Dear Parents

Our community of learners has been busy recently participating in a number of school events.

**Celebrating Dr Maria Montessori’s Birthday**
We celebrated Dr Maria Montessori’s birthday with a special visit from the ‘philosopher’. She talked about the values of Montessori education that has been built on peace for social change.

“Montessori saw that children held within them something wonderful, something so special that it could be the key to changing the world. She saw that they were inherently good and that, if allowed to develop freely, they felt connected to everything and were naturally caring to each other and the world around them”. (Montessori Media Center)

Special thanks to Crispin Rapsey for her wise words!

Thank you to all the parents for sharing in our picnic lunch, the Gelato and the coffees!

**Silent Walk**
Thank you to the parents who participated in the ‘Silent Walk’ last Wednesday. The ‘Silent Walk’ is about walking through a Montessori environment in silence without touching or engaging with the children. The silence aspect created a feeling among the group of something important happening. It was so nice to see everybody really having a look at the children learning. We then sat outside for debrief and discuss what we saw and what it meant to us. It provided an opportunity to clarify and share.

From what they shared, parents noticed the size of things, the order, how attractive the materials are, checked for understanding, some discovering rooms in the school they’d never been in before (the Curriculum Resource Office). Their curiosity had been awakened!

**Incursions and Excursions**
Learning continues outside the classroom with school incursions and excursions. It is important for your child to be part of the wider learning community which is central to practical life. They have so much to learn about life and how to engage in the many opportunities it offers.

It was a pleasure meeting members of our Upper Primary community at the World Religious Feast held last Friday. Thank you to Candice for her kind invitation. This day was about sharing culture, demonstrating tolerance and developing understanding. Congratulations to the Upper Primary team for an outstanding incursion and to the parents and family members who attended to support the children in learning about diversity.

Upper Primary are at Rottnest Island for their school camp this week. We hope they have a wonderful trip and I look forward to hearing about their adventures.

**Professional Exchange**
A group of ten teachers from ‘BrainyBunch’ International Montessori School in Malaysia, visited Blue Gum Montessori School as part of a professional exchange. The teachers were briefed on the school and observed our classrooms at work. We discussed the differences and similarities in our schools and will continue our dialogue. This professional exchange provided an opportunity for us to celebrate diversity and learn about Montessori education in an international Muslim context.

**NAPLAN**
Congratulations to our students and teachers on another very successful NAPLAN cycle. We must remember that NAPLAN is about individual learning progress. It is most satisfying to see our students working to their potential. Every Year 3 and 5 student enrolled at BGMS sat the NAPLAN, and we recognise their individual learning achievements. It is important to note that huge gains are more likely in Year 3 as children are becoming literate. Middle Primary is a time of transition from sounding letters, words and learning to write sentences. In Mathematics, it is about shifting from ‘rote’ learning to understanding how numbers work e.g. moving from addition to subtraction and division.

Dr Maree Matthews
Principal
TRANSITION CLASS

Blue Gum Montessori School has a growing waiting list and high demand from families wishing to access a Montessori education for their children. Currently the structure of our Junior Primary classrooms facilitates a Montessori program for Pre-Kindergarten to Year 6. To assist children in making a successful transition into Junior Primary, we have commenced a transition program.

The Transition class is facilitated by our fully qualified Montessori 3-6 Teacher, Ms Lorna Kelly, and Education Assistant, Taryn Walford.

Hours of Attendance are Monday to Thursday, 12 noon to 3.00pm. We encourage new children to attend the program five days a week to ensure a routine is formed, resulting in the transition to school being a smooth and enjoyable experience.

Expression of interest
We invite enrolments for our Transition class. Priority, according to the criteria of access within the program guidelines, will be given to current students, siblings, three year old children on the current waiting list and the wider community. For Transition class bookings, please return the reply slip under, in hard copy to reception, or emailed to Lorna at transition@bluegummontessori.wa.edu.au

WATTLE NEWS

A farewell to Catherine Day (former Wattle Directress) who has been on maternity leave and has now resigned.

Dr Matthews would like to invite all Wattle parents and children to an afternoon tea to farewell Catherine on Tuesday, 13 October 2015 at 2.30pm in Wattle.

