

MONTESSORI HOUSE NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2009

"Welcome Back"

Welcome Back! As we leave our summer activities and schedule behind, we embrace the beginning of the fall 2009 school year at MHFC. We happily welcome back our returning families and students, and extend a special welcome to the many new families who have joined over the summer and who are joining us for the 2009-10 academic school year.

We are looking forward to getting back to our academic school year schedules, parent education, celebrations, cultural traditions and most importantly, socializing, sharing and enjoying the many wonderful families at our school.

We would like to thank the families and staff at Montessori House for their support and participation in the Parent Orientation and transition to the first day of the school year. The first week of school was exciting and VERY SMOOTH and enjoyable for us all.

If you did miss Parent Orientation, and do not see a 2009 Parent Handbook in your family folder, please leave a note for your child's teacher to give you the new school year information.

School News

The school announced this summer that the AMS headquarters in New York has granted MHFC Full Membership status, in recognition of each classroom having a teacher trained from a recognized MACTE training center. There are only 5 schools in the entire Houston area that have this level of AMS school membership.

Doing just what comes naturally

Did you know that not only our families, but our teachers, come from many places on our planet and as a result we have a natural melting pot of cultures and languages. The predominate second language in the school is Spanish. We have 8 teachers whose mother tongue is Spanish, so we are asking those teachers to speak ONLY Spanish in their classrooms. What a nice use of one of the school's "Natural Resources"!

Drive-Thru Etiquette, Child Safety and Fire Marshall Regulations

- Drive-through times are 8:30 to 8:45 for morning arrival, 11:30 and 12:00 for half day dismissals and 2:30—2:45 for afternoon dismissal. Anyone bringing or picking up children during these times should use the drive-through for the safety of everyone. If you wish to walk your child into or out of school, you may come just before or just after drive-through.
- We will soon have our parking lot re-stripped (thanks to the parents who offered this suggestion at the parent orientation). From now on, enter the school from Mason Road which will have ONE-WAY arrows. Follow the arrows to exit onto Lakemont Bend.
- Do not let your child exit your car and/or walk to the front door by himself. Yes, he knows the way, but it is not safe. Please wait until a staff member takes your child's hand or, if it's after drive-through, park your car and walk your child into the lobby.
- Classes start at 8:30. Please say your goodbyes either in your car at drive-through or in the front lobby. Our staff is here to help any child who needs assistance walking to their classroom.
- Final gentle warning: Do not ever leave your car unlocked/running while you deliver a child into school, especially if there is a child still in the car.
- Except for drive-through times, the fire lane in front of the school entrance must be left clear for emergency vehicles at all times.. All fire lanes will be re-painted soon. We will use traffic cones as visual reminders. Do not park at school entrance at any time. Please use parking lot and if needed, along north/south driveway along the vacant lot.

Status of SACS accreditation:

We are advancing in our goal of obtaining national recognition of our school by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This group measures our school against objective criteria in all areas of school curriculum and organization. Ms. Barbara and Ms. Melissa will attend a September conference to help us on our final few months of the process. The school hosts a team of auditors mid year.

Whole family participation in the life of the school is one of the attributes of a thriving school and is a necessary component for both AMS and SACS accredited schools. If you do not already have a niche that connects you to your child's school life, please sign up for any of our volunteer opportunities.

Last year we established a Parent Board to help connect school and family for the enrichment of Montessori House children and its families. Aside from the obvious benefit of having a board where parents and staff are represented and work together to achieve common goals, this school board will also allow 2-way communication between Montessori House and its families. All families have a voice and will be represented by the parent board members. Working with our Parent Organization board, we want to share our Montessori philosophy, focus on the spirit of the child and offer support and opportunities for parents to meet, share and discuss issues that are important to them. Each year we invite parents to step forward and join the Parent Organization board. If you are interested or would like more information on the commitment we ask of you, please contact Pam at 281-239-3400 or www.pam@montessorihouseforchildren.com.

Montessori House Committees—Join now!

We have many committees at the school that you can volunteer on—Some require as few as 5 minutes a month. We can fit our needs with your time. Would you like to listen to a child read? Would you like to join our morning outdoor practical and plant seeds? Please email Margie at Margie@montessorihouseforchildren.com and she will find an opportunity that allows you to get involved, in an area that interests you.

