

Finally, it was time to go home. After the most fun trip of my life and one I will never forget, it was hard to go back to my regular schedule. All of the great memories and fun times we had on this trip will stay fresh in my mind and I am glad we got to do something like this in the first place.



SLT focuses on improvement, Montessori

The School Leadership Team, composed of elected parent and staff representatives, along with the principal, works to set the long-term strategic course for the school. The SLT creates the multi-year School Improvement Plan (SIP) and monitors progress against its goals. This year, the SLT focused on several aspects of the SIP that are critical to sustaining and improving the authenticity of the Montessori approach at Park Road. Specific initiatives included:

- working with PTO to provide Montessori training opportunities for lead teachers by sending a record number to national Montessori conferences.
- gathering detailed information about testing impacts on instructional time, so that school administrators could identify strategies to mitigate some of those impacts by changing testing schedules, etc.
- expanding the PRMCares program to strengthen our connection to our community and the world by helping provide for the needs of others.
- complementing existing parent education events

with a new online parent Montessori resource library with videos and articles.

- introducing incoming parents to Montessori learning by hosting them for a half-day participatory learning session.
- enhancing our ability to gather more detailed and actionable feedback from staff and from parents.
- partnering with parents and staff at other CMS Montessori schools to share best ideas on matters of common interest across the system.
- collaborating with Montessori advocacy group to better inform CMS senior staff and board about Montessori approach, and needs of the CMS Montessori community.

Our work will continue next year. If you want to hear more, come join one of our meetings, which are all open to the whole PRM school community. The last scheduled one for this school year is **Friday, May 16, at 7:30 a.m. in the Band Room.**

Green Marathon beats its goals

April 4's Green Marathon was an all-around fantastic experience! Our goals this year were very high – raise \$20,000 with a donation from all 50 states, and boy did we knock it out of the park! We raised \$24,271 and received donations from all 50 states. The entire school got excited about the event, which included lessons in the classroom about math related to fundraising and geography, with regular trips to the map in the hallway to track progress. A very special thanks to the Dehority family, as their friends and family generated donations from 18 states alone!

The day of the event was so much fun. Each class came out dressed in their Green Marathon T-shirts ready to do their best. As the day heated up no one showed any signs of backing down from the challenge. The children, staff and volunteers showed incredible enthusiasm and dedication. One person in particular went above and beyond in the enthusiasm department – Coach Strait! In his glorious green wig he introduced, encouraged and tracked laps for each and every classroom. He made sure everyone was having fun.

In the end the entire event was a great success. There is no way we could have accomplished our goals without the help of the more than 60 volunteers who helped plan and execute the campaign and the event. Our Park Road staff and families are unlike any other and there just aren't enough accolades for them. Thank you to everyone who supported this and we look forward to doing it again next time.

– *Dianna Byers and Traci Andrews, Co-Chairs, Green Marathon Campaign*

