



WATERDOWN MONTESSORI SCHOOL  
1921 SNAKE ROAD, BURLINGTON L7P 4Y2  
[www.waterdownmontessori.com](http://www.waterdownmontessori.com)

## NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2009

### From the Principal's Desk

For a month containing only a few weeks of school, there is so much going on! The festivities started with the Flamborough Santa Claus parade last Saturday. We are indebted to **Nancy and Sam** and **Bot Construction** for their tremendous contributions! Details are reported elsewhere in the newsletter.



Our **Pancake Breakfast with Santa** is scheduled for this Saturday. Santa has promised to make time to visit, so we hope to see many of you there! Please check the sign up sheet; we need a few more volunteers to help out.

The **S** family provided a perfect raffle prize: a 22 pound turkey!! Raffle tickets will be on sale this week and on Saturday.



The sign up sheet for the Festive Food Fair (Tuesday, December 14) is posted in the hallway, and the children are busy rehearsing for the December concert.



Profiles for the Children's Aid families we are supporting this year are detailed elsewhere in this newsletter.



Every year the school supports several charities, which are chosen for different reasons. One of our mandates last year was to find a charity that had greater relevance for children, fewer "gimmicks" (flashy prizes for the amount of money raised, for example), and reduced or eliminated the onus on parents to canvass family and friends for funds.

We found it! Last year's campaign was very well received, and so we decided to once again support



**Sleeping Children  
Around the World!**

Sleeping Children Around the World (or "SCAW") raises funds to provide bedkits to the neediest of children in underdeveloped and developing countries.

There are at least two compelling reasons for choosing this charity for our school to support. One is that 100% of every donor dollar reaches a child; because it is run by volunteers, there is **absolutely zero overhead**. The second reason is that we felt it was a cause every child could relate to at some level. Any child can imagine what it would be like to sleep on bare ground with no bed, no covers, and no pyjamas.

Each class has been busy with their own projects. Crafts and baked goods were on display in the hallway during parent teacher interviews last week. Many were sold, but there are still some available for purchase. In addition, the elementary class has been taking orders for bread for the past several weeks. When the last batch is baked, they will have made 54 loaves of bread in all!

We thank you for supporting the children in their endeavours. Last year the children earned enough money to purchase TEN bedkits!

The Jacques family lent us a bedkit, and each class had a chance to examine its contents. Pictures of the bedkit and the children working on their projects are posted in the hallway.



The **S** family deserves special mention. **Cole** and **Sam** helped their mum make cupcakes, chocolate suckers, popcorn and cookies, and even prepared selections of veggies as a healthy alternative. They took their wares into Mom's work Monday morning, where Cole stood up before 18 adults and spoke to them about SCAW. The boys brought in \$145.00...enough for FOUR bedkits, with a bit left over. Well done!!!



On behalf of the school community, I would like to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you a happy holiday. May you enjoy the time with family and friends.

*Sue Reid-Kulpaka*  
Principal

## AGM 2009

The Annual General Meeting was held on November 10. There was a very small turnout again this year. We would like to thank those of you who came, for the lively and fruitful discussion. A copy of the minutes is posted on the community bulletin board. We have a strong board, made up of energetic members ready to move forward with new ideas. The board welcomes new members **Amanda** and **Tony** who will fill the two remaining positions. I look forward to another exciting and productive year.



## December Birthdays

Nicholas will be 5 on December 7.  
Sam will be 4 on December 8.  
Meagan will be 8 on December 15.  
Brayden will be 4 on December 23.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL OF YOU!

## *WMS Coffee Club*

Our first Coffee Club was a great success! 10 parents/caregivers and 5 young children gathered in the Extended Care Room for some coffee and treats, and the opportunity to discuss some of our current events and share some new ideas. A great suggestion came from Soo for a Mom-to-Mom sale in the spring! Madame Sue joined us for coffee and answered some questions regarding the relocation of our school. Thank you to everyone who attended! We look forward to an even greater response at our next Coffee Club to be held on

**December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at 9:00.**

Our December host will be Janice, parent of Cole and Sam in Ms Wyn's class. Hope to see you there!

*Mary Ann*  
*November Coffee Club Host*

## Christmas Concert

This year's concert will take place on **Tuesday, December 15** in the morning, beginning at approximately 9:30am. Children should arrive at school as usual.

Unfortunately, because "it's a different flu season" Notre Dame decided that we would not be permitted to use their stage this year. We debated what to do, but in the end agreed to hold the concert in our gym. This is not ideal, but we have been busy working out the logistics. We will have a sound system, and children will play their instruments standing up rather than sitting on the floor. Students will stay in their classrooms until it is their turn to perform. (They will have a chance to see what everyone else is doing the day before the concert, at our "dress rehearsal".)

