

Great Beginnings Montessori School

March Newsletter

MARCH, 2010

DATES TO REMEMBER

March 2	Read Across America Day
March 3	GBMS Mom's Night Out starting at 6:00 pm in the Baxter Wine Bar
March 8	Public School Registration Kick-Off
March 9 & 10	Parent/Teacher Conferences, School Closed
March 15-19	Spring Break, School Closed

Coming in April: Great Beginnings Open House and Kindergarten Night

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

With spring just around the corner, it's time for our next round of Parent/Teacher conferences. Sign-up sheets are posted in the sign-in area of the locker room. Each conference offers twenty-five minutes to review your child's recent progress and goals for the weeks ahead. School is closed during the conferences to free up our teaching staff to focus on your time together. Please make arrangements for childcare during your meeting time. We look forward to our time together!

MOM'S NIGHT OUT

Our next Mom's gathering (Dads are welcome, too) is scheduled for Thursday evening, March 3. We'll meet in the wine bar inside the Baxter at 6 pm. An optional scotch tasting will be underway for those brave enough to participate. The typical offerings will also be available like wine, beer, appetizers or dinner. The evening will include musical entertainment with Heidi Swan. It's been a while since our last Mom's gathering, so we hope you will be able to join us for an evening downtown.

FALL ENROLLMENT

Thank you for promptly returning your re-enrollment forms. Your response helps us as we plan for next fall. We currently have several spots open in our fall schedule. If you have a friend who is interested in Great Beginnings, please don't hesitate to send them our way for a tour of the school and more information.

If you have any questions regarding enrollment or the Bozeman Public School system, please contact Jane Burns in the school office or at jcburns@qwestoffice.net

PUBLIC SCHOOL REGISTRATION

Bozeman Public Schools Registration Kickoff Monday, March 8, at the Bozeman Public Library, the school district will hold a child development information day for incoming new students. From 8:30 – 4:30, representatives from the elementary schools and other community organizations will be available to answer questions and give out information. Registration packets will be available.

The first round of new student enrollment runs from March 8 – April 6. (You *really* want to get your forms in within this time period.) If you are unable to attend, registration forms (posted after March 8) along with more information are downloadable at the school district's website: <http://www.bsd7.org/district/departments/enrollment/>

If you have any questions, I'm happy to help, jcburns@qwestoffice.net

The school district's enrollment secretary is Liz Cleary. She can be reached at 522-6005. Best of luck to all of you who are entering in to this new territory!

SUMMER PROGRAM

We are planning for two summer sessions this year. The dates are as follows: Session 1: June 14—July 1 and Session 2: July 14—August 1. Our weeks will run Mondays through Thursdays from 9 am to 2 pm. We will be posting a sign-up sheet in the locker room and when we have 18 children signed up, we will consider the session confirmed. Alumni siblings under seven years old are also welcome to sign-up.

Drop-in days will be available on a first come, first served basis with at least 24 hour notice.

2010-2011 ANNUAL CALENDAR

We are waiting on the Bozeman Public Schools to approve their 2010-2011 annual calendar before we create our own. Our recent survey showed a strong majority of our families would like to continue following the Bozeman Public School calendar. With hope, we will share next year's annual calendar with our families by April. Stay tuned and thank you for your patience!

CLEAN AIR ZONE

Clean Air Zone Montana is a statewide program aimed at reducing children's exposure to harmful exhaust by discouraging idling of buses and other vehicles. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has initiated *Clean Air Zone Montana* to provide Montana schools with a comprehensive toolkit to reduce the impacts of vehicle emissions outside their schools. One of the goals of the program is to improve air quality in and around school buildings and throughout local communities.

To that end, Great Beginnings will be posting *Clean Air Zone* signs in our parking area as part of our no-idling policy or all vehicles.

Did You Know?

- Running vehicles emit many air pollutants including sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, fine particulate matter, and other hazardous air pollutants.
- Asthma is the most common long-term childhood disease, affecting approximately

10% of children in Montana. It is the number one cause of absenteeism.

