



MONTECITO CONNECTION

September/October 2009

Welcome Back From Erin: Welcome back to Montecito for our 2009-2010 School Year! Although each school year brings new hope and excitement - this year is particularly special! One reason is that Montecito will be turning 50 in the coming year! We will be celebrating our "Legend of Learning" in many ways over the next year; and one of the ways we are doing this is to offer some new, exciting programs!

As many of you already know, we have added a K-5 after-school program called Kids Klub. We are VERY excited to offer this fun, new program, especially during these difficult economic times when other schools are cutting back. Here at Montecito, we are offering Kids Klub as a drop-in program to families, so that your children no longer have to leave Montecito when they enter first grade. They can continue to be enriched in our drop-in program to augment their experiences in elementary school. Kids Klub is a fun place where your children can finish their homework so that they can spend quality time with you once they come home in the evenings, and they can even get some one-on-one tutoring. Our other K-5 offerings will include special sports and PE classes, such as After School Hoops and After School Sports (both starting later this month), art, music and science classes, and lots of fun outdoor and indoor after-school activities (using our new equipment!). For more information or to sign up, please pick up a Kids Klub Daily Schedule and our new Special Programs Fee Schedule in the office. All of these special programs can be paid for directly with a credit card or check, by using our Punch Card system. Of course, we are still offering our wonderful Afternoon Enrichment (including fun Bonanza Days), Little Hoopers (preschool basketball), and all of our regular preschool classes for your preschoolers. Talk to the office about our new discount programs so that you can take full advantage of all that we have to offer!

For the first time ever, Montecito will be offering scholarships for families with particular financial needs! More information will be available in the office by the week of September 28th. Remember, you can also earn tuition discounts by submitting tuition coupons for as many families as you can refer to Montecito's wonderful programs!

I want to thank all of our wonderful families for coming to Orientation and making your child's first few days at school so smooth and special. Your children's transitions are going very smoothly this year, so thank you for your assistance in making them feel comfortable. We cannot do this without you! ☺ We hope you are feeling positive about your child's experience at Montecito. We encourage you to talk to your child's teachers if you have any questions or concerns, and the entire Administrative staff is here to support you as well. So come and see us. If your child is having difficulty transitioning or you feel any discomfort, please let us know so that we can help ease you and your child into the transition. Also please take a look at the information below about separation anxiety, as there is something that everyone can relate to, and Fall is a time of transition for us all.

If you have any further questions about our programs, upcoming dates, and/or our philosophy, please remember to go to our website (www.montecitopreschool.com).



Separation Anxiety: Along with the newness and excitement of another school year, there is sometimes a little sadness, particularly for our younger children. Separation anxiety is a very real and predictable emotion, and we at Montecito approach it with patience and compassion.

If your child is having a difficult time adjusting to school, please consult with his/her teacher to discuss ways to ease the transition. Sometimes shortening the time at school can be helpful. It is also important to acknowledge the feelings without dramatizing or escalating them. In addition, we urge you to speak positively to your child about his/her school experience. You can do this by talking with your child before and after school, telling him/her that you understand and that you miss him/her too; but that you will be back soon to pick him/her up and you can hear all about his/her day and the fun he/she had at school! Your child needs to know that you have confidence that he/she is going to be happy and safe at school. It is not uncommon for children to say that they "have no friends at school," or that they "hate school." What they are really trying to say is that they will miss you and are sad to say good-bye. Teachers will often tell you that, once you leave, your child quickly settles down and starts to play.

If your child is crying when you drop him/her off, remember that this is often much more difficult on you than it is on your child, as they have a different memory and many less life experiences. If your child is upset when you leave, please try not to show your child that you are also upset, as this will make his/her adjustment that much more difficult and he/she may connect too much to your sad feelings, which will in turn make your child more upset. Please feel free to call Erin directly or the office if your child is upset when you leave, and we will check on your child in the classroom. We also take "happy pictures" of your children, so that you feel confident that they are happy and adjusting well.