For catering purposes, please RSVP to admin@bluegummontessori.wa.edu.au by Friday, 9 October 2015.

BOOK WEEK—Transition Class with Lorna and Taryn
What has been happening in Melaleuca?

Well! What a busy few weeks we’ve had. Milla’s Mum, Nadia, and their dog Blue came to visit for News. Blue practised sitting, waiting and rolling over. He was very excited to see all the children! Thank you Milla, Nadia and Blue.

It was great to see so many families at Maria Montessori’s birthday celebration. If Maria Montessori were alive today, she would be 145 years old. During the week we had a go at making 145 with the golden beads. We also read ‘Our Peaceful Classroom’ and discussed how we can be peaceful every day. Sometimes it’s the little things that help encourage peace, such as looking after the places you know and love. After the picnic, the afternoon children went looking for any litter in the playground. There wasn’t much, but we did find a few gelato spoons. We’ve decided to wash them and reuse them with our light box, as they are lovely colours.

We’ve also been hard at work in the classroom writing, counting, matching, sorting, building, sharing and exploring. Thank you to Tate for sharing his poem about the zoology and botany puzzles. The words and illustrations are his own. Alison helped with the writing.

Finally, a very big Thank You to all the parents who came in to read their child’s favourite story for Book Week. It was lovely to have you visit!

“Little children from the moment they are weaned, are making their way toward independence.” Dr Maria Montessori
The Middle Primary children’s big day out to Piney Lakes was a wonderful learning experience.

The children learnt appropriate collection techniques for capturing invertebrates and frogs in their natural habitat. They were introduced to the study of these creatures through their classification.

The children were guided along the Bidi Katitjiny Aboriginal Women’s Trail by Marissa, a local Aboriginal woman, to discuss the Noongar six seasons, use of plants and animals and learn a song and dance after being adorned with ochre face paint.

Thank you to Amanda Blackburn, Tracy Kowatch, Uliya Gankande, Martin Albrecht, Eugenio Bini, Zeph Loke and Jenny Hanson who did a wonderful job supervising the children and support their learning.
Middle Primary News

EAGLE ROCK MY SCHOOL INCURSION - FOOTBALL CLINIC

The Middle Primary children had two visits from representatives of the West Coast Eagles, both of which were exciting and engaging learning experiences. In the first session the children discussed the practises that could lead to them achieving their dreams. The highlight was meeting Roc, the Eagles’ mascot. The second session was one when some footy skills were demonstrated to the children by Dylan Main, followed by the children practising these skills.

Investigating Mia Mias with Fiona Hook

The Middle Primary children have been learning about the history of shelter. They have been looking at how shelters were adapted to suit the needs of man and his changing environment. They had an opportunity to learn and build a Mia Mia, a traditional Noongar Aboriginal shelter, by working with an Aboriginal person and Fiona Hook, an archaeologist. All the students participated with great enthusiasm in exploring and building the Mia Mia. The Mia Mia will stay in our school playground for the children to use at play time. This will be an opportunity for them to keep the wonderful discussion and learning going on. The children are already discussing about ways to maintain and repair the Mia Mia.
Upper Primary News

Wildlife Incursion

Written by Candice Long and Grace Monaghan

Coolibah and Kurrajong had a visit from a dingo, a koala, a bobtail lizard, a German Shepard and two snakes. We enjoyed the experience of having these animals in the classroom. We got to hold a python around our necks. The dingo was an Alpine dingo and we learned that dingoes don’t bark.

They tried to get the dingo to howl by the German Shepard howling, but it did not succeed.

The koala was adorable and we all enjoyed having a pat.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE DAY

The Upper Primary students and staff invite all families to be at school at 9am next Monday, 21 September, to watch our ‘Peace Pole’ being erected in the school grounds to commemorate International Peace Day. The 3m pole will have four versions of ‘MAY PEACE PREVAIL UPON THE EARTH’ written in different languages, and will be decorated with messages of peace made by all classes. Maree will read a dedication and the children will be singing a song.

WE HOPE YOU ARE ABLE TO JOIN US ON THIS SPECIAL OCCASION
Cucina: Restaurant Day

Written by George Williamson, Conall Veitch and Alexander Doig.