Please be considerate; toddlers are probably best left in the care of someone else for the morning. If you do bring younger siblings, we would ask that you take them outside should they become too restless. The children have all worked hard for this performance, and deserve the full attention of the audience. We know that grandparents often wish to come, and don't want to turn anyone away. We would like to accommodate everyone who would like to attend, but we **MUST** have a good idea of numbers.

**PLEASE LET THE OFFICE KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE YOUR FAMILY WOULD LIKE TO BRING!**

After the concert, the students will be asked to return to their classrooms for a snack. Families are invited to go to the Extended Care room to browse the Festive Food Fair. When you are ready to leave, please let your child's teacher know. It is a regular school day, but you are welcome to take your full day child/children with you should you wish. Please note that the last day of school, (December 16), *is* a half day. Pick up time for *all* students is 11:45 on that day.

**Sleeping Children Around the World (SCAW)** is a charitable organization, founded in 1970 by Murray and Margaret Dryden, headquartered in Toronto, Canada, providing bedkits to children in developing countries. In return for each \$35 CAD donation, SCAW provides a child with a kit consisting of a mat or mattress, pillow, bed sheet, blanket, mosquito net (if required), clothes outfit, towel and school supplies. The kits are created in the country where they are to be distributed. This helps reduce transportation and material costs as well as providing an economic benefit to the targeted area. The organization reports that since 1970, bed kits have been provided to 900 000 children at a cost of \$20 million CAD.

All charitable contributions go directly to purchasing the bedkits. The expenses connected to the volunteers who distribute the bedkits are paid by each volunteer. Administrative costs including the sole paid employee are paid from a legacy fund set up by Murray Dryden specifically to defray the costs of administration and to ensure that all money donated goes towards purchasing the bed kits. There is no promotional budget as advertising is only by word of mouth.

## Ms. Wyn's Yoga is Returning!

Ms. Wyn will be offering her after school yoga classes again, starting mid-January, 2010 on Mondays. This time the classes will be open to ALL CASA STUDENTS. Registration forms will be available shortly. Let the office or Ms. Wyn know if you are interested. Thank you.

In triplicate, please! ☺

Please take a few minutes to go through the forms attached to this newsletter and return them quickly so that we can be organized and ready for 2010!

*Please fill out a separate lunch form for each child in your family. It will take you a few extra minutes, but it will help us tremendously with organization. Thank you.*

## FESTIVE FOOD FAIR

Once again, our Festive Food Fair will be held on the day of the concert; December 15<sup>th</sup>. This year it will be set up in the Extended Care room.

Please, please if at all possible bring in your **packaged and priced** baked goods to the school the day before, on Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. (**PLEASE** put prices on yourself! It is a tremendous help to those who will be setting up.) The sign up sheet is quickly getting filled up – but we still need more! Also, we will need helpers to man the bake tables after the concert.

Thank you again to all of you who bake and help us out on that day.

## Classroom Etiquette Reminder

Please stay outside your child's classroom at dismissal times. The teachers will send your child out to you when he/she is ready. If you are in a particular hurry, let a teacher or the office know, and we will act accordingly. Thank you.

## Report on the Santa Claus Parade 2009

What's more exciting than the Flamborough Santa Claus Parade on a November Saturday night? 30,000 people come from *all over* to attend this fantastic night-time event. Having a WMS float in the parade puts us in the forefront of the Waterdown-area schools. Like always, we were so lucky with the weather. Many thanks go towards making our Flintstones themed float a success. Thank you to everyone that helped in this year's parade.

### Volunteers Set-up:

1. Bot Construction staff
2. Johnny, the driver
3. Herb, the carpenter that hand-made the Flinstones car
4. Sam
5. Michael
6. Mike
7. Trevor
8. Paul

### Families that rode on the float:

1. Trevor and Jessica
2. Mary Ann & Eddie, and Eddie's friend Ashley
3. Sue Reid-Kulpaka
4. Steven & Isla
5. Paul & Nicholas
6. Grandpa & Nathan
7. Mike, Tracy & Meagan
8. Sam, Nancy, Victor & Sophia

Nancy  
WMS float Chairperson  
November 28, 2009

## Madame Sue adds...

What a perfect night for a parade! It must have been one of the warmest ones on record. As I was leaving the parking lot afterwards, I was greeted by someone whose children used to attend the school. (Her two older boys had been marching with the Flamborough Centre band – they are now both as tall as I am!) She said she had been admiring our float: “It’s come a long way since we used my husband’s trailer, hasn’t it?”

It made me stop and realize how extremely fortunate we are with our parents, something that we sometimes take for granted. For years now, the **M** family has not only provided us with a flatbed truck and driver, but has also brought the float professionally prepared to the parade grounds, needing only a few final touches...attaching lights, and the WMS banners, for instance. Their family has ridden on the float every single year, asking nothing in return but that others join them.