Even if your child is being obstinate about attending school, we encourage you to bring him/her anyway. If he/she gets the message that temper tantrums are rewarded by staying home, the stubborn behavior will continue, and you will find it that much more difficult the next time you try to bring your child to school. For further advice, we suggest you take a look at several articles posted on the Parent Board in the Office, or simply come to us in the main office, or to the Director.

Montecito's Nature Corner



"I would characterize hiking as the best nature-based activity for a lifetime of activity ... it requires a minimal level of gear. Anyone can hike. You can set your own pace, and you can experience the outdoors on your own terms." Gregory Miller



This summer my 5-year-old son, Luke, and I went to Alaska. My desire to see Alaska was sparked when my parents visited there over 20 years ago, and grew as I heard friends' stories of their cruises. I wanted us to experience more than a cruise though - of course I wanted to see the glaciers, but I also wanted to visit Denali National Park and its wildlife.

My love of national parks started in my childhood. I have fond memories of my first trip to Yellowstone, where it snowed in June, and the bear cub in Yosemite that stole potato chips and film from our station wagon. Both trips were taken before I entered first grade. Several decades and national parks later, I decided to take Luke to Alaska before he started kindergarten.

We chose a "cruisetour" that was divided into two distinctly different experiences. The first four nights spent on land took us to Denali National Park where we went river rafting, got up close and personal with moose and grizzly bears, and saw caribou, golden eagles, and countless small animals. We transitioned to our ship via a 9-hour luxury train journey that was filled with spectacular sights, including Mt. McKinley, mountain glaciers, and remnants of the 1964 Alaskan earthquake and tsunami - it was a 9.2!

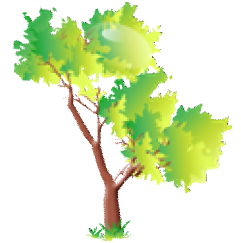
The 7-night Inside Passage cruise to Vancouver took us through Glacier Bay National Park, which was the crown jewel of our journey. Near the entrance, we cruised past Humpback whales and slowed for rangers to board the ship. Once on board, the rangers took over the ship and for the next 10 hours or so, they gave presentations (some for kids only) and narrated our journey through the bay. Many of the glaciers we saw were

receding, some were growing, and all were spectacular. I was also impressed with the Park Service's rules to help conserve Glacier Bay. In short, only two large cruise ships are allowed into Glacier Bay per day on a staggered schedule, and while in the bay, they minimize distractions by closing the shops and casino.

The Inside Passage is surrounded by a temperate rain forest dotted with charming fishing villages. Our stops allowed us to trace part of the Yukon trail, gawk at bald eagles, splash in a glacial lake, gaze at orca from our dining table, watch salmon leap up river, and enjoy a lumberjack show.

Alaska is so remote and vast that you really have to see it to believe it. I can't tell you how many times we were told that something was the largest in North America or one of the largest in the world. We covered a lot of miles in planes, trains, buses and a big ship - and Alaska has many more sights and wildlife that we would still like to see. I wish that everyone could visit Alaska at least once, and I hope to take Luke again some day.

Saving Trees (technology update): We are working feverishly (and have had some glitches) to have your classroom web pages ready as soon as possible and we'll let you know when this happens. In the meantime, we urge you to visit www.montecitopreschool.com for information about all of our upcoming events. They're all listed under Current Events (with links to the appropriate forms) on our home page. Also check your inbox - we will be emailing information home soon, too. Please be sure to let us know if you change your email address.



Family Referrals & Tuition Coupons: Although the spaces are filling quickly, we still have openings in some of our preschool classes. Please tell your friends! Remember, if you refer a family and they enroll and attend for one month, you will receive a \$100 tuition referral credit (or 10 Punch Card hours). You can also get similar tuition and/or punch card credits for referring families to our Summer School and Special Programs (see the office for Punch Card values and tuition credit amounts). There is no limit to how many families you can refer, so refer your friends to Montecito so they too can have an awesome preschool experience!