Exciting "Green" Fundraising for Montessori Teachers continuing Education - Coming Soon

This soft fundraiser is for teacher conference funding. We have found a supplier of products that reflect the Montessori ideals and practices of "reduce, re-use, recycle". Hope you enjoy them.

Upcoming Events in September:

- **Mon, 9/7: SCHOOL CLOSED—Labor Day**
- **Thurs, 9/10: Welcome Coffee from 8:30-9:30am**
- **Friday, 9/11: Fall fundraiser "Greenraising" catalog sent home**
- **Thurs, 9/24: Parenting Roundtable-Positive Guidance from 6-7 pm**
- **Friday, 9/25: County Fair Day– Montessori Holiday– No school for 1/2 and extended day students**

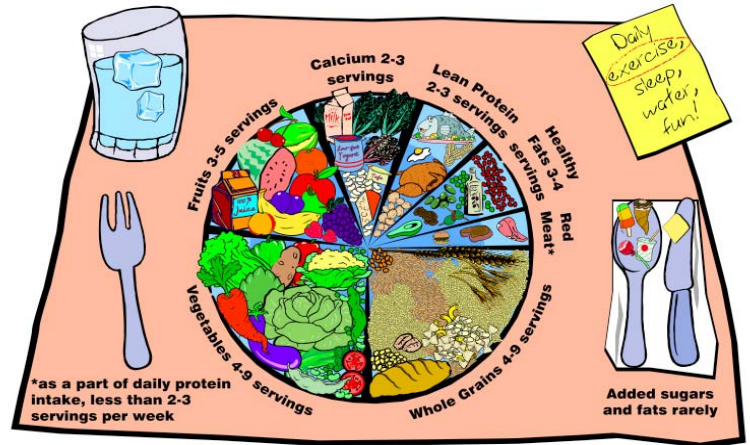
Upcoming Events in October:

- **Sat. Oct 3—Free Parent Workshop 9:30 to noon—The Parent/Child Connection through positive communication.**
- **Wed, 10/7 KVPAC performs at school for EC classes**
- **Thurs, 10/8: Parent Coffee 8:30-9:30am**
- **Friday, 10/9: Individual Portraits**
- **Thurs, 10/22: Parent Ed for EC classes—Early Childhood Curriculum Night 6-7pm**
- **Fri, 10/30: Fall Harvest Celebration for children—Early Release 11:30 & 12 noon**

Health & Wellness at MHFC

Flu season advice: We have both seasonal flu and H1N1 coming our way. Please talk with your child's pediatrician about his recommendations for vaccinating your family. MHFC strongly endorses a combination of FREQUENT HANDWASHING AND BUILDING UP THE BODY'S IMMUNITY LEVELS THROUGH GOOD NUTRITION. Good advice to follow is: when returning home after being at a public place (grocery store, mall etc) wash your hands as soon as you come home. It is the first thing we do when we come into the school, also.

Part of building natural immunity is eating well. MHFC is a low sugar facility because we want to offer only snacks and meals that help your child think, and perform well during the day. In support of this at home, there are many resources popping up these days to make your meal planning life easier. Check out Chef Ann Cooper's resources at www.lunchlessons.org where she provides a 'Kid's Meal Wheel' estimating the number of calories and servings for your kiddos on a fun little plate illustration. What I like about this guide is the inclusion of **water** (not mentioned in the USDA's My Pyramid guide) and the updated "milk" group to **calcium**, as many people are sensitive to dairy products (especially pasteurized), often resulting in digestive upset, allergies, and suppressed immune function. I also like that vegetables have equal standing with whole grains. We can all afford to add in more veggies at every meal!