We have been researching world religions this term. After learning about the various religions, we each chose a dish for that particular religions festivals or special holy days.

We had a brainstorm about the name of the restaurant ‘Cucina’ and designed the colours, menus and nametags. We then prepared the dishes ready for the day.

We invited one special guest and had to use our practical life skills to serve, take care of our guests, and clean up afterwards. We loved preparing the food, but the clean-up wasn’t so much fun!

We had a great time and it was very enjoyable.
General News

Book Week

Fun was had by all! The students and staff dressed as their favourite book character and some parents came into the classrooms to share a book with the students.
FATHER’S DAY BREAKFAST

What a fantastic success this was!

A very big thank you to all the students who invited their dads, grandfathers or other special member of their family to the breakfast. The children, although very excited, were on their best behaviour and thoroughly enjoyed showing all their hard work to their special guests.

Thank you to the staff, parents and P&C who contributed to make this event so successful.

Here is an email that we have received by one our parents:

“The students, children and teachers/staff + fathers/grandfathers, mothers and friends/relatives who may have stood in for Dad, and helpers, Principal as well, did a wonderful job of making Dads the centre of attention and helping them get an idea of how their school and work is growing and progressing...handmade presents aside ...this was a present in itself. Well appreciated. Ciao”
General News

WHOLE SCHOOL CELEBRATION OF DR MONTESSORI’S BIRTHDAY—Thursday, 27 August 2015
‘Positive Education’ on Fridays

‘Positive Education’ has replaced ‘Library Literacy’ for the second half of the year, as we are having a whole school focus on life-long mindfulness skills and excellent communication. Our Principal, Maree, attended a ‘Positive Education’ conference earlier this year and myself and Maree are partaking in further workshops through the Institute of Positive Education as well as a ‘Visible Learning Symposium’ and we will be using our knew knowledge to enhance the students and teachers learning.

On Fridays, we start each session with a meditation. Last week we changed from a sitting meditation to lying down and listening to a guided meditation by Montessori teacher Christiane Kerr. Many of the younger students have asked for the name of the App: ‘Sleep Meditations for Children’ (which I am using through my phone) – she has a number of guided meditations available. I am delightfully impressed at how willing all the students have been to meditate and how good they are at it!

After meditating, I am still continuing to read ongoing novels in the classes as this has been very popular. In the different cycles, we then have a number of focuses: in Junior Primary we are talking about friendships and good personal qualities, in Middle Primary we are covering the ‘Save Kids’ program as well as talking about strategies to help with bullying and maintaining good friendships. In Upper Primary, the students wrote anonymous issues on slips of paper, which went into a jar. As a group we are talking about the issues that arose.

Should you have any questions about the program, please don’t hesitate to come and see me or email me at curr.cord@bluegummontessori.wa.edu.au

Crispin Rapsey
Curriculum Coordinator & ‘Positive Education’ Teacher

Our Montessori Book Club

On Tuesday, 1 September we had our monthly Book Club in Boab. The topic for this session was ‘Making Transition’. We watched two videos (via youtube) on Montessori education. One was called Imagine a School: Montessori for Elementary Age Learners and the other was called 19 High School Seniors Reflect on Their Education. This led us to discussion about the Montessori schools in Perth which offer High School programs (Beehive Montessori, Perth Montessori, Rockingham Montessori & Kingsley Montessori).

I gave my feedback from many Upper Primary students I have taught over 10 years who went on to various public and private High Schools. For a start, many of them were really ready to be part of a larger school and many commented on how they were much better than their fellow students at organising their homework, assignment due dates and study schedules as they are familiar with working independently. The students were always grateful for their Montessori education and felt prepared for High School in terms of curriculum as well as social—I have always felt that being in classrooms with peers who are not all the same age leads to a life-long ease with being friends with people of varying ages.

On the curriculum front, I explained how Montessori schools follow both the National Curriculum and the Montessori Curriculum: they have been ‘mapped’ together to ensure that we meet all mandatory requirements.

We also discussed the transition from Middle Primary to Upper Primary at Blue Gum. As students progress through a Montessori School, they gradually move from using concrete materials (and learning through all their senses) to more abstract learning. In Upper Primary, Montessori learning materials are still used, but more abstract learning takes place. Very in-depth ‘Inquiry Learning’ projects take place and group projects are more common.

