



Everyday Matters

A Publication of Weinacker's Montessori School

Fall 2007

Congratulations NAMC Graduates!

by Ellen Knodel - Hillcrest

Six of Weinacker's Montessori School's teachers have recently completed their North American Montessori Center (NAMC) training. This program gives our teachers a chance to further their education, earning a Montessori diploma without leaving their families or their students.



Pictured from left to right, from top: Olena, Nancy, Stephanie, Cindy, Brandi and Dedra.

Olena Kochurova, Dedra Harris, and Cindy Hoobler completed the Infant/Toddler Diploma program (Birth-3 years). This program consists of six areas of

development: cognitive, motor, sensory, language, social and practical life. They also expanded their knowledge in the Montessori Method, Child growth and development, establishing a proper Montessori environment and more effectively communicating with young children.

Brandi Rutledge, Nancy Tyrrell, and Stephanie Satterfield completed the Montessori Preschool/Kindergarten Diploma program. The components of this training include Montessori Theory and Enrichment, Math, Language, Sensorial, Practical Life, Science, Music and Culture. These were just a few of the areas the teachers explored during their training.

All of these teachers have completed 9 months of intense training. During this time the teachers were required to participate in 18 four-hour curriculum meetings, 36 site visits by Curriculum/Training Coordinator, Maryann Byrne, 540 classroom hours (180 days of documented classroom teaching), 6 observations and 3 on-site personal observations. They were also required to complete 3 off-site observations of other Montessori Classrooms in "action."

To finish out the training for this year each teacher completed a synthesis project. These synthesis projects included teacher-made

See "NAMC Grads" on back page

In this Issue...

NAMC Grads 1

WMS Receives
OSR Grants 2

Benefits of Gardening
When Young 2

Infants & Toddlers . 3

Importance of
Group Time 3

Our Students,
Your Children 4

Did You Know 4

WeinackersMontessori.com

The Benefits of Gardening When Young

by Brandi Rutledge and Tracey Lynne Jeffery - Daphne

The most important thing you will raise in your garden will be a young child's awareness of the world around him and how his actions affect the environment. Like many schools across the country Weinacker's Montessori School of Daphne is making room for wildlife in their schoolyard. Schoolyard habitats are not a new idea, but rather a product of the past and present. Learning and teaching in the outdoors has always been valued and embraced by quality early childhood education programs, and employing wildlife management principles in an effort to conserve habitat is not revolutionary.

The combination of these two driving forces, however, leads to a rather unique project implemented within school communities— schoolyard habitats. Creating a suitable habitat for wildlife by providing the four essential habitat components—food, water, cover and a place to raise young—on school grounds allows students, teachers, and community members to take action for both wildlife and students.



Through the use of our backyard habitat students will benefit by experiencing tangible learning through their senses (visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic) which enhances all of the areas of the curriculum from Science to Math to Social Studies.

Getting the Schoolyard Habitat Started

More than just plants grow out of helping a child tend a garden. Gardening gives children a sense of responsibility and accomplishment while it enables them to learn about the environment. It also helps them learn about the importance of native plants and wildlife habitat.

Gardening with children can be an educational, safe and enjoyable experience for all. The following are some ideas to help support your child's developing interests in gardening and the environment in which we live:

- *Visit places where plants thrive*, such as nurseries, arboretums or your neighbor's flower garden. Talk with children about sun, soil and water requirements for healthy vegetation.
- *Cultivate curiosity* by taking note of your own backyard treasures—existing birds, bees and blossoms.
- *Sow fast-germinating seeds* or introduce transplants that are quick to flower or fruit so eager children can quickly see the results of their labor.

WMS Awarded Two Pre-K Grants

by *Stephanie Satterfield* - Bay Minette

The Alabama Office of School Readiness has selected high-quality programs in each county to act as pilot sites for a statewide school readiness program. It is designed to offer a quality learning program to prepare four year-olds for further learning.

WMS has been selected as the grant recipient for the Office of School Readiness (OSR) preschool site in both Baldwin County (Bay Minette) and Mobile County (Tillman's Corner) for the 2007-2008 school year. This prestigious grant is awarded to applicants in each county in Alabama who have exhibited high quality programs, and helps fund a classroom of eighteen children and two teachers.

Open to all four year-olds, the OSR Pre-K classroom is an academic-based program designed to provide an early learning experience for children throughout Alabama. The school year starts September 4 and runs through May 23, 2008. Classes are from 8:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. each day. The requirements for admission are that each child be four years old on or before September 1, 2007, and that he/she be a resident of Alabama. Selection is made by lottery.