- 30 seconds of idling uses more fuel than turning off the engine and restarting it.
- Manufacturers routinely suggest a warm-up time of less than five minutes in cold weather. In fact, running an engine at low speed (idling) causes significantly more wear on internal parts compared to driving at regular speeds.

How Can You Help?

Even if you'll only be here for a minute, remember to turn off your vehicle during pick-up and drop off. For more information, go to deq.mt.gov or call 800.433.8773.

READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY

One of Dr. Suess's many legacies is "Read Across America Day," a national celebration held on his birthday, March 2. Our own Jane Burns (who brings her experience as a children's librarian and Dr. Seuss aficionado) will visit the children during the week of March 2 for a special reading of one of Dr. Suess's classic tales.

We invite you to participate in Read Across America day by spending time reading with your child or listening to them as they read to you. The National Education Association states: "The research is clear; children who are read to, and who read for pleasure, are significantly more successful in school than children who do not. Give your children a head start on success—teach them that reading is fun!"

CLASSROOM VISITORS AND MONTHLY THEMES

Our children enjoyed a traditional tea ceremony on Friday, February 19 with past GBMS Board President Deanna Campbell and Susan McKeivitt, who brought stories of their frequent trips to China to the classroom circle.

Heart of the Valley Humane Society also visited the school on February 25 to help kick off our donation drive to benefit the Humane Society. Check out the display near the sign-in area in the classroom to learn about what the Humane Society needs.

Our monthly themes have included a strong focus on anatomy, dental health and nutrition with a visit from Dr. Steinmetz scheduled for March 4. We celebrated Chinese New Year while also studying the continent of Europe. President's Day gave us the opportunity to talk about U.S. presidents, introduce some fun songs and learn about money.

When you get our monthly calendars, be sure to note the themes at the bottom of the calendar. If you have an interest or something to share with us at circle that relates to one of our monthly themes, contact one of the teachers and we would love to have you as a special guest.

We also welcome your visits to the classroom to observe your child and their day. Please contact a teacher to arrange for an observation visit.

RECENT SONGS

Some songs we have been singing at school:

Magic Penny

Love is something if you give it away, give it away, give it away,

Love is something if you give it away, you end up having more.
It's just like a magic penny, hold on tight, and you won't have any,
Lend it, spend it, and you'll have so many,
They'll roll all over the floor, for,
Love is something if you give it away, give it away, give it away,
Love is something if you give it away, you end up having more.

Honesty (sung to the tune of Edelweis)

Honesty, honesty, this means that we are truthful,
Honesty, honesty, this means that we play fair.
I am so honest in all do, always tell the truth,
Honesty, honesty, tell the truth and be free.

Old Abe Lincoln

Old Abe Lincoln, he came (out of the wilderness) 3 x
Many long years ago.
Old Abe Lincoln, he moved (into the White House) 3 x
Many long years ago,
Old Abe Lincoln was (the sixteenth president) 3 x
Many long years ago.

SCHOLASTIC BOOK ORDERS

Did you know that every time you order from Scholastic, your school earns points for free books? Most of the books in our school library are from Scholastic book points and private donations. Every month, volunteer parent Amy Lincoln passes out book order forms for you to peruse. We love Scholastic books because

- The great prices make buying books affordable for our families
- You can now also conveniently order online
- Once placed, the orders arrive promptly
- The school earns free books with the bonus points generated by the parent orders.

If you do order online, go to www.scholastic.com. The username is Springhillane and the password is books. If you have any questions on your Scholastic order, please let Victoria or Amy Lincoln know!

WASTE-FREE LUNCHES

by Bevin Campbell (Arlo's mom)

When I was a kid, my mom would buy paper lunch sacks in packs of 50, and I'd use (and throw out) one of those every school day, along with the 3-4 small plastic sandwich baggies that housed my mid-day meal. Most kids today wouldn't dare discard a paper bag in the garbage (or the plastic bags either, if they're my children). However, even this recycling-conscious generation is still producing way too much trash at lunch time. In fact, it has been estimated that **on average a school-age child using disposable lunch products generates 67 pounds of waste per school year. That equates to 18,760 pounds of lunch waste for just one average-size elementary school!**