Our next Book Club is on Tuesday, 22 September in Boab. The topic will be ‘Montessori Questions?’ There will be articles available from the front office if you wish to do some reading before joining us.

Crispin Rapsey, Curriculum Coordinator & ‘Positive Education’ Teacher
General News

We congratulate Ella Power from Coolibah for being awarded ‘highly commended’ in the Upper Primary category of the 2015 Tim Winton Award for Young Writers. Good work Ella.

Funding for Students with Disability

Over the past three years the Australian Department of Education has been collecting data on school students with disability. This data collection supports the current obligations of schools towards students with disability under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and the Disability Standards for Education (2005). From 2016 The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability will provide all Australian schools, education authorities and the community with information about the number of students with disability in schools (including physical, cognitive, sensory and social/emotional disabilities) and where they are located. The purpose of this is to provide students, parents and guardians with information in relation to NCCD (Nationally consistent collection of data) on students with disability.

The type of adjustment will also be included in the NCCD data. Education adjustments are the measures of action taken by education providers to support the participation and learning of students with disability. They are changes and supports which are made to enable students with disability to participate in education, to learn and to demonstrate what they have learned on the same basis as their peers. There are four levels of adjustment: no adjustment needed, supplementary, substantial, and extensive adjustment. Our school reflects evidence of personalized education adjustments in a range of activities, records and documents. The work of the teachers shows how they support students and cater for their individual needs. This is closely monitored by the classroom teacher, learning support teacher, curriculum co-ordinator and Principal.

This year application for State funding for children with disability took place online according to the current Association of Independent Schools in Western Australia (AISWA) eligibility criteria and is separate to the NCCD. The names of these students are included with parent or guardian permission along with documents that verify the diagnosis of an eligible disability. It is imperative if your child has a learning disability that they are assessed to ensure they and the teachers have access to the resources and support they require to best learn. This funding is often consumed in general school funding and is allocated to best meet the student’s needs.

Blue Gum Montessori School will be reviewing how these funds will be best used for these children next year.

Should you have any questions please don’t hesitate in speaking with me.

Michelle de Bruin
Learning Support Teacher

PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR TERM JOBS

Parents are asked to volunteer two hours of their time per family for a ‘Term Job’. This includes tasks such as sharpening pencils, laundry, gardening etc. within your child’s classroom. Term jobs are very important as they contribute to building the community, grace and courtesy & respect, role modelling to the children (“I am interested in your school and what you do at school, and I want to help take care of it / I also take care of the environment.”).

Providing a clean, hygienic, safe and well prepared environment communicates to the children our respect for them and each other.

We cannot do this alone – we need help ...so please sign up for term job in re-

The Montessori Parent Library ...

is located outside the administration office. Please feel free to sign a book out and enjoy reading these fantastic books.

The library will be built up over the coming months. If there is a particular Montessori book that you would like to see in this library, please see Shelley in administration.

Enjoy!

OBSERVATIONS

Have you seen your child in their learning environment recently? Please feel free to book in a 30 minute classroom observation with Shelly any Monday to Thursday from 9.30am—10.00am. Note observations are not done during the first two weeks or last week of term. Observations are limited for half an hour only.

BATTERY AND INK CARTRIDGE RECYCLING

Please deliver all of your household’s used batteries and ink cartridges to Reception
SPORT CARNIVAL INFORMATION

All families are welcome to attend

The Junior Primary sport carnival will be held on Wednesday, 23 September from 11 am to 12 noon in the school playground.

The Middle and Upper Primary sport carnival will be held on Thursday, 24 September from 1-3pm at Meller Park. Please note: a mobile café has been booked for parents to make cash purchases of hot and cold drinks and food.

Please ensure your child/children are wearing appropriate clothing to participate in all the athletic events, including well fitting sport shoes.

Students are required to bring a hat and bottle of water to school, and have sunscreen applied prior to coming to school, particularly Junior Primary children.

If any parents are able to assist me at the Middle and Upper Primary carnival on Thursday, please email me at physical.ed@bluegummontessori.wa.edu.au

I am looking forward to showing you all of the children's efforts over these two fun-filled days.

Tara Smith
Physical Education Teacher