Our Infants & Toddlers

by Dedra Harris - Midtown

In order for children to learn effectively at WMS, we provide adequate time and space for children in a quiet environment so that they can concentrate on activities. We encourage infants to move freely throughout the environment and allow them to be placed in classroom settings where they can learn from younger toddlers.

A defined area is available for non-mobile infants, tucked away from the busy traffic of mobile infants. We allow tummy time and encourage movement by presenting materials to entice the infant to roll over and/or reach for an object. Non-mobile infants are held while they are being fed.

Eating is also a special time for our mobile infants and toddlers. Teachers eat with the children to model appropriate behavior and table manners. Children learn to drink from cups very quickly as sippy cups are strongly discouraged in all our infant/toddler classrooms. The real benefit to the child comes as he/she learns that they can hold and drink from a cup just like you and me.

Infants and toddlers are encouraged to develop motor skills and independence. They are never restrained or restricted of movement. High chairs and infant swings are not used in our Montessori schools as they are restrictive and place the child in an unnatural position, i.e., one in which he/she may not be able to get into and out of on their own.

We also provide the children with an opportunity to

learn skills that they will use throughout their lives. Practical Life skills are reinforced daily. These skills consist of a number of activities such as eating with utensils, squeezing a sponge or cloth, nose-wiping, pouring, drinking out of a cup, cleaning tables, unrolling and rolling a mat, sweeping and mopping, using a cookie cutter, serving food, hand washing, and many more.



Infants and toddlers are introduced to other activities by presentation and repetition, that is, by seeing and doing. The child has access to a wide variety of activities located on low shelves so that he/she can reach them. Children choose their own work and do the activities whenever they desire. They are

exposed to art, music and language as well as social, cognitive, sensory-motor and practical life activities on a daily basis.

We provide ever-changing opportunities for learning with a twelve-month curriculum complemented by monthly themes that start with focusing the child's attention on the self in the fall and working outward into the world, including the community and all forms of life as the months progress. The reward to infants and toddlers enrolled at Weinacker's Montessori Schools are endless!

The Importance of Group Time at WMS

by Maryann Byrne - Training Coordinator

Why do we require children to be at school by 8:30 am each day? The basic reason is that it benefits your child. In Montessori classrooms we start each day with a morning group time. This is the most important time of the day for children in early education. During this group children learn all they need to know for the work period that follows. Teachers instruct the children on ground rules, so they know what is expected. They give presentations of new learning materials, so the children know how to use them. And the children learn about time through the use of the calendar.

When a child arrives late not only does he miss all of this vital information, he also causes a distraction for those children who have arrived in time. We all know that it does not take much to draw a child's attention away, so be please be considerate of the class and help us to educate your children.

We want each child to receive all the benefits our program has to offer. The morning group and the work period that follows are the most important part of the day. Please be sure your child is there in time to receive all the benefits that are available from attending Weinacker's.

Our Students, Your Children

by Lisa Seay - Parent, Tillman's Corner

My child, William, is four years-old. He attends Weinacker's Montessori School because of their excellent curriculum and teaching methods. The teachers allow for individuality and independence. It's more structured than a traditional childcare. They make a special effort to teach children skills they need to be self-reliant at school and in the world.

My child's Math, Language and Science knowledge has greatly improved since he started at Weinacker's. I have also noticed an improvement in his social skills and manners.

I'm so glad we chose Weinacker's for our child because we have seen him grow so much.

NAMC Grads *continued from front page*

materials for each area of the Montessori classroom. Each teacher chose a theme that that would encompass the synthesis project. This is a list of the teachers and the themes they chose for their synthesis projects:

Olena Kochurova	Transportation
Brandi Rutledge	Insects
Dedra Harris	Ocean Life
Cindy Hoobler	Dinosaurs
Nancy Tyrrell	Birds
Stephanie Satterfield	Ocean Life

Each of these teachers deserves a pat on the back for

a job well done! Ms. Maryann graciously invited the graduating teachers to her bay house to present their synthesis projects and to celebrate the completion of their training. A wonderful time was had by all as the teachers reminisced about what they have accomplished and learned over the last nine months. During this event Ms. Dana presented the teachers their NAMC Diplomas.

We would like to thank all the parents and fellow staff members for being so supportive of our teachers during their training. And we look forward to a new group of teachers experiencing this life-changing training this year!

Did You Know?

The first Montessori school, Casa dei Bambini, was founded on January 6, 1907, in Rome, Italy.

Still considered a progressive educational philosophy it is beginning its second century this year. Happy Centennial, Montessori Method!



Weinacker's Montessori School
227 Hillcrest Road
Mobile, AL 36608

With locations in:

**West Mobile
Midtown
Tillman's Corner
Daphne
Bay Minette**