If you haven't done so already, take a few moments to look at the pictures in the digital picture frame in the hallway, or look in the “recent events” section of our website.

Thank you, Nancy and Sam!  
And thanks too, to Sophia, and to Victor, who was such a help both setting up and packing up!

Sue Reid-Kulpaka

*Profiles of the  
Children's Aid Families  
WMS is supporting this Christmas*



As we said last month, the Children's Aid is in desperate need of donations for teenagers. In addition, though, we have descriptions of two families needing help:

1. A mother and two boys, ages 10 and 13. They left an abusive home for a shelter. They have recently moved into housing, and have nothing.
2. The second family consists of a mother and father and three girls, ages 5, 12 and 14. The father is on disability, and the mother recently lost her job. The family is in counselling to try to help them through.
3. There is an ongoing (year round) need for emergency supplies for newborns: blankets, clothes, diapers etc. The Children's Aid usually has items in reserve, but at the moment has next to nothing.

These boots are made for walking...

Please remember to send warm outdoor clothing to school with your child. We go outside every day after lunch, all winter long!  
We are Canadians!

Remember also if possible to leave a pair of indoor shoes at school, and once again,

**LABEL ALL YOUR CHILD'S  
BELONGINGS...BOOTS, MITTS,  
HATS...Thank you!**

## FOLLOW THE CHILD

Last month I had the pleasure of attending a workshop at the Canadian Association for Montessori Teachers conference called, *Follow Their Lead*. It was an interactive workshop where we were able to enter the world of the child for a brief span of time. We spent time being detectives, trying to determine who the leader of the game was. We were explorers of nature as we searched the garden for something that compelled us, which we were to share in silence and wonder. All the participants were choir members, with a conductor leading us, as we whispered or chanted, 'I am a (adjective) .....', using the noun of the item of nature we found. For myself, as it happened, 'I am a cool daddy-long-legs spider.'

The most exciting part was enacting the myth of Isis and Osiris, who was torn apart by Seth. I jumped at the chance to play Isis and attempt to put all of the parts of Osiris together, while trying to stay out of a blindfolded Seth's reach - a more challenging task than it might first appear. We were contained within a circle and all of Osiris' parts (not to fear, it was stuffed doll parts) had bells attached. Needless to say, that while I accomplished the task, I was certainly breathless at the end.

As I write this article, it occurs to me that these exercises may seem somewhat juvenile; but when we stop to consider that the majority of these activities came from the children themselves, often being created spontaneously, one can appreciate the idea of 'Follow their Lead'. This allows for much of the learning to come from their interests, excitement and inspiration.

Included is an article written by the facilitator, Wendy Agnew. I hope you enjoy it and find inspiration of your own.

Peace and blessings! Ms. Wyn

## Elementary News

The first piece of work below comes from the third year students' novel study Owls in the Family.



- Anissa

The remaining pictures are from an art lesson a few weeks ago. Mrs. Barbara read a story to the class called "The Leaf Man", which had been illustrated using photographs of arrangements of leaves. The children discussed the story and studied the illustrations, then went outside to gather their own collection of leaves, which they then arranged to make their own unique leaf pictures. Enjoy!

If you look under "downloadables" on our website, you will see them in full colour – glorious!



Zoey



Meagan



Hannah



Anissa



Kiveli



Matteen





Max



Isla



Sophia

### Casa French News

What a busy fall we have had in French class. The older children are always so enthusiastic and ready to learn more language. The use of simple directions: “Ferme la porte, on s’en va” for example, provides ease and is very popular since the children love to show that they understand what has been said.

The younger groups have enjoyed the use of puppets to enhance the learning of new words as well as the sounds of the letters of the alphabet. All the age groups have been doing activities that require repetition, recall and much concentration such as exercises that use pictures, story sequence and matching games. Please feel free to pick up a copy of the November/December program, which is available in the French room.

Madame Grace

### Elementary French

Sometime in November, thoughts turn to the Christmas concert. I often, though not always, consult the students as to their preferences; would they like to put on a play? Sing a song? Learn a poem? Do they want to participate at all?

This year the vote was almost unanimous; they would sing a song. But they did not like any of the songs I suggested. “Couldn’t we sing “On N’Achète Pas””? they asked. This was a song we had learned earlier in the year, with a great tune, that everyone liked. I pointed out that it wasn’t exactly seasonal...but then suggested that perhaps we could write new words to make it so.