Our Back to School Days will be taking place on two (2) Saturdays in September and October (September 26th and October 10th). We will send home more information as the dates come closer. Please make note of the following times. If your child attends a morning class, please come from 9:00 to 9:45 a.m. on the designated day. If your child attends an afternoon class, please come between 10:30 and 11:15 a.m. on the designated day. During Back to School Days, you will have an opportunity to learn more about the curriculum and the goals for the year, as well as preview, and participate in, some examples of art and cognitive materials and activities that will be offered throughout the year in your child's class. At the end of the presentation, you will have a chance to ask questions. **Although this event is for adults only, we DO have Child Care available for you to use in the Green Yard on both Back to School Saturdays (using our Punch Card system). So don't worry if you do not have child care during Back to School Day - bring your kids to enjoy a fun morning in Montecito's Extended Care! Also, we will allow two-year-olds in Extended Care during this time.** And if you have an infant, you are welcome to bring him/her with you in a baby carrier.

The Herbert Allen Ross Memorial Fund for Early Literacy: Herbert Allen Ross began his career in law enforcement for the Capitola Police Department in 1973. He retired in 2001. During his tenure, he was responsible for the development of several community outreach programs including the first Drug Abuse Awareness Education program, the Juvenile Diversion Program, and the Safe Ride Home program. Herb spent years as an advocate for young people. Over his years as a police officer he could be seen in his uniform reading to the children in their classrooms. At times he would bring his horse, Rowdy, to the local elementary schools in order to engage the children in discussions of his various child advocacy programs. He received a Mayor's Proclamation for his service in 1996. In 1997, when he was named Citizen of the Year by the Capitola

Chamber of Commerce, many of Capitola's school district teachers attended the awards ceremony to honor him for his dedication to the education and well-being of Capitola's youth.

Herb passed away on January 8, 2007, just seven weeks after being diagnosed with cancer. All those who so loved and admired him were devastated by their loss. In loving memory and in honor of his legacy of good works, his eight older siblings, his wife, children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, created a memorial fund to help promote and support literacy in young learners who may have limited access to books. Herb would have wanted us to do this. **He believed so completely in early education as a way to a rewarding and productive life.**

This memorial fund was created in August, 2008. Since then, we have given over 1500 books to struggling schools, head start programs, and clients of service agencies. And the need grows. We would very much appreciate **your donation of gently used children's books ranging from infant/toddler to high school age.** We have placed a donation box on the front porch of the Blue Room for you donations.

Thank you for your support of literacy and to help continue my brother's legacy!

Ginny Ross Quackenbush, Teacher and Early Childhood Consultant for Montecito School



Fall Festival Volunteers: The annual Los Altos Fall Festival will be held on Saturday and Sunday, October 3rd and 4th from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. As we do every year, Montecito will have a booth set up in the Children's Alley on Sunday, October 4th. We will have a few games for the children to play and an arts/crafts table. Erin will be there, and one Montecito staff member will be manning our booth; however, we are looking for parent volunteers to help us on Sunday. The volunteers may work one to two hour shifts, or whatever time you have to give. Please talk to someone in the Office if you are interested in helping us. Thanks for your support!

Emergency Preparedness: Information will be sent home for Lockdown Drills that will be held on Wednesday and Thursday, October 14th and 15th. By including staff, parents and children in our drills, we can handle any emergency together! Lockdown drills occur on the school campus during class time, and your children are in safe, trained hands. We will hold evacuation drills in November, and will send home information as those dates approach. Remember to keep your Disaster Booklet in your car glove compartment, so that you have the information with you in case of a real emergency. If you need additional copies for your car(s), you may get them from the office. If you have any questions or concerns about any of our drills, please talk to your teachers or the office staff. Our door is always open. ☺



Halloween: As Halloween approaches you will hear lots of excited talk from your children about their costumes and going out trick or treating. It is also common for your child to have some fears during this season. We have some simple guidelines and tips to help you assist your child in dealing with his/her fears during the Halloween season, as well as the rest of the year. This will help make this a safe and fun holiday for them.