If your children are not enrolled in our yummy hot catered lunch program offered by Chef Bennie (enrollment forms in the lobby) the following tips will help you prepare lunches:

Consider investing in a waste-free lunch box system- Check out Laptop Lunches at www.laptoplunches.com for a worthwhile re-useable container that runs around \$21- \$35. You'll be instilling sustainable living concepts in your kiddos and besides, kids love the little sectioned out containers- they just might be inspired to eat a broccoli tree or two out of them! There are loads of fun lunch ideas, complete with pictures at: http://www.flickr.com/photos/bento_jane/tags/laptoplunchbox/ OR, SnackTaxis (some of these may still be available at MHFC-proceeds benefit our MHFC scholarship fund-ask front desk for more details) <http://snacktaxi.com/> and Lunch in a Box <http://lunchinabox.net/>

Pack your protein- I know its easy to make PB & J, but there's more to protein than peanut butter! Add a little variety into your sandwiches with an easy chicken, tuna or egg salad. Even a boiled egg makes a fun breakfast, lunch or dinner addition. Diced turkey or grilled chicken is a quick way to get that protein too. Transform any sandwich into a fun wrap with whole wheat or sprouted grain tortillas. Your kiddo might also like hummus dip (a Mediterranean delicacy made of blended chick peas) with veggies or pita bread. Avocados are packed with protein and healthy fats- send slices or mashed, homemade guacamole as a fun dip for corn chips or veggies. Mmmmm-great for after-school snack attacks!

Prep ahead of time- Chop veggies as soon as you get home from the grocery store, make a simple chicken or bean salad for ready-to-grab healthy protein, cook rice in bulk and re-use in combination with sautéed veggies and chicken or even a rice pudding for a nutrient-dense dessert. Creating a meal planning binder is a great way to keep track of ideas that work and plan ahead for stress-free meals. For more great info on Meal Planning, see Sugar Land mom Brenda Thompson's blog at <http://mealplanningmagic.blogspot.com/>

Montessori House for Children seeks to encourage healthy families with practical ideas and answers to your questions about what to feed your family (and yourself), as well as effective ways to release stress and nourish your body with classes, individual consultations and valuable resources. Brandie Trigger, Licensed Massage Therapist, Labor Doula and Nutritionist is available for the following wellness services for your family:

"Kitchen Clean-Outs" to create systems that work for your family and discover what has been lurking in your pantry and refrigerator that may be sabotaging your health. \$50/hour

Family cooking classes in your own kitchen- based on your family's needs \$50/hour

Grocery Store tours- private tour \$75 per person/family or group tour \$40 per person (limit 4) Tours held at Whole Foods, Central Market or HEB.

Massage Therapy and Bodywork- 30 minutes \$30/adult \$20/child 60 minutes \$70 90 minutes \$95

Please contact Brandie Trigger directly to sign up for any of these events or services at 512.695.3456 or brandie@nourishyourfamily.com

Connecting Communication

~ the highly acclaimed process for creating rich and powerful relationships ~



FREE
WORKSHOP
Saturday,
October 3
9:30am to NOON

Sponsor & host:
**Montessori House for
Children**

**20625 Lakemont Bend Lane
Richmond, TX 77407
(281) 239-3400**

Pre-registration by email

most appreciated:

barb@montessorihouseforchildren.com

Connecting Communication is a way of speaking, listening, and thinking that promotes natural compassion and a desire to serve life in every human being; based on the work of Marshall Rosenberg, PhD. **Discover how to:**

- **Have respectful and productive conversations with your children, spouse, colleagues, --everyone!**
- **Inspire cooperation and put an end to power struggles.**
- **Be heard the way you want to be?**

"I believe the principles and techniques of Nonviolent CommunicationSM can literally change the world, but more importantly, they can change the quality of your life with your spouse, your children, your neighbors, your coworkers and everyone else you interact with. I cannot recommend it highly enough."

- Jack Canfield, author, *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series

To learn more, visit www.nonviolentcommunication.com



BREN HARDT, a teacher and community advocate for children, serves on The Compassionate Communication Committee, part of The Decade of Nonviolence – Houston, and is becoming a certified trainer with The Center for Nonviolent Communication, www.cnvc.org. More about Bren at www.HoustonNVC.org.

"Bren combines deep knowledge of her subject with warmth and passion for sharing NVC. I would recommend her classes to anyone and everyone hoping to improve their ability to connect with themselves and others in a compassionate way!" – Syrrus Powell, Houston