What can be done? Many schools, and even countries, have instituted waste-free lunch programs. In Japan, the entire country has a waste-free lunch policy (don't you dare use a paper napkin on that island!). While Great Beginnings already encourages us parents to compliment our kid's lunches with a lovely cloth napkin and reusable silverware, there is more we could be doing to teach our kids that stuff need not be disposable. To celebrate Earth Day 2010, here are some ideas to encourage your child's waste reduction at lunch time:

1) Join the "bento box" movement and purchase a lunch box that comes complete with a set of Tupperware containers (or just buy containers for that Spiderman lunch box). This will **allow you to eliminate all use of plastic baggies, aluminum foil, and wax paper**. As I've already mentioned, **don't forget the cloth napkin and reusable silverware**. Switching to a bento box-style lunch box will also encourage better nutrition, as you will find that you are more inclined to use fresh items from the refrigerator.

Our current favorite bento box is the Laptop Lunch Box. You can order them at www.laptoplunches.com. They are dishwasher safe, made of non-toxic plastics, and come with stainless steel silverware and a "user's guide" full of healthy lunch ideas.

2) **Resist the juice box craze** and let those little non-recyclable buggers become a special treat only, instead of the way your kid gets juice every day (scary factoid: most inorganic trash retains its weight, volume, and form for at least FOUR decades!). A fun kid's drink bottle can be a perfectly fine vehicle of juice delivery.

3) Instead of buying pre-packaged, kid-sized items (a marketing hoax really, in which you are paying extra money for less food and more packaging), **buy large bags or containers of the desired food items** (better yet, buy items in the bulk bins at the Co-op, such as raisins, nuts and animal cookies). Again, make those small packaged snacks a special treat, rather than an everyday item.

4) **Compost**. Honestly, it is really easy and simple. **Food debris in a landfill decomposes only 25% in the first 15 years!** In your compost pile, that banana peel is history come spring gardening season.

5) **Carry this sensibility with you and your children elsewhere**. My kids know that

I keep a set of plastic silverware and a spare paper sack in my purse for the fruit cup treat and muffin at the library café. Afterwards, we take them home with us to wash for the next adventure (thus, a plastic spoon is NOT seen as something disposable). Another idea: attempt a waste-free birthday party (or pretty darn close)... that's my next project.

With a few gentle shifts in our habits and some creativity, we can help our families make better choices about what they eat, while reducing our impact on the environment. Good luck!

MONTESSORI EDUCATION WEEK

Montessori Education Week took place February 21 through 27. Great Beginnings participated in a group ad in the Bozeman Daily Chronicle on February 21 to promote Montessori education in the Bozeman, Livingston, Big Sky and Belgrade areas. Our staff attended the annual area Montessori Schools pot-luck on February 24. Some of our staff will also attend the Girls for a Change women's workshop on February 27 with nationally recognized trainers Deidre Combs (another past GBMS board president and parent) and Karly Randolph-Pitman (Montessori parent) whose workshops, "Listening to Your Inner Voice" and "Living the Soul of Self-Care" offer continuing education units.

SPRING HIKE

GBMS teachers invite your child to join them for our fundraiser hike up the Drinking Horse Mountain Trail on May 15. Our rain check date is May 22. We will meet in the parking area at 10 and head up the mountain from there. Snacks will be provided and children will bring their own water bottle. We have several spaces open and are asking for a minimum donation of \$20 for each child who attends.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

After a visit from the Humane Society and one of their cats, Parker, Sadie tells Miss Victoria: "I'm really keeping my fingers crossed for a cat!"

Campbell: "Guess what, Miss Amy! Me and Logan love you!"

Tillman is in a baking project with Miss Vicki. After the flour gets passed around, Tillman says, "It smells like flowers!"

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

Special thanks to all of the parents who have helped our teachers as playground helpers: Michele Esperti, Michele West, Lisa Hughes, Debra Habernicht and Jenn Bartholomew

Thank you, Jon Campbell and Taylor Lonsdale for transporting our recent recycling.

If you are interested in joining us as a helper on the playground, please talk to Victoria.