And so we did. The children had to come up with things they might ask for – either for Christmas, or at other times, such as birthdays. The stipulation was that they had to think of words they could say in French. Following the general pattern of the original song, they first had to name something they *didn’t* want, because it doesn’t exist, (such as a cat that flies) and then change it to something that *does* exist (a cat that sleeps). With a little prompting, they came up with a list of seven items. I added the ending (with just a *hint* of a moral lesson), and voilà! ...an original song for the concert. We hope you will enjoy hearing it as much as we enjoyed creating it.

Madame Sue

## "Follow-ship" by Wendy Agnew

We North Americans tend to be a leadership-oriented culture. 'Follow-ship' is rarely trumpeted and I suppose that's because the act of following has led humanity into several unpleasant troughs. Perhaps it's the dialectic between leading and following that begs to be fleshed out in my mind. As a Montessori educator, I experience my keenest moments when I abdicate pinnacles of planning and crawl into the maze of child quest. But I am still amazed – coming out of those experiences – to find a life clogged by leading.

Maria Montessori, in *Education and Peace*, articulated a bold humility; "When I am with children, I am a nobody, and the greatest privilege I have when I approach them is to forget that I even exist, for this has enabled me to see things that one would miss if one were a somebody – little things, simple but very precious truths." (Clio, 2002, 85)

Writing this article, and preparing for this conference, and living in these tenuous times, I wonder; what fosters a humility that allows us to follow tender green shoots of inquiry into a world of sense. Again, I look to Montessori, and find an invitation to immerse the collective self in a robust sense of the world. That, "All nature, in a word, is replete with poetry." (Montessori, *The Secret of Childhood*, Fides, 1966, 200). And I think, perhaps, it is that poetry that helps manifest the magic between leading and following. I interpret Montessori's humility as an expansion of self into mystery of other. Her vision of Cosmic Education still fills me with awe. Perhaps it's a radical shift from

mechanism to muse, from master to mentor, that creates a wrinkle in the expected. One of my children once told me, "We love to go to the forest because it's alive and when we're in it, we feel alive." So we go there, and begin to discover relationships – relationships I would not have expected:

As a casa directress, my full day children nudged me to live historical scenarios on the bosom of a prairie field near our school. We would do three-hour improvisations (a work-cycle of sorts) exploring roles of prehistoric tribes, making camps, fashioning jewelry from grass, simulating fishing trips and hunting expeditions, inventing language and ritualizing a relationship with death. These children (aged five and six) touched the inception of mathematics as they counted out precious stones as a way of recording how many gopher holes graced our territory. The stone became a standard of measurement for trees, feet, fingers... The thrown stone became an approximation of distance and our classroom materials took on new meaning, as refinements of the children's primal innovations.

From Casa to Junior High, the students are consistent in their desire to follow the muse of that blue-green mentor – our natural earth.

I follow the winding path of the children's discovery and arrive at the edge of wonder again and again. We begin a long-term liaison with a local farm and call it Project Centaur. We explore the world of Shakespeare

on the banks of an urban stream and create a movie. We simulate vision quests and masks to create visual literacies with place. We transcribe our visions of nature on walls from Mozambique to the University of Toronto. I abdicate the classroom for nature-framed teacher training in Iran.

In honoring nature/culture and to mitigate the ubiquitous consumerism that afflicts 'first-world' society we might find a way to follow our hearts and perhaps ignore temptations to swallow our planet.



Project Centaur – Kitchener 2007



The Tempest and Mural 2009



Graduation in the Forest – Tehran 2008

PLEASE RETURN THESE FORMS!

Or, send us an email: [wms@bellnet.ca](mailto:wms@bellnet.ca)

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I will be attending the Christmas concert on Tuesday, December 15, and will be bringing a total of \_\_\_\_\_ people.

I am interested in having my **Casa** child / children \_\_\_\_\_ take part in Yoga lessons after school on Mondays, starting in January.



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**Donna Redl** is excited to bring **CREATIVWORKS Art Programming** to Waterdown, beginning Jan. 5, 2010 at the Waterdown Montessori School, 1921 Snake Road.

Students will have the opportunity to learn and discover ART through age appropriate themes, using a variety of materials and techniques. New artists will be amazed by the special Artworks they will create.

The **CREATIVWORKS Arts Program** will offer 3 terms in the year, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> term (winter term) beginning Jan. 5 to March 23. The 1 ½ hr. classes will be available Tues. and Thurs. for separate classes for students from grade (1-4), (5-8), (9-12). Class size will be kept to a minimum, ranging from 6-12 students per class. Each term is \$225.00 which includes all art materials.

Parents wanting more information on the program or to register their children can contact :  
Donna Redl @ 905-689-1992 or [creativework.artex@gmail.com](mailto:creativework.artex@gmail.com)  
Sue Reid-Kulpaka @ Montessori School, 905-689-2171

I am interested in **CREATIVWORKS Art Programming**, and would like more information. \_\_\_\_\_