- ❖ When you are choosing costumes, keep in mind that children this age have very vivid imaginations and can be easily frightened by scary masks or outfits. We encourage you to choose simple costumes based on nursery rhymes or Disney characters and avoid masks and warrior costumes with weapons.
- ❖ Respect fear. Sometimes our first response is to tell children that they don't have to worry about something that concerns them. Instead of a signal that something is wrong, when your child tells you about a fear, use that information as a sign that something needs to be explored. You can do this by singing songs or reading books related to the topic. For example, at Halloween you could read Where the Wild Things Are, The Humbug Witch, There's a Monster in My Closet, There's an Alligator Under My Bed, and The Night Kitchen. If your child is afraid of spiders, you can put out play spiders, sing The Itsy Bitsy Spider, or learn more about how spiders live, specifically focusing on the triggers for the anxiety. Remember, spiders are wonderful creatures and most spiders are not dangerous.

- ❖ Provide time for exploration and acknowledge each child's individual timetable for exploration. While one child may work through a fear in a day, another child might need a month. By acknowledging these different needs and giving each child the time he or she requires, you can help them feel safe to explore their feelings.

There is no doubt that our world is a quickly changing place that provides many opportunities for stress and anxiety. Helping your children work with and through their fears now will help them build the foundation they need for confronting challenges and crises throughout their lives. Perhaps teaching children courage begins with the simple act of becoming curious about fear.



Harvest Festival: Join us for our **Annual Harvest Festival on Friday, October 23rd!**

The festival will begin at 6:00 p.m. and will end by 8:00 p.m. We will serve dinner for your family to enjoy, and provide lots of fun games and activities, including a jump house, relay races, hay rides, a scavenger hunt, bobbing for apples, an art activity, a "feely table" and fun, spooky music to dance and play to! More details and sign-up information will be sent home. Like most of our campus events, this festival is open to the public, so invite your friends and neighbors. We hope to see you at our annual Harvest Festival - and you're welcome to wear your costumes too! ☺

Halloween Sings: We will send home information about our upcoming harvest celebrations and Halloween Sings (October 29th and 30th). We encourage children (and parents too!) to come to school dressed in their costumes; however, if your child does not wish to wear a costume, that is fine. Please note that we will not have the time to dress your child in his/her costume at school. **This is a family event and every child must have a grown-up with them during the parties.** Please drop your child off as normal then return at the time indicated on your invitations. **PARKING INFORMATION:** Keep in mind that very few spaces are available in the front parking lot; however, parking is also available on side streets and on Grant Road. Please be respectful of our neighbors and do not block their driveways and/or mailboxes. **PLEASE DO NOT PARK ON PETERSEN COURT, AS THIS IS A PRIVATE STREET AND NO NON-RESIDENT PARKING IS ALLOWED (we have received complaints in the past).** Violators will be towed at their own expense. And remember to treat the public streets and surrounding neighborhood with respect (no littering or loitering please). Consider arriving early, parking several blocks away, or walking or riding your bike. **All drop-in programs, including Lunch Bunch, Afternoon Enrichment, and Kids Klub are available on Halloween Sing days.**



Kids Klub Field Trip and Back-up Care on Veteran's Day! Elementary schools will be closed on Wednesday, November 11th in honor of Veteran's Day. **Montecito will remain open and Kids Klub will be holding a special field trip day so that you can drop your elementary school child off at Montecito for part of the day or all day!** Your child can be enriched and have fun with their friends and our Kids Klub Leaders during this holiday from school. So come join the fun! ☺ More details will be sent home about when and where to drop off your child, as well as where we are going on our field trip. Please call the office if you have questions about Kids Klub or this special field trip day.



BOOK CORNER



The Book Corner is typically where we provide recommended reading for kids and parents. However, this time we are asking for your gently used children's books in honor of Herbert Allen Ross. Please see the Herbert Allen Ross Memorial Fund for Early Literacy. If you would like suggestions for your fall reading about transition or this time of year, please ask Erin or your teachers. We have lots of recommendations